President’s Report

Tiffany Carr, President/CEO

Recognizing Teen Dating Violence Prevention Week.

On February 3rd, I joined Attorney General Bill McCollum, Representative Kurt Kelly and Tony and Kim Barwick at Leon High School for a press conference to announce Teen Dating Violence Prevention Week. Tony and Kim Barwick are the parents of Tiffany Barwick, a 19 year old girl killed by her ex boyfriend. The unnecessary death of Tiffany Barwick propelled the Florida Legislature to tighten up gaps in Florida Statute 784 in an effort to increase protections for victims of dating violence.

We know that according to recent statistics, it is extremely likely that someone you know has experienced violence in a dating relationship. Dating violence can take many forms, including psychological and emotional abuse, physical abuse, and sexual abuse. It can occur in the context of casual dating or serious long-term relationships.

A particular segment of dating violence that has recently been on the rise is violence within teen relationships. Both teenage boys and teenage girls report being victims of physical violence in relationships. Typically, however, teenage boys and teenage girls use physical force for different reasons and with different results. While both tend to report acting violently because they were angry, teenage boys are much more likely to use force in order to control their girlfriends, while girls more often act violently in self-defense.

Teenage girls are reported to suffer more from relationship violence, emotionally and physically. They are much more likely to have serious injuries and to develop feelings of fear, humility, and worthlessness. In contrast, male victims seldom seem to fear violence by their dates or girlfriends, often saying that the attacks did not hurt and that they found the violence amusing.

One recent national survey found that one in eleven high-school students said they had been hit, slapped, or physically hurt on purpose by their boyfriend or girlfriend in the past year. One in eleven students also reported that they had been forced to have sexual intercourse when they did not want to. Far greater numbers of teens (as high as 96%) report emotional and psychological abuse in their dating relationships. The increase in access and usage of technology by teens has presented new forms of abuse such as tech stalking, geo-fencing, and cyber-bullying. With increased and improved communication technologies, have come increased opportunities to threaten, stalk and harass victims.

Please join FCADV as we convene at “The Time is Now! Taking Action Together to Create a Violence-free Future Statewide Teen Dating Violence Prevention Summit” on April 17, 2009. Participants will gather at the Disney Coronado Springs Resort in Lake Buena Vista, FL to generate ideas on ways to prevent teen dating violence in our communities. This event will provide the unique opportunity for youth leaders to meet with adults so they can partner together to establish a plan of action to create a violence free future. To learn more please visit our website at http://www.fcadv.org/projects-summit.php

I have no doubt that if we as a community come together we can work hard to ensure our teens are in healthy, loving relationships.

Chair’s Message
Laurel Lynch, FCADV Board Chair and Executive Director, HOPE Family Services, Bradenton, Florida

Florida’s Dating Violence Prevention Efforts On The Cutting Edge

On January 4th 2009, the NY Times ran a feature story on dating violence titled *Domestic Violence Turns To Dating* (author Elizabeth Olsen). The article speaks to the tragic death of three young women -- an Indianapolis woman killed in 2007 who was only 17 when she began dating her batterer; a Texas teen stabbed in the hallway of her Austin high school, and a Rhode Island teen, whose murder was the impetus for Rhode Island’s requirement that school districts teach students in grades 7 through 12 about dating violence. These senseless and tragic deaths have prompted schools and domestic violence programs from coast to coast to recognize the importance of teaching teens about behavior that is acceptable versus those actions deemed unacceptable. More importantly, it has come to the attention of mainstream media and John and Jane Q. Citizen that violence against women is far more common than they realized.

In Florida, many certified domestic violence centers have offered classes to youth for a long time. Teaching young women the warning signs of violence while reinforcing the unacceptable nature of this behavior to those who perpetrate violence, advocates stand ready to work toward prevention in an effort to stem the tide of tragic deaths before young women like those women cited by the New York Times article are murdered.

The DELTA Project, Domestic Violence Prevention Enhancement and Leadership through Alliances, began in the state of Florida, along with 13 other domestic violence state coalitions. In 2003, DELTA began as an initiative funded by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) with pilot programs in six communities in Florida of varying sizes and demographic makeup; Fort Walton Beach, St. Petersburg, West Palm Beach, Orlando, Gainesville, and Pasco County. The main goal of the inaugural DELTA Projects was to start Primary Prevention and help identify best practices in an effort to replicate successful programs in all 42 of Florida’s certified domestic violence centers.

