

# Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women

## Ring Out the Old, Ring In the New

As a new year is underway, it's a good time for the staff of MCBW to reflect on the changes and accomplishments of 2001 and the work that is ahead of us in 2002.

During the summer of 2001, MCBW was restructured. The Board of Directors hired Karmit Bulman, Esq. in August 2001 as the Executive Director. In October, 2001, four new staff members were added: Sandy Davidson as Rural Grant Supervisor, Delia Ruiz as Financial Coordinator, and Lonna Stevens as Program Coordinator. In November, 2001, Danielle Kluz joined the staff as Communications Coordinator. While we are still actively seeking an Associate Director/Program Coordinator, we are very excited

and are looking forward to a new year of working to end violence against women in Minnesota.

The MCBW staff have coordinated several statewide advocate's trainings which include, but are not limited to, working with children, crisis line training, legal issues, and media advocacy. In addition, some of the other projects we're currently working on include Violence Against Women Action Day at the capitol on February 28 and March 1, 2002. The 2001 Clothesline Project will be on display during this event. Other significant projects include the work of the Gender Think Tank, the production of the new Lesbian Battering manual and a complete redesign of the MCBW web site.

## From the Director's Office

*Karmit Bulman, Executive Director*

2001 was a memorable year at MCBW. Many hardworking staff and Board members took big risks and created major organizational change at MCBW. While this change was not easy, it has produced a solid foundation for a very strong and transformed Coalition for Battered Women.

Excellent work was produced by MCBW in the past year. Outstanding legislative accomplishments, training events, community education, and technical assistance to battered women's pro-

grams are some of the highlights. Also, MCBW has already produced nationally-recognized results in its federally-funded rural domestic violence and child victimization project (see page 11 for details).

The first six months of the brand new MCBW overflowed with accomplishment geared towards maintaining a strong and solid MCBW. Six staff, four rural grant community specialists, and several consultants were hired.

*Story continued on page 2.*

"If you don't like the way the world is, you change it. You have an obligation to change it. You just do it one step at a time."

~Marian Wright Edelman

## Winter 2002

### Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women Staff:

**Karmit Bulman**  
Executive Director

**Sandy Davidson**  
Rural Grant Supervisor

**Danielle Kluz**  
Communication  
Coordinator

**Delia Ruiz**  
Financial and Adminis-  
trative Coordinator

**Lonna Stevens**  
Program Coordinator

### Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women

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## From the Director's Office

*(continued from page 1)*

New computer work stations and effective internet access was provided to every staff person. Brand new by-laws, personnel policy handbook, financial policy manual, and new accounting and internal management systems were created and implemented. A November 2001, MCCVS state audit affirmed that MCBW is strong and well-positioned to serve membership and meet established goals.

In the fall, MCBW took several steps to determine member needs and to plan activities to address these needs. A written needs assessment was sent out and results were compiled and assessed. In September, MCBW designed and hosted an annual membership meeting. In early January, the Board and staff spent long days participating in strategic planning and visioning. One of the primary goals of the annual meeting and the Board/Staff retreat, was to do strategic planning and to assess needs and make concrete plans. Also, MCBW staff have made hundreds of personal phone calls and set up several individual meetings to get acquainted and determine needs. We plan to visit many MCBW programs in 2002. As a result of these efforts, membership has doubled in just three months and new membership applications come in regularly.

Each MCBW staff person, and the organization as a whole, has produced activity work plans, following thoughtful consideration of the most effective ways to meet the needs of MCBW membership. Please call MCBW at 651-646-6177 if you would like a copy of the nine-page MCBW activity plan through June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2002. MCBW staff continue to invite input and recommendations regarding the best way to serve member needs and to put forth a strong collective voice. Some of the activities being planned for 2002 include the following: (Please look at the calendar and several articles detailing many of these activities).

- **Ongoing Gender Think Tank Meetings and follow-up action plans-page 8.**
- **Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay, Transgender Education: regular trainings, networking opportunities, and publishing a new LGBT Battering Manual-page 10.**
- **Women of Color Network: organizing, training, and networking- page 16.**
- **Youth and Children: training and networking.**

- **Training opportunities for advocates, including two day advocacy training, crisis line training, and media training (see calendar).**
- **Network on Abuse in Later Life: training, community education, and networking.**
- **Providing a comprehensive statewide conference for programs that serve battered women on November 6-8, 2002.**
- **Action Day at the Capitol, February 28<sup>th</sup> and March 1st – page 3.**
- **Women and Girls Come to the Capitol , February 17 and 18.**
- **Policy, systems change and public education work through involvement in such groups as: Interagency Task Force on Battered Women, Corporate Citizenship Initiative, Internet Based Domestic Abuse Court Preparation Project, POST Board, Violence Against Women Advisory Council, and the Overlap (domestic abuse and child abuse) Group**
- **Maintaining and updating the Femicide Report and the Clothesline Project.**
- **Providing public awareness and media coverage of issues of concern to battered women– page 15.**
- **Providing legislative advocacy and education- page 15.**
- **Serving as an information clearing-house for programs that serve battered women and the public.**

We extend heartfelt thanks to Board members, past staff, MCBW members, and other supporters who have worked hard to build, contribute, debate, educate and produce results on behalf of battered women and their children. We look forward to serving as your statewide voice.

# Violence Against Women Action Day at the Capitol: Don't Sacrifice the Safety of Women and Children

**FEBRUARY 28 AND MARCH 1, 2002**

**Please join the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women and  
the Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault**

**for our Legislative Training and the  
annual VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACTION DAY  
at the Minnesota State Capitol**

***RESERVE YOUR ROOMS NOW!  
SCHEDULE APPOINTMENTS WITH YOUR LEGISLATORS NOW –  
for February 28<sup>th</sup> or March 1***

**DEADLINE FOR RESERVATIONS IS FEBRUARY 14, 2002**

**Sheraton Four Points  
400 North Hamline Avenue  
St. Paul, Minnesota  
CALL: 651-642-1234**

- If reservations are made by February 14<sup>th</sup>, the rate is \$89/night
- **BE SURE TO TELL THEM** you're with the *Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women* (the block of rooms are reserved under MCBW but if you're with MCASA, the same rates will apply).
- *You do need to refer to the block of rooms for MCBW to get the reduced rate.*
- Due to funding cuts, it will not be possible for MCASA or MCBW to reimburse individuals or programs for lodging, mileage, or meals. In the case of hardship, please apply to MCBW or MCASA for assistance. We don't want groups/individuals not attending because of financial difficulties.
- If, however, you are able to bring a battered woman, or formerly battered woman, who is active with your program, MCBW will pay for her room and meals.

**LUNCH AND LEGISLATIVE TRAINING (at the Sheraton)**

**Thursday, February 28, 2002**

**12:00 to 3:00 PM**

**RALLY AT THE CAPITOL**

**Friday, March 1, 2002**

**12:00 to 1:00 PM**

**RECEPTION IN GREAT HALL AFTER RALLY, March 1<sup>st</sup>**

**CLOTHESLINE DISPLAY IN GREAT HALL, Feb. 28 and March 1<sup>st</sup>**

**If you, or an organization you work with, are interested in being a supporter of this event, please contact Kristine Dickenson at (507) 387-6465.**

## Letter to MCBW Members and Supporters About Funding Cuts

Dear Members and Supporters,

We are writing this letter with an urgent message. Victims of sexual and domestic violence need your help.

Decisions are currently being made which will have an impact on victims of battering and sexual assault in ways that we can only imagine. What we don't need to imagine, because we know it all too well, is that the safety of women and children across the state of Minnesota is being threatened. The answer to Minnesota's economic problems is not fewer beds in battered women's shelters, fewer outreach services, or fewer resources for small rural rape crisis centers struggling to respond to the needs of multiple counties. In fact, it is in times of economic distress that services to victims of sexual and domestic violence are in the most demand.

As a society, we are all too familiar with feelings of fear and terror. What has been less publicized, but is something that you all know in a very personal way, is that women and children are experiencing terror in their homes and communities every day across this state.

Unfortunately, rather than support the safety and security of families in Minnesota, funding for services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault are being cut. This includes a potential cut of more than \$1 million for shelter and safehome services to battered women and their children, and a cut of statewide direct services to victims of sexual assault and battering through a 67% cut of funding for the Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault and the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women. We don't know what other cuts of services to victims of battering and sexual assault are still to come.

While we recognize these difficult times in our state's economy, solutions cannot come at the expense of the safety of Minnesota's women and children

It is for that reason that the sexual assault and battered women's movements come together once more as a unified voice. Our strength has not been, and will never be, diminished, and we simply will not stand for any decision that harms the people we are all here to serve. We will fight these decisions through our legislators, through the media, and through every other resource at our disposal. As we all know, victims of domestic and sexual assault

across this state depend on it.

One of our greatest strengths as a movement is our collective voice. We are encouraging all of you to use that voice, and to do once again what you all do so well.

- Bring this letter to your local legislators and talk to them about the impact cuts in funding would have on the lives of their constituents.
- If you can't meet with them, call or write to them. Bring this letter to your local media and let them know about what is happening and how it will affect the people in their community.
- Write letters to the editor. Have your board, staff, volunteers, and community supporters do the same. Come to the MCBW and MCASA Violence Against Women Action Day on March 1<sup>st</sup> at the Capitol, and let legislators know in person about the impact a cut in this funding would have.

We know that these are difficult times. We also know the impact that domestic and sexual violence have on the lives of countless Minnesotans. We see it in their faces every day. It is for that reason that our two movements again come together in this fight. We simply cannot, and will not accept a world in which the safety and security of women and children is not a priority.

Keep us informed about any contacts you have with media or legislators. As always, we encourage you to contact Tammie Larsen at MCASA, Karmit Bulman at MCBW, or any other Coalition staff with any questions, concerns, ideas, or suggestions you might have.

We look forward to working together with you as we move forward in our fight against domestic and sexual assault.

Sincerely,

Karmit Bulman  
Executive Director  
Minnesota Coalition  
for Battered Women

Tammie Larsen  
Executive Director  
Minnesota Coalition  
Against Sexual Assault

The Staffs of MCBW and MCASA

## Tips and Tactics for Contacting Legislators From the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits

### *Identifying your legislators*

Know as much as you can about them. For assistance in identifying your own Representative and Senator, contact:

1. House Information, Room 175, State Office Building, 651-296-2146 or
2. Senate Information Office, Room 231, Capitol., 651-296-0504.

Staff there will assist you and have brief descriptions of legislators in the "Green Book" which is available at no cost. You can sign up for weekly bulletins that describe legislative action and upcoming hearings.

### *Meeting with legislators*

Make an appointment to see your legislator. If you have not set up appointments you may still be able to meet with your elected officials. Stop at your legislators' offices and ask their staff if they have a few minutes to meet with you. Even on busy days, many legislators will make time for a conversation with a constituent, so be sure to tell staff and legislators that you live in the district (and if you have met with them before, that you appreciated their time.)

1. Introduce yourself -- as a constituent. Thank the legislator for taking the time to meet with you. Identify your organization if you are working with a nonprofit or coalition. Tell a little about your mission and people served.
2. State your purpose. Be clear about what legislation you are supporting or opposing.
3. Mention it by number and topic. Focus on one topic per meeting. Let the legislator know your position and why you are asking her/him to vote for that position.
4. Let the legislator and her/his staff members know that you and your organization have information and expertise. Let them know you can be a resource to them.
5. Give them a chance to talk about their perspective on your issue.
6. Ask for their vote and try to get a commitment at the meeting.
7. Let them know you plan to stay in touch.

Keep it brief. Expect to have 5-10 minute conversations at this busy time in the legislative session. Follow-up will enhance this brief meeting, so write a follow-up letter as soon as possible.