The DELTA Project encompasses several core Primary Prevention principles, including avoiding first-time victimization or perpetration. In addition, DELTA principles include reducing risk factors, promoting protective factors, developing evidence-based programs, utilizing behavior and social change theories and evaluating successful programs through program outcome measurement to craft future initiatives.

Thanks to the forward thinking of Governor Crist, seed funding has been provided to every center to organize and begin steps necessary to coordinate prevention efforts. To date, the most widely adopted approach in Florida is the social ecological method which was introduced by the CDC and taught by the training professionals at FCADV. This model addresses the complexity of individuals, relationships, communities, and societal factors, and allows examination of the risks and protective factors in each of these multiple domains. The theory is, when developed appropriately over multiple stages, this approach results in change with a greater level of success than a single intervention.

Together, by taking one step after another, we will bring about social change. Continuing to move forward with Primary Prevention, and continuing to engage partners like the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence, and connecting with the expertise of the CDC, a paradigm shift in the current standard as a solution to domestic violence seems inevitable.

On-site Technical Assistance and Trainings for Florida Centers for Child & Youth Programs
Vanessa Adams, FCADV Child and Youth Intervention & Prevention Specialist

As the new Child and Youth Intervention & Prevention Specialist, I want to introduce an opportunity to take advantage of the on-site technical assistance and onsite trainings provided by FCADV.

FCADV offers a variety of onsite trainings for certified domestic violence centers regarding its youth. We offer *Effects of Domestic Violence on Children and Youth*, which presents current information on the unintended consequences of witnessing violence in the home; *Relationship Abuse in the Lives of Runaway and Homeless Youth*, provides advocates with intervention and prevention strategies as identified by service providers and teen representatives; and *Mandated Reporting: Distinguishing, Identifying, and Reporting Child Abuse*, a discussion of issues related to “What qualifies as child abuse?” and the appropriate time to report. A significant portion of the training will be devoted to your center’s unique experiences and will include DV center and DCF interventions.

FCADV also offers tools for program development in, *Building Your Agency’s Children and Youth Program*. In this training, FCADV will work with center leaders, staff and volunteers to develop a program based on the needs and resources of the center and local community.

These trainings are just a sample of all the new and innovative trainings that FCADV now offers. To learn more about these trainings, please visit [www.fcadv.org/training.php](http://www.fcadv.org/training.php) or call (850) 425-2749.
A Missing Piece of the Prevention Puzzle

Malika Saada Saar / Executive Director, Rebecca Project for Human Rights

August 6, 2008

Last month, the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy hosted a congressional briefing on the racial and ethnic disparities in teen pregnancy rates. The research revealed that while 19 percent of white girls will become pregnant during their teen years, 53 percent of Latina and 51 percent of African-American girls will do so.

These facts demonstrate the significant need to develop culturally competent community- and school-based projects to educate teens on the consequences of teenage pregnancy, to inform teens about how to prevent teen pregnancy, and to expand access to the Medicaid, and State Children’s Health Insurance Programs that girls need to manage their fertility and protect their reproductive health.

But there is even more that needs to be done. Teen pregnancy isn’t simply about girls and boys being promiscuous, or lacking access to sex education or contraception. Too often teen pregnancy is about girls losing agency over their bodies because of the unbearable injuries of being sexually violated.

Underneath the discourse about the educational strategies needed to prevent teen pregnancy lies a much harder and complex issue: Violence in girls’ lives leaves them at risk for teen pregnancy—especially for girls of color.

A significant correlation exists between childhood sexual abuse and teen pregnancy. An estimated 60 percent of teen girls’ first pregnancies are preceded by experiences of molestation, rape, or attempted rape. In one study, between 30 and 44 percent of teen mothers were victims of rape or attempted rape. Up to 20 percent of girls become pregnant as the direct result of rape.

The Harvard School of Public Health’s exhaustive research on the lives of girls demonstrates that girls who are victims of violence from dating partners are four to six times more likely than non-abused girls to become pregnant, and eight to nine times more likely to attempt suicide.

Other research findings compare sexually abused teen girls to pregnant teens who have not suffered sexual abuse. The sexually abused girls initiated intercourse a year earlier than their peers and engaged in a wide variety of high-risk behaviors, including substance abuse. The average age of first intercourse for abused girls is 13.8, in contrast to the national average of 16.2. Only 28 percent of the abused girls used birth control at first intercourse, compared to 74 percent of girls in the general population.