### *Making phone calls*

1. State your name, address and indicate that you are a constituent.
2. Give the name and House or Senate File number of the legislation.
3. State clearly whether you oppose or support the legislation and how you want your legislator to vote. Include a statement on how the issue affects you personally.
4. You will usually be speaking with a secretary or aide who is checking pro or con and the call will last a very short time. Keep the phone call under five minutes unless the aide or legislator prolongs the conversation. Listen to the legislator's point of view.
5. Take down the name of the aide with whom you spoke so that you will have a contact person in case you need to contact the legislator again.
6. Thank them for their time, both on the telephone, and with a note of thanks for the conversation that includes a concise summary of your position.
7. Do not call too often and risk becoming a nuisance.
8. Do not lie or try to talk your way around questions to which you do not know the answers. Say that you will get back to the legislator or aide and then do so.

*Story continued on page 6*

## Tips and Tactics for Contacting Legislators

(continued from page 5)

### Writing Letters

1. Use the correct address and salutation, i.e., Dear Senator (name), or Dear Representative (name), or Dear Governor (name). While the legislature is in session send letters to Senate or House offices; otherwise, send them as requested in the Official Directory.
2. Describe the bill by popular name and by House or Senate file number.
3. Know if your legislator is one of the authors and acknowledge it.
4. Be brief and clear. Write about one issue per letter, and state the issue and how you want your elected official to vote in your first sentence. Letters should be no longer than one page, however longer letters may be appreciated if you have some new information on a subject.
5. Be specific. If possible, give an example of how the issue affects your district.
6. Be timely. Make sure your representative will have sufficient time to consider your request.
7. Know your facts. Inaccurate or misleading information will hurt your credibility.
8. Be polite in your requests for support or opposition. Never express anger, make demands, or threaten defeat at the next election. You will want to have future contact with the legislator.
9. Use your own words and stationary rather than form letters or postcards. In addition, write legibly or type--your letter could be discarded if it is not easy to read.
10. Be constructive. Explain an alternative or better solution to the problem and offer to be a resource on the issue.
11. Send a note of appreciation when your elected official supports your issue. When he or she does not supported your issue, explain why you think a different decisions should have been made. It might make a difference the next time.

### Information provided by:

**Minnesota Council of Nonprofits**  
2314 University Ave. West, Suite 20  
St. Paul, MN 55104

**Phone: 651-642-1904**

**Fax: 651-646-1517**

**Email: [info@mncn.org](mailto:info@mncn.org)**

**Web: [www.mncn.org](http://www.mncn.org)**

The Minnesota Council of Nonprofits web page has a lot of information about what you can do to advocate for the state's nonprofits in this time of extreme budget cuts, including **Nonprofits' Action Day at the Capitol** - a day for nonprofits to make their collective voice heard! **Wednesday, February 20th, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m., State Capitol Rotunda.**

Last year's Nonprofit Action Day was an important milestone in helping STOP a proposal to impose a new tax on nonprofits. Make plans now to join us for this important event during the 2002 Legislative Session! This event is designed for nonprofits to come together and speak with a strong and unified voice about the importance of our work and accomplishments. Plan to bring key stakeholders in your organization: board, funders, people who benefit from your programs, volunteers, staff and other fans! This event is free, but please register by going to <http://www.mncn.org/policypage.htm#action>.



## Meet the MCBW staff:

### **Karmit Bulman— Executive Director:**

Karmit has been working on behalf of battered women and children since 1984. She has worked as a domestic violence attorney for legal services in Maine, founded and directed a self-help family law program for low-income women, and was the Managing Attorney/Director of the Minnesota Legal Services Coalition.

### **Delia Ruiz— Financial and Administrative Coordinator**

Delia comes to MCBW with 25 years of experience in financial management and human resources. Delia worked most recently at Casa De Esperanza and is very dedicated to ending violence against women. She has been working diligently to set up new financial and administrative systems at MCBW.

### **Sandy Davidson— Rural Grant Supervisor**

After an extensive hiring process, Sandy was selected from a pool of several candidates to return to MCBW as the Rural Grant Supervisor. Sandy will also spend a small percentage of her time on youth and children's work. She has nearly ten years of previous domestic violence, youth and children's advocacy, and supervisory experience.

### **Lonna Stevens— Program Coordinator**

Lonna comes from the Alaska Coalition Against Domestic Violence and has done extensive training and task force coordination, particularly in rural areas. She is the staff person in charge of coordinating programming for women of color, older battered women, LGBT, and general advocacy.

### **Danielle Kluz— Communication Coordinator**

Danielle has years of experience as a writer, editor, and web designer, and is very committed to ending violence against women. Danielle coordinates program visits, works on newsletters and other publications, information sharing, and is our web designer and technology guru.

As part of the federally-funded *Rural Violence Against Women Child Victimization Enforcement Grant*, the four Community Specialists listed below will continue to organize, facilitate, and guide collaborative teams as they continue the process of developing protocols to enhance services for women when battering and child abuse co-exist. They will continue to provide technical assistance upon re-

quest from demonstration projects and to provide input for the cross-training curriculum being developed through this project. The Specialists each work in four regions of the state and their work includes the involvement of 22 MCBW rural battered women's programs and 8 reservation programs.

### **Dorian Eder— Community Specialist, SW Region (Kandiyohi, Nobles, Redwood, Lyon, Yellow Medicine counties, and the Upper and Lower Sioux reservations)**

Dori has been working in the battered women's movement for 5 years. She has advocated for battered women and their children in shelter, hospital, and court system settings while providing education and training in schools, among civic groups, and for other helping professions.

### **Kathy Hesch— Community Specialist, SE Region (Fillmore, Goodhue, Houston, Steele, Winona counties and the Prairie Island Reservation)**

Kathy founded and operated a Montessori school in St. Cloud and has worked as a consultant who coaches individuals to promote systems change in the workplace. Kathy has been active in political organizing with a particular passion for peace and justice issues as well as the safety needs of battered women and their children.

### **Beth Olsen— Community Specialist, NE Region (Aitkin, Cook, Lake, Mille Lacs, and Northern St. Louis counties and Bois Forte, Grand Portage and Mille Lacs reservations)**

Prior to her role as Community Specialist, Beth worked at North Shore Horizons in Two Harbors. She provided extensive advocacy and community education on behalf of battered women. Her interest in ageism as it relates to battering provides a unique perspective to her work.

### **Janell Hunt—Community Specialist, NW Region (Beltrami, Cass, Clearwater, Mahnomon, and Becker counties, Red Lake, Leech Lake and White Earth reservations).**

Janell is our newest Community Specialist and we welcome her to MCBW. Most recently, Janell has worked on the Red Lake Reservation for the STEP (Success Through Employment Program). She is well aware of the strong need for effective interventions when battering and child abuse overlap and will be a wonderful asset to this project.

## Gender Think Tank Meets to Make Strategic Decisions Regarding Male Victim Issue

*Karmit Bulman, Executive Director*

The Gender Think Tank was formed prior to November 2001 to begin the development of a position statement about gender issues, funding, and male victims. Most recently, a group of representatives from many different programs that serve battered women have been meeting since November, 2001 to strategize and act on issues relative to male victims.

The male victim issue has surfaced more visibly since recent legislative mandates regarding male victims. The first mandate was for the Minnesota Center for Crime Victim Services (MCCVS) Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Director to “study issues involving domestic violence and sexual assault, as they pertain to both men and women, and present findings and recommendations resulting from these studies to all branches of government.” The second mandate was for the legislatively created Interagency Task Force on Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault (IATF) to “study issues related to gender and domestic violence and to assess the needs of male victims of domestic violence including false arrest accusations.”

The Gender Think Tank has invited MCCVS to work collaboratively to interpret the considerable existing research about issues of gender and domestic violence. MCCVS has revised their reporting forms and has sent out surveys asking battered women’s programs to report on the number of males served. The Gender Think Tank would like to work with MCCVS to put the numbers obtained into context. In addition to numbers, the Gender Think Tank stresses the need to understand who the men are that contact programs and what their needs are. The Gender Think Tank would like information about whether the men seeking assistance are, in fact, perpetrators. Do they have outstanding orders for protection against them? Are they defendants in abuse related criminal proceedings? Are they actually calling for help for someone other than themselves? The Gender Think Tank would like to ascertain how many of the people identified as male victims identify as being in a male/male or transgender relationship.

The Gender Think Tank has stressed the importance of recognizing that power and control remain at the heart of domestic violence. Domestic violence is a gender-specific problem. Women who are battered are victims of a pattern of power and control

tactics that are in addition to the actual physical violence. While there may be instances in which women use violence, there is no dispute that men commit more severe abuse, their violence results in greater injury (and death) and that women are more embedded in violent relationships and need more services to leave such relationships. If women use violence, many do so in self-defense or in response to prior abuse. It is rare for a woman in a heterosexual relationship to use violence as a power and control tactic, which is a systematic pattern of violent, controlling, coercive behaviors to punish, abuse, and ultimately control the thoughts, beliefs, and actions of the victim. There is a strong need for recognition of these power and control dynamics and how they relate to gender differences.

The Gender Think Tank is a strong and active group. We invite greater participation from battered women’s advocates and others who serve battered women.

**For information on attending the next Gender Think Tank meeting, please call MCBW at 651-646-6177.**



## Forging a Strategic Plan at the MCBW Staff/Board Retreat

*Danielle Kluz, Communications Coordinator*

On January 10, 2002, MCBW board and staff members met to discuss the future of the organization. Over the course of the day, we talked about the core purpose and values of MCBW, the needs and wants of our customer base, results MCBW wants to achieve for its customers, strengths on which to capitalize, and priority goals for the next two years.

One of the most significant core purposes of the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women was determined to be developing the strong collective political power of our member organizations, including coordinating statewide efforts and developing strong community organizers. Other important core purposes we decided on were equipping programs with forums for grappling with the root causes of violence against women: discussions, debates, education, recommendation, and solutions, and serving as a statewide clearinghouse of information and resources.

The values we believe in at MCBW are the autonomy and liberation of women, the belief in individual dignity, self-determination and transformation. We value a feminist analysis of violence against women, promoting social change, and justice related to all forms of oppression. We are committed to including and recognizing diverse perspectives and experiences, and to a grassroots approach that involves the voices and perspectives of all battered women in decision-making, leadership, and direction of MCBW. Finally, we are determined to question, evaluate, and redesign our work.

Since MCBW needs to be responsive to its customer base, the member programs throughout Minnesota, we talked about what our customers need from us and results we want to achieve for our members. Some of the most important results discussed were collective political power, to have our members grounded in philosophy, to have our members able to do strong community organizing, and to provide more resources for members.

We got down to concrete planning after discussing all these ideas and goals and began strategically planning for the next two years.

One of MCBW's main priority goals for the near future is to develop a strong legislative presence where we can mobilize the state around domestic violence issues and help people become politically

active. Through legislative work, we need to preserve and increase funding for battered women's programs and make sure laws are written and/or changed to protect women and children in Minnesota.

A second immediate goal is to put on a great MCBW Statewide Conference in November of 2002. We want this conference to provide educational and networking opportunities for battered women's advocates, to have national speakers, to have high attendance from our member programs, to build for the future from this conference, and to have the conference be low-cost or offer scholarships so that money is not a major consideration when our member programs plan for attending the conference.

Another important and immediate goal is the continue outreach to communities of color and other underserved populations by creating forums to support, discuss, and problem solve relevant issues.

The other immediate goal discussed was promoting the philosophy of the battered women's movement and a feminist analysis of social change at every opportunity through developing position statements, mentoring new advocates, and identifying other relevant groups that are sensitive to women's issues that we can partner with to achieve our mission.