Sexual violence is especially pervasive in the lives of girls of color. An unfortunate, historical narrative oversexualizes black and brown girls. Even today this narrative renders their bodies more vulnerable to sexual exploitation and devaluation. Approximately 40 percent of black teen girls report coercive sexual contact by the time they turn 18. Native Americans are victims of rape or sexual assault at more than double the rate of other racial groups—and are more likely to be victimized by non-Native American perpetrators.

Sexual violence can play different roles in teen pregnancy. Many girls become pregnant because of coerced intercourse. Other abused teen girls become pregnant because girls subjected to sexual violence typically lose a sense of control over their bodies and often descend into a “disembodied self.” Unintended pregnancy can be the manifestation of sexually violated girls’ loss of connection to and agency over their physical selves.

Girls affected by sexual violence need support to reclaim their bodies and to make reproductive health decisions from a place of strength and health. Strength-based programs such as PACE Center for Girls in Florida and Girls Educational and Mentoring Services in New York seek to restore abused girls’ self-worth and alleviate the injuries of sexual violence.

The alarming rates of teenage pregnancy in the lives of girls broken by sexual violence—so many of whom are girls of color—require us to revisit the current discourse on teen pregnancy. We must recognize the role of violence in girls’ reproductive journeys, and emphasize the importance of effective, evidence-based, gender-specific programs and interventions to protect girls from abuse and to heal them if or when it occurs. That means any campaign to reduce teen pregnancy must also become a campaign to reduce the unacceptable levels of violence against girls and to give all girls the opportunity to realize their full personhood, equality, dignity, and worth.

Malika Saada Saar is the Executive Director of the Rebecca Project for Human Rights and a member of the Center for American Progress’s Women’s Health Leadership Network.

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The Lasting Impressions of Witnessing Domestic Violence on Youth

Jesse Dill, Legal Intern, Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Experts estimate up to 3 million women are physically abused by their relationship partners each year. Not only do the adult women from these relationships suffer but the children from these homes are also prevalent victims. The U.S. Department of Justice estimates that “more than half of female victims of intimate violence live in households with children under age twelve.” These children are forced to endure the trauma of witnessing or experiencing domestic violence while going through their own maturation. When a child lives in a home with domestic violence, the child may be affected directly by suffering from physical abuse or indirectly by the emotional damage the violence can cause. Studies suggest that in 50% of homes where the wife is physically abused, the children are also assaulted. Additionally, it has been estimated that 3.3 to 10 million children witness domestic violence each year.

While our society has long espoused its...
concerns for children and youth who are physically or sexually abused, beginning in the 1960s with the formulation of the term “child abuse,” our society has been slower to recognize that witnessing abuse is also harmful to children.

Adolescents go through a wide range of emotional and physical changes due to puberty. Combining the stress of a domestic violence situation with these pubescent changes presents a unique challenge to adolescents. The Centre for Children and Families in the Justice System demonstrate this concept by pointing out several key areas of development and how natural development may impact an adolescent’s reaction to domestic violence. Children who witness abuse are often listening to an abusive adult deride the other adult for not being “attractive,” or being “ugly.” When a child begins to equate their self worth with physical attractiveness, their self esteem may suffer due to the abuser’s degradation of the child’s mother or even of the child. In addition, with the physical changes brought on by puberty, a child may attempt to prevent the violence inflicted by an abuser on the child’s mother. The child views their increased size and independence as presenting an opportunity to impose their will with physical intimidation or aggression. These examples of developments and potential responses offer just a small sample of what an adolescent can experience while living in a home with domestic violence.

Although a staggering number of children are victims of domestic violence, not all children react to these situations similarly. Maura O’Keefe discusses the different feelings, defense mechanisms, and strategies children use to cope with growing up in a home with domestic violence. Children feeling shame do everything they can to keep the abuse a family secret. Children feeling fear and anxiety report a constant sense of “walking on eggshells.” Related to shame, children also try to limit the number of people who know about the violence due to fear of retaliation from the abuser should word spread about the abuser’s actions. Other responses include aggression, rage, depression, delinquency.

Two unique responses O’Keefe describes are forming an emotional alliance with the batterer and parentification. Forming an alliance with the batterer occurs when the child associates with the abuser and blames the victim for the occurring abuse. Incidents of abuse and verbal assaults on the victim manipulate the child’s beliefs. The child witnesses the abuser constantly blaming the victim and begins to feel the victim is truly at fault. The child feels his or her mother has provoked the physical and emotional abuse inflicted by his or her father. Additionally, the child further develops these beliefs by seeing the abuser have his way and associates the abuser’s actions as a means to power. Later when the child has physically developed, this alliance may develop into incidents where the child assaults the mother. In parentification, the child develops a sense of responsibility for taking care of the child’s siblings or even defending the child’s mother. O’Keefe reports this response can leave the child unable to develop a sense of independence for fear of leaving family members vulnerable to abuse.