There were many things to discuss at the MCBW Board-Staff Retreat, but we ended the day feeling that our purpose and goals had been clarified and we're ready to take on the challenging work of end-



*(L-R) MCBW Board Vice-Chair Sharonna Lee, Board Member Nita Quinn, Executive Director Karmit Bulman, Board Chair Tamara Buffalo and Board Member Grace Vigilante at the Board-Staff Retreat Dinner.*

## The Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay, Transgender and Allies Network

*Lonna Stevens, Program Coordinator*

The topic of our first meeting/training with Mary Allen of the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence was lesbian/transgender violence. With her knowledge and expertise she clearly outlined the barriers lesbian/transgender people face when disclosing domestic violence. She maintained that too often we, as advocates, are unfamiliar with the similarities of lesbian/transgender domestic violence to heterosexual battering, with the same power and control tactics. She spoke about the internalized homophobia many people in our communities still have and disclosed and discussed many of the fears that still exist. Barriers to direct services for LGBT victims are:

- Law enforcement: When an officer is on the scene of a domestic dispute with two female partners it is often minimized and may result in law enforcement not being able to determine the "primary aggressor."
- Court system: Minimizing or not acknowledging the lethality involved and difficulty obtaining an Order for Protection if both partners are the same sex.
- Shelters: Advocates may not understand the dynamics of abuse. Services often are not adequate, resulting in re-victimization or not being able to give "appropriate referrals."
- Parenting/custody: Custody and visitation issues where homophobia may be disguised as "endangerment" or "bad parenting" when dealing with same sex couples.
- People of color: With the added barrier of racism, people of color may not want to disclose abuse because of homophobia within the greater society and homophobia within their own culture.

- Older victims: Ageism within the LGBT communities and homophobia within the older community may be barriers to services and inhibit disclosure of abuse.

These are only the tip of the iceberg when an LGBT victim is deciding whether or not to disclose domestic violence. One of the tactics in addition to the power and control is *outing*: a primary aggressor may threaten to "out" the victim to family, to the workplace, or within a small rural community. In addition, the abuser may have status within the community, or may be very vocal in the LGBT community, or have the respect and community support the victim does not.

It is important to remember the terror a victim goes through when disclosing domestic violence and to remember our role as advocates whether victims are LGBT or a heterosexual. It is important to look at our roles as shelters and programs in communities. Are we creating "queer positive" space in our shelters? Are we committed to challenging homophobia in our community?

The LGBT Network is also a working group to complete the *Beyond the Hetero Model-A Guide for Advocates on Lesbian, Bisexual, Transpeople and Gay Domestic Violence* manual. This working group will continue until September 2002 when the manual will be sent to print. We plan to have the manual available at the MCBW Statewide Conference in November 2002. If you would like to be involved with the working group please contact me. We will also be doing a one-day LGBT training May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2002. If you would like to present, please contact Lonna at 651-646-6177 or [lstevens@mcbw.org](mailto:lstevens@mcbw.org).

## MCBW Web Site Redesigned to Reflect Our New Changes

It's becoming more and more necessary for battered women's programs to have a presence on the World Wide Web. The web is becoming an increasingly used resource for women looking for advocacy on abuse and battering issues.

With that in mind, MCBW has redesigned and changed our web site to reflect the changes in our organization itself. The new site offers the same content as before but organized in an easy-to-use format and features the prints of artist Sarah Davitt. In addition, in the near future we will be adding expanded content such as general domestic violence information, a larger collection of links and resources, Friday Mailing information, an online form for purchasing materials and other items from our store, and an expanded section for the Clothesline Project.

The new MCBW web site is now live and ready for action. Check it out at [www.mcbw.org](http://www.mcbw.org).

## The Rural Violence Against Women Child Victimization Enforcement Project

### Collaborating for Woman and Child Safety: A Statewide Project to Develop and Enhance the Capacity of Rural and Tribal Programs

*Sandy Davidson, Rural Grant Supervisor*

**National studies identify a strong overlap between battering and child abuse.** According to recent studies (Appel & Holden, 1998, Edleson, 1999), up to 60% of men who batter also abuse their children. Wright and Issac estimate that 30% to 59% of the mothers of abused children are battered women. (1997).

When battered women first started organizing over 25 years ago, they were met with much resistance: disbelief by the general public, backlash, and resistance by state and federal government to fund programming to better protect women living with violence. With perseverance, political savvy and grassroots organizing, battered women all over the nation have raised awareness to this grave social problem.

With heightened awareness and on-going research, we now know that an estimated 33 million American children witness the battering of their mothers every day. We know too that children are abused and even murdered. In Minnesota alone, we know this, because the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women (MCBW) has been monitoring the murder of women and children since 1988 via the Femicide Report (see page 15 for more details on the Femicide Report or go to our web site at [www.mcbw.org](http://www.mcbw.org) to see all of our compiled reports).

In spite of increased awareness, public support, and all our efforts to end violence against women and children, it seems like we're never doing enough. Women and children continue to be brutalized, even murdered, every day. So we continue. We continue to strategically and actively seek ways to better protect battered women and their children: locally, statewide, and nationally.

One of the most recent endeavors MCBW has undertaken involves a collaborative with three state agencies: the Department of Human Services (Child Protection), the Department of Children, Families and Learning (Abused Children's Programs), and the Minnesota Center for Crime Victim Services (STOP grant administrators), the Minnesota Center

Against Violence and Abuse (MINCAVA), U of M School of Social Work, and MCBW. This project, with these collaborative agencies have a common vision: a) to provide **safety** to both adult and child victims in the family, b) to address the need for increased cross-communication, multidisciplinary training, and program-to-program collaboration to achieve goals of **safety and accountability**.

The Minnesota Collaborative is a statewide initiative to find ways for rural and tribal communities to build new collaborative practices to keep battered adults and their children safe and stable. Funding is made available through the Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Violence Against Women's office, and has three major components:

#### 1) **The development of regional collaborative teams in four quadrants of the state.**

- With the guidance of Community Specialists, 22 County teams have organized to develop, implement and evaluate rural county and tribal "best practice" protocols for responding to families where both women and children are victims of violence.
- Teams consist of, at a minimum, decision makers from battered women's programs, abused children's programs, and county child protection agencies.
- Each county team is assessing for current problems faced by each agency in responding to the dual issues involving battered women and abused children. They have received cross-training, have investigated model protocols/ interventions that have been developed in other parts of the country; and continue to develop, implement and evaluate new local interagency practices, policies and protocols to effectively address these problems.

#### 2) **Funding for demonstration projects.**

- Competitive funding has been awarded to collaborators wishing to further develop pro-

*Story continued on page 12*

## Collaborating for Woman and Child Safety

(continued from page 11)

gramming in their counties to address the dual issues of battering and child abuse if, in addition to seeking more effective ways to respond to battered women and abused children, these counties are seeking to develop programming that can be replicated in other parts of the state.

### 3) **Cross-training for participants of county/tribal teams and the development of a cross-training curriculum.**

- Participants have 12 regional, specialized cross-trainings utilizing a multi-disciplinary, team-based curriculum developed specifically for this project.
- The Minnesota Center Against Violence and Abuse (MINCAVA) has gathered feedback from county team participants, Community Specialists, and consultants/experts in the field. The formalized cross-training curriculum will be completed by the end of this grant cycle.

### ***What does this project mean for battered women, abused children, child witnesses, and the community?***

- Too often, children have been placed in foster care or otherwise removed from all that's loving, comforting and familiar to them, either temporarily or permanently, when their family is in crisis as a result of battering. Participants understand the importance of all systems working together with a common vision to: 1) hold the perpetrator of violence accountable, and 2) develop best practices that provide the best possible support, services, and safety options for a battered woman in order to minimize further harm to herself and to her children. For individuals and community, the development of best practice protocols for responding to these dual issues promises greater safety, greater stability and ultimately less trauma, presently and in the future, for children living in violent homes.
- There are current and emerging model initiatives throughout the nation for responding to the dual issues of domestic violence and child maltreatment. These initiatives have a lot of support and advocates are in a position to lend their expertise.
- Child Protective Services all over the country are in a position to re-evaluate current practices. Too often Child Protective Services is

mandated by statute or tied to obsolete forms and practices that may actually cause more harm to victims of battering and to their children. While changes may be slow, it's encouraging to know that CPS is assessing alternative ways of dealing with adult victims, seeking ways to reduce the number of substantiations based on failure to protect, and seeking alternative ways to respond to battered women and their children. Ultimately, every community will benefit when perpetrators of violence are held accountable and positive support and resources are provided to victims.

- Collaboration and cross-training can promote the development of screening tools used to determine if domestic violence is a factor. The identification of domestic violence, when it is present, is an important step in effectively addressing the safety of children through the recognition that *one of the best ways to protect children is to protect their mothers.*
- The issues of safety for battered women and their children are too critical to deal with as separate agencies. Careful and well thought-out development and implementation of protocols could ensure that more batterers are held accountable for their violence, more victims and their children are provided safety, and a greater deterrence is created.

As advocates for children, we've learned that it's *extremely* difficult to protect children in our society. When up to 60% of the men who batter their partners also abuse their children, we *have* to keep doing more. As long as women and children continue to be abused—even murdered, as a society, we cannot ignore the issue. We can no longer place the onus of protecting her children on a battered woman when she, herself, is in danger. If we're serious about protecting children then we've got to get even more serious about protecting battered women. When they are safe, our children will be safe.



## Program Update: Pearl Battered Women's Resource Center

*Delrita Rudnitski, Executive Director of Pearl Battered Women's Resource Center*

Pearl Battered Women's Resource Center in Milaca, Minnesota has recently implemented the DAIN (Domestic Abuse Intervention Network) computer program. Andrea Smith, Legal Advocate for Pearl BWRC, has been using the program to log data on criminal cases as well as gather information for statistical purposes. Chuck Derry from the Gender Violence Institute will be stopping by at the end of January to complete further training on the DAIN program in order to fully utilize its potential for our agency.

Since October 2001, Pearl BWRC has been busy assisting women with Alternative Employment Plans. The new statute change has helped to alleviate the welfare reform initiatives that pressure women to obtain full-time employment and fail to recognize the need for safety first. Central Minnesota Legal Services and St. Cloud Area Legal Services have been assisting Pearl BWRC advocates with training and questions that arise when working with Alternative Employment Plans.

Our program has also expanded to better serve the needs of youth and children in the Mille Lacs County area. In August 2001, Pearl BWRC received a Bremer Grant to enhance the youth and children's advocacy work done at Pearl BWRC. Dezra Rittmann (formerly Berg) is the Youth and Child Services Coordinator, and she has been working hard in her new role. She attends Child Protection Team Meetings, is a member of the Family Information Network and the Chemical Health and Violence Prevention Team, and works diligently to advocate on behalf of children and their mothers in the court system. We also are participating in the Rural Violence Against Women/Child Victimization Collabo-

ration Project, and Dezra attended her first training under that grant in Duluth during the month of December, 2001. It was great.

Additionally, we are busy and excited about expanding our sexual violence prevention services during the New Year as we were the recipients of two new grants: the VAWA SMART Grant and the Minnesota Department of Health Sexual Violence Prevention Grant. Due to the additional grants, we will add one more employee to Pearl BWRC on February 1, 2002. So now we are 6!!

We have also updated our technology by networking our computers, leasing a new copy machine, and getting high speed internet services (Hurray!).

PLEASE NOTE: Our new email address is: [pearl@milaca.net](mailto:pearl@milaca.net).

We changed telephone service providers too, and consequently, our telephone prefix has changed from 983 to 982 which is very important to know if you are trying to fax something to us.

To contact the Pearl Battered Women's Resource Center:

### **Pearl Battered Women's Resource Center**

P.O. Box 42

Milaca, MN 56353

Voice: (320) 982-2901

Fax: (320) 982-2814

Email: [pearl@milaca.net](mailto:pearl@milaca.net)

## Rivers of Hope Welcomes New Executive Director

Rivers of Hope, an MCBW member program in Elk River and Buffalo, is pleased to announce a new Executive Director. She is Andrea Miles, MSW, MBA. Andrea was Executive Director of New Beginnings in St. Cloud, and over the years has worked with victims of domestic abuse in a variety of settings including addiction treatment.