Into adulthood, children from domestic violence households may come to suffer numerous long-term effects. These unfortunate consequences include alcohol abuse, depression, low self-esteem, violent practices in the home, criminal behavior, and substance abuse. Additionally, children from violent homes report suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and more frequently had allergies, asthma, gastrointestinal problems, headaches, and flu. Again, these effects occur both due to experiencing and witnessing domestic violence in the child’s home.

Teens who live through domestic violence are not doomed to lives without success or fulfilling relationships. There are numerous examples of children living in homes with domestic violence that go on to lead successful lives with healthy relationships. Janice Humphreys tracked the development of adult daughters of abused women who found successful lives and relationships after living through domestic violence. Following the turnings and adaptations in the lives of women who lived in homes with domestic violence, Humphreys was able to identify common experiences that helped lead to each individual’s personal success later in adulthood. In her study, Humphreys defines turnings as major transitions marking the principal periods of life and adaptations as how people responded to turnings. Although all the women experienced fear and anger at a young age, each shared feelings of optimism and self-healing as they entered adulthood. The most successful turning point for nearly all the women was the beginning of her pursuit for education or a new job. Additionally, all mothers described the birth of their first children as a very positive experience in their lives. Thus, events granting an individual greater independence appear to have a strong correlation to positive experiences in these cases.

Domestic violence affects more people than those who abusers physically harm. Children who are raised in homes with domestic violence and witness the assaults demand significant attention so that we can afford them every opportunity to lead healthy, productive lives and end the cycle of abuse. The range of responses for children who witness abuse is diverse. Although the potential negative consequences are immense, the possibility of success is well within reach for these children.

2. Id.
3. Id.

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A Fond Farewell to Marilyn Trigg

On October 24, 2008 the staff of FCADV and colleagues from the DV Unit at DCF gathered at Chez Pierre Restaurant to bid a fond farewell to Marilyn Trigg. Marilyn has served as the Director of Training and Technical Assistance for most of her 9 year tenure with FCADV. For over a year she told us she planned to retire, but we never believed she really would.

Before coming to FCADV Marilyn worked at the Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence and prior to that she was an instructor at the University of Georgia Department of Dance. Dr. Trigg holds a Ph.D. in Physical Education Dance and at one time danced professionally in New York City.

Marilyn plans to spend her retirement working in her garden and sewing christening gowns. She may occasionally help us out when we get desperate. She possesses such a treasure trove of information that we can’t let her go too easily. Marilyn has been a valued member of the Management Team that Tiffany Carr built when she became Executive Director in 2000. Her contributions to FCADV and to the women and children of the State of Florida will be greatly missed.

Marilyn was presented with a beautiful vase full of purple roses and a scrapbook of remembrances from her nine years at FCADV. Here she is about to cut her True Colors cake which was decorated with orange, gold, green and blue dots!

Marilyn’s staff wears western hats as an homage to her Texas roots. From left: Kim Wiley, Marilyn Trigg, Zoë Flowers, Haley Cutler, Jennifer Pace, Rosa Morgan and Julie Ann Rivers-Cochran (in front)

Julie Ann Rivers-Cochran, Vice President of Program and Policy with her mentor, Marilyn Trigg
Beginning the 2009 New Year, the Florida Department of Children and Families Domestic Violence Program (DVP) resumes its strong commitment to support domestic violence service providers in Florida’s communities. To ensure continued financial support, DVP submitted two U.S. Department of Justice (USDOJ) grant applications for funding in the month of January; the 2009 Grants to Encourage Arrest Policies and Enforcement of Protection Orders Program (GTEA) that will continue to enhance current GTEA programs in the state and the 2009 STOP Violence Against Women Formula Grant. Both grants support communities in their efforts to develop and strengthen effective law enforcement and prosecution strategies to combat violent crimes against women and develop and strengthen victim services in cases involving violent crimes against women. These grants together provide nearly $5.8 million in funding for Florida’s domestic violence services.