In other news, Rivers of Hope's annual fundraiser, the Fall Ball, was again a success. We thank all the people who helped to make the event a smashing success. We couldn't do it without you!

## The Minnesota Collaborative Another Perspective: Alternative Response

*Kathy Hesch, Community Specialist, Southeast Region*

As the Southeast Community Specialist working on the Woman and Child Safety Project, our primary task is to organize regional collaborative teams to develop best practice protocols when battering and child abuse co-exist. However, I have been privileged to watch the beginning of something I believe could be very beneficial to families involved with the child protection system.

Recently, at a county child protection team meeting, a worker spoke who had been an investigator for the county and now does Alternative Response full-time. He said that instead of having his whole job revolve around whether a reported incident happened or not, he can now get to know the family and help them decide what is needed in their best interest. One client invited him to stop for coffee any time, and that has never before happened to him on the job.

Around the state, there is optimism that given training for workers, there will be a much more positive outcome for individual families. Some county workers feel that the climate is ripe for their peers, with training, to make the shift away from the traditional "investigation," and towards maxi-

mizing assets the family already has working for them. In cases where domestic violence is known to exist, obviously there must be specific procedures to protect the mother and children, and keep the responsibility for change primarily with the perpetrator. We will need to keep having input into what that will look like in practice, as Alternative Response grows.

Also significant is the good work of Dave Thompson and Carole Johnson in coordinating a diverse workgroup to develop *Guidelines for Responding to the Co-occurrence of Child Maltreatment and Domestic Violence through the Department of Human Services*. As a result of collaborative efforts over the past two years, there are strong relationships being established at the state and local level between child protection and domestic violence workers, and others. Acceptance of the above-mentioned document is being furthered by these relationships, and it is exceptional to have these entities not only working together, but feeling like this document was an accomplishment with input from many. Take a look at it sometime if you can, as it is very encouraging to read. For information on this document, go to [www.dhs.state.mn.us](http://www.dhs.state.mn.us).

## Collaboration: A Success Story

*Carolyn Devine, Houston County Women's Resources*

Building relationships has been absolutely critical as we've worked to develop our collaborative team in Houston County. There were times when CPS allowed us to assist, with a release of information, in putting together a reunification plan for battered women involved in the child protection system.

CPS has turned to our Visitation Program to supervise visits between women and her children. It's taken some time and we haven't always had such a positive working relationship but there are particular workers who began to use the Visitation Program with several other cases where supervised visits were appropriate. We, of course, bent over backwards to be helpful and accommodating and the relationship between our two agencies began to flourish. Over time, there were a few staff changes - which were helpful - including the hiring at CPS of my old college friend. What a lucky break! From that day forward, we were able to really work together, with these two CPS workers in particular. Those positive relationships began to sort of "rub off" with Human Services in general...and the rest, as they say, is history! We now have a very good working relationship with CPS. We all still continue to work hard at maintaining a positive and respectful attitude toward each other and the jobs we need to do. It's been a great experience and I'm happy to have been involved in the process...seeing it unfold and being a part of it. At our 2001 Annual Meeting we awarded that first worker I mentioned with the "Exceptional Professional Service" Award.

## From the MCBW Lobbyists

*Peg Larsen, Capital Gains*

Each year has a different feel to it. This current legislative session is no exception. The mood is unusually political and emotional. Top priorities will be funding cuts, bonding, and redistricting— not necessarily in that order.

For those reasons, we need to remain focused and on target with our message, and be ready to contact our legislators at a moment's notice.

The number one priority at the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women will be dealing with funding. John Kaul and I, your lobbyists, will be working on two main areas: preservation of current funding for all members of the coalition and diminishing the cuts in further years.

We will also be working on a policy form that will include improvements in language passed in past

legislative sessions. These areas include victim access to full police reports, make parallel the list of crimes that affect parenting time, changes in violation of Orders for Protection: Probable Cause to Arrest, the need to check for OFPs while in detention, ex parte orders becoming valid upon signature of a referee, and some changes in the Burkstrand case.

We will be looking to the MCBW member organizations for immediate responses as well as grassroots work. So please be prepared to contact your legislators.

The word is out that this legislative session will last ten to twelve weeks.

***You can contact our lobbyists via email:  
Peg Larsen at [peglarsen@yahoo.com](mailto:peglarsen@yahoo.com)  
and John Kaul at [jjkaul@aol.com](mailto:jjkaul@aol.com).***

## MCBW Makes News With Announcement of the 2001 Femicide Report

On January 23, 2002, the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women held a press conference at the State Capitol to announce the 2001 Femicide Report and to decry state funding cuts of domestic violence programs.

In 2001, 32 women and 10 children were killed in Minnesota. "This year's Femicide Report, combined with past years, clearly shows that the issue of domestic violence is real and the consequences are staggering," MCBW Executive Director Karmit Bulman told reporters at the press conference.

She also expressed dismay at significant funding cuts MCBW (and other domestic and sexual violence programs in the state) faces from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety. "Programs like ours that battle terror at the home front are critical to women around the state. While our original goal for 2002 was to provide services to all 87 counties in the state, we will be lucky to keep what we currently have in place, and the women and children of Minnesota deserve better than that."

Deborah Galuk, the sister of Darcy Galuk, one of the victims in the 2001 Femicide Report, spoke of her sister's tragic murder at the hands of her former

partner. She expressed a need for greater funding for battered women so that tragedies like Darcy's would never happen again in Minnesota.

Two-thirds of MCBW's funding from the Minnesota Center for Crime Victims Services has been cut for 2002 and 2003. This will have a direct impact on the direct services and programming MCBW offers to its statewide member programs. "These proposed cuts will critically affect women and children throughout the state," Bulman said at the press conference. "MCBW is the hub of the wheel that directly serves battered women and provides assistance to programs throughout the state allowing them to work more efficiently and cost effectively. It makes absolutely no sense to cut the central force driving this assistance to help keep women and children safe and secure."

More than 40 T-shirts representing the women and children killed in 2001 as a result of domestic violence hung behind the podium at the press conference. These T-shirts, specially decorated to commemorate the victims, are known as the Clothesline Project. MCBW's Clothesline Project travels the state to raise public awareness of the lethality of domestic violence.

## The MCBW Women of Color and Native American Women Network

*Lonna Stevens, Program Coordinator*

The MCBW Women of Color and Native American Network held our first meeting November 30, 2001 at MCBW. We discussed the following training topics for upcoming meetings: immigrant women and their children, prostitution, grassroots organizing, outreach to women of color in rural areas, culture and domestic violence, child protection, racism, tokenism, and affordable housing. The action item discussed was reaching women of color throughout the state. A database and contact information will be developed and if legislative action is needed, each member agreed to contact at least five women of color.

The Women of Color and Native American Women Network meeting for January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2002 was hosted by Grace Vigilante at Korean Family Community Advocacy Program. We shared various cultural foods brought by many nations of women. We shared stories of who we are and what we have seen in our years of wisdom and enlightenment.

Vendita Carter and Kathleen Mitchell of Breaking Free trained on prostitution as a form of domestic violence and did an informative and moving presentation. The following are statistics shared by Breaking Free:

- The average entry age of prostitution is 14 and 11 for pornography
- 98% of the women are chemically dependent
- 83% have been victims of assault with a weapon
- 66% have been victims of physical and sexual assault
- 57% of women attempt suicide
- 50% of prostitutes are African American

As advocates we need to be mindful of the women we serve; Vednita suggested a screening question: Have you ever been involved in prostitution?

Once that information is disclosed we need to be careful to not re-victimize the women by scrutinizing her every move; "She went out shopping again," or not treating her like the other women in the shelter. Prostitution *is* a form of domestic violence. All of the same power and control tactics are used with

women who are prostituted. Other forms of prostitution are: escort services, brothels, stripping, or "survival sex" to pay rent, or buy new clothing, drugs or being prostituted by an intimate partner to friends or strangers.

There are only 4 programs in the nation that provide direct services to prostituted women. So it is important that we as advocates provide the prostituted women who come through our doors with the same services as any other woman. Breaking Free is available for presentations for your program. Please call Breaking Free at 651-645-6557 for more information.

The action items were:

- Legislative organizing and how to talk to your legislator.
- Action Day to End Violence Against Women Day and rallying women of color throughout the state.
- Statewide conference in Brainerd and training by women of color and representing women of color on the state level.

### Upcoming meetings:

- February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2002 in Duluth with Tina Olson of Mending the Sacred Hoop hosting the meeting from 12-3 pm.
- March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2002 with Joleen Jones of African American Family Services Hosting the meeting from 12-3 pm.
- April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2002 in Grand Rapids with Faye Torvinen of Advocates of Family Peace hosting the meeting from 12-3 pm.

If your program would like to host a meeting in your region or you are interested in getting involved with the MCBW Women of Color and Native American Women Network, please contact Lonna Stevens at 651-646-6177 or email her at [lstevens@mcbw.org](mailto:lstevens@mcbw.org)

## Are You an MCBW Member? Join Us In Ending Violence Against Women and Children!

If you, or your organization, haven't already become a member of MCBW, we urge you to do so now. In this era of drastic funding cuts of domestic violence programs in Minnesota and rising rates of abuse against women and children, now is the time to act in support of the programs and services MCBW provides to end domestic violence.

### **There are three different kinds of membership available:**

**Voting member organizations:** This membership is open to battered women's programs in the state of Minnesota which are incorporated as a non-profit organization designed primarily to serve battered women and their children and which provide crisis intervention, advocacy, protective housing, referrals, peer support, and/or children's services. Programs that meet the above criteria but are a sub-group of a larger non-profit corporation which is not incorporated for such purposes may become voting members as long as the above criteria is met.

**Supportive non-voting organizations:** Organizations that pay dues and support and actively promote the mission statement of MCBW may join as supportive non-voting members.

**Supportive non-voting individuals:** Individuals who pay dues and support and actively promote the mission statement of MCBW may join as supportive non-voting individuals.

### **Our members allow MCBW to do the following things:**

- Provide technical assistance to our statewide member programs.
- Provide bi-monthly Friday Mailings to membership.
- Allow the Rural Violence Against Women Child Victimization Enforcement Project to advocate for the children of battered women in rural Minnesota.
- Provide trainings on domestic violence topics around the state of Minnesota.
- Provide public policy and legislative advocacy to end domestic violence.
- Produce this newsletter and our web site.
- Coordinate the annual MCBW Statewide Conference, which provides educational and networking opportunities for domestic violence advocates throughout the state.
- Serve as an informational clearinghouse— locally, statewide and nationally .
- Maintain and display the Clothesline Project throughout the state to raise public awareness of domestic violence.
- Maintain and release the annual Femicide Report.
- Update and develop new materials.
- Provide staff support to statewide networks such as the Women of Color and Native American Women Network, the Lesbian, Gay, Transgender and Bisexual Network, and the Minnesota Network of Abuse in Later Life.
- Provide leadership for grassroots efforts to end violence against women and children.

Your new or continuing membership will allow us to continue this good work on the behalf of battered women and children.

**For a membership application form, please go to our website at [www.mcbw.org](http://www.mcbw.org) or call Danielle at 651-646-6177.**

## Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women

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St. Paul, MN 55104

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Crisis Line: (651) 646-0994  
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Web: <http://www.mcbw.org>



I want to help stop violence against women by supporting the mission of MCBW. Enclosed is my tax-deductible contribution.

\$25     \$50     \$100     \$250     \$500     Other

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

As an MCBW contributor, I would like to receive updates about MCBW and domestic violence via email.

Yes     No

Please return the completed form with contribution to the address above. We thank you for your generous support of MCBW.