The DVP office will also continue to maintain its commitment to domestic violence training and reporting initiatives in 2009. Training and technical assistance remain a vital function of the DVP office. Two recent Coordinated Community Response (CCR) trainings for child welfare professionals working with families experiencing domestic violence have been held in Sarasota (November 2008) and Ft. Lauderdale (February 3). Mary Marotta, DVP’s STOP Administrator, also attended the national State STOP Administrators Annual Meeting in San Diego, January 12-14, 2009. Information received at the national training event will be shared with service providers who are required to report on the expenditure of STOP grant funds. A current list of online and onsite training events for 2009 can be found on the DVP webpage at http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/domicsticviolence/calendar/index.shtml#onsite

The DVP office has also finished setting up an automated data system for collecting reports and information from all DVP providers. This new system will help DVP ensure the accuracy of data while reducing the amount of time needed to produce custom reports and analysis. The system also utilizes uniform electronic reporting forms which save paper and are quicker and easier to fill out than the previous ones. All DV reporting forms are easily assessable via our website: http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/domesticviolence/grant/QuarterlyProjectPerformanceReport.shtml.

The DVP office continues to provide information to state legislators and federal government administrative offices concerning domestic violence programs. DVP has submitted the required federal 2007 GTEA Quarterly Progress Report in January, as well as the new 2007-2008 Domestic Violence Annual Report to the Governor and the Florida Legislature, detailing the responsibilities and accomplishments of DV program throughout the state.

The Florida Department of Children and Families Domestic Violence Program can be reached at: 850-921-2168, or by visiting the website at: http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/domesticviolence

If a survivor is separated from her batterer, she may want to use email or text messaging as a tool for communication regarding custody, visitation or other legal matters. Strategies such as these record electronic communication, healthy or unhealthy, and provide printable evidence of any harassment. Many courts now accept text messages and email communication as evidence. If a batterer violates court orders, such as ignoring custody arrangements or making threats, a survivor may be able to submit the email or text message as evidence of a violation.

A great tip to share with survivors is to open a new email account that is only used for communication regarding legal matters. Create this email account and access it only on a safe computer such as a computer at the library. This option may serve as a safer form of contact to arrange visitation or schedule meetings.

If you would like more information about safety planning on issues concerning computers, cell phones, GPS and other forms of technology, contact FCADV. FCADV provides advocate training and technical assistance at no charge to Florida’s certified domestic violence centers. Invite FCADV to your center to provide a two-hour Tech Safety onsite training. Call (850) 425-2749 or visit www.fcadv.org/contact_training.php.
Who We Are

The Child and Youth Caucus is a statewide coalition of activists concerned about children and youth affected by domestic violence, teen dating violence and sexual assault. As a group we work to provide resources, educational materials and assessment tools for domestic violence centers to use with their participants. The Child and Youth Caucus provides a forum to network, share ideas and to discuss innovative approaches and materials. In addition, we help organize and plan FCADV’s annual Child and Youth Training Institute. One of the most recent and exciting caucus projects is the Mentor Program which is available to all 42 certified domestic violence centers (see information below).

Who Can Participate in the Child and Youth Caucus?

The Child and Youth Caucus is open to anyone who is passionate about advocating for children and youth affected by domestic violence, teen dating violence and sexual assault. While many of our members work as child advocates/educators at domestic violence centers, we also have representatives from Guardian ad Litem, community members and individuals from other agencies. Child and Youth Caucus meetings are held every two months. For more information about getting involved contact the FCADV Child and Youth Caucus Liaison.

Mentor Program

Goal/Purpose:
The hope of the Children’s Caucus is to pair new child and youth advocates/educators with a more seasoned advocate who is familiar with working with children and youth impacted by domestic violence. The intent of this program is to promote meaningful dialogue between mentors and mentees along with providing a system of support for new advocates. The mentor-mentee relationship may include exchanging information about service provisions, resources for working with children and youth, and support for new advocates during the realistic challenges faced in the field. However, FCADV and the Child and Youth Caucus does not support unethical communication.

How to Access a Mentor:
If you feel you would benefit from a mentor, please contact the FCADV Child and Youth Caucus Liaison. Make sure to state your current position, center you work for, and the type of assistance you may benefit from so we can match you with an appropriate mentor.

How to Become a Mentor:
Mentors must have at least one year experience working in the field of domestic violence as a Child or Youth Advocate or Educator as well as active membership in the Child and Youth Caucus for a minimum of six months. The Child and Youth Caucus also strongly suggests that you have approval from a supervisor/director prior to becoming a mentor as participation in this program requires a time commitment once matched with a mentee (The time commitment is dependent upon mentors’ availability). If you are interested in becoming a mentor contact the FCADV Child and Youth Caucus Liaison, Vanessa Adams (850/425-2749).