



# BEHIND THE SCENES

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*Bennington County Domestic And Sexual Violence Services - September 2006 - Nancy Feinberg, Editor*

## WHAT KIND OF WORLD? *Joan Sakalas, Executive Director*

Lately I've been thinking about how we make decisions about the way we live. Daily we are bombarded with messages telling us what we need and what we should do to live the "good life." However, as I listen to these messages, I am confronted daily at PAVE with the terrible facts of how many of us actually live.

- Globally, wars for national dominance strangle the hopes and futures of countries.
- In the U.S.A. we talk about our concern for children yet allow 22% to live in poverty.
- In Bennington County, we have the highest number of sexual assaults per capita in Vermont.
- Locally, in Bennington, domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking figures continue to rise—95% in the past year.

So I wonder whether and how we can change these distressing facts.

My early years in a Quaker college had a profound effect on the way I see the possibility for change and the processes needed to effect change. In the first place, I find that I have become an optimist. In this line of work that mindset is useful. When thinking about change, I tend also to be a pragmatist. In other words, I find it useful to ask—what kind of world, community, neighborhood do I want to live in?

Let me describe how this plays out. When I moved to the hinterlands of Shaftsbury about a year ago, I was advised to buy a gun because some fellows with a history of rape convictions were known to hunt in the area. I thought about it and even priced a gun. Then I asked myself—what kind of neighborhood do I want to live in? Even if I were to learn how to use a gun, would I be able to live with the consequences of my skill if I were to use it? So I made a conscious decision not to buy or learn how to use a gun.

At many meetings I hear "psychobabble" about victims being "enablers." Think about it. Imagine engaging in an argument with someone you love. The argument becomes heated and you both can't seem to resolve your differences. All of a sudden this relative/lover/friend hauls off and punches you in the eye. You are shocked and afraid and don't want to be hit again. This person tells you that "if you only would shut up this wouldn't happen." He adds that you better watch out. But this is the person you love! How could this happen?

Two weeks later he comes home and asks where dinner is—you're late with your preparations. He's had a bad day at work. This time he tells you that you're worthless, ugly and incapable of doing anything right. You can see that he's getting more angry but you don't want to provoke so you keep quiet. He grabs your arm and asks, "Do you hear me? What did I say?" Now you don't know whether to answer. You hesitate and he pushes you into the wall. This time he doesn't just punch you—he hits and punches and kicks and finally leaves.

This time you think that you may need to go to the hospital but you hesitate because you really don't want your "business" all over town. He doesn't come home until early in the morning and then leaves for work without saying anything. You are still sore but the hurt is much deeper. You decide to call the PAVE Hotline that morning and speak with them about your partner's behavior. Ultimately you fill out a request for a Relief from Abuse Order. This feels like a dangerous thing to do because it might make him even more angry but at this point you don't know what to do next.

Now let's return to my original question concerning the kind of world/neighborhood in which we want to live. Do we really think that violence in families is all right when we accuse a victim of "enabling" a batterer? Isn't this akin to saying that when a teen wears a short skirt, she is inviting rape? When, as adults, do we have to take responsibility for our behavior?

Something is wrong when we jump to defend BAD BEHAVIOR. How can we explain to children that hitting, punching, kicking is all right in the family context? Why are violent acts considered serious and criminal when done to strangers – o.k. in a family? What kind of world do we want? What makes us think it's necessary to argue that UNACCEPTABLE, VIOLENT BEHAVIOR is justified – especially in families?

We need to stop defending VIOLENCE. I remember that even as a child I was told that I was not supposed to jump off a cliff just because everyone else was doing it. In order to effect change, we have to make it clear that excuses will not work. And if I annoy you, that does not mean you can hit me. If you hate someone, you cannot kill them.

Let's take the focus off what the victim said or didn't do and place the emphasis on the real issue. DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE IS NEVER JUSTIFIED—period. ▲

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*To end domestic*  
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PAVE is a United Way Member Agency.

## IMAGINE WHEN YOU WERE 10... *Hilary Batchelor, Education Department*

### Imagine when you were 10...

- How simple was your life?
- Did you see children on milk boxes who have disappeared?
- Did you know what Domestic Violence meant?
- Did you have a safety plan when you came home from school?
- What TV shows did you watch?
- Did you know what the word harassment or porn meant?
- Did you know what gay and lesbian meant?
- "Lure" meant something you caught a fish with, not a manipulation used by a pedophile.
- Was dressing sexy something you thought about...
- "Pot" was something your mom cooked in.
- Did you see violence on the news every night?
- "Aids" were students who worked in the principal's office.
- "Coke" was a cold drink.

### Now think about being 10 or even 15 today...

Today's children have the same emotional maturity as you did, BUT they are bombarded with media, violence, technology and sex. They are scared and have so much more to be confused about.

- Advertisements, reality shows, and series have multiplied (kids say CSI scares them)
- Children on the news are kidnapped and killed all the time.
- Schools have shootings and people die.
- Sexual violence is everywhere.
- Drugs are a daily event in many children's lives
- Harassment and sexual assault is accepted.
- STI's are rampant.

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**"Prevention provides an escape from a negative life course, and helps to develop competency and knowledge that leads to a more desired life course in general" (Veinot, 1).**

The 2005 Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey reports that:

- 5 percent of Bennington County students did not go to school because they did not feel safe.
- 6 percent of 8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> graders had been hit or slapped.
- 10% of this group had been forced to be touched or touch someone else.

These behaviors can result in truancy, low self-esteem, depression, fear, mental health issues, lower grade averages, unhealthy relationships, suicide, and the inability to positively contribute to the community.

This year Vermont schools are mandated to address harassment policies for students because it is a reoccurring issue. Two years ago bullying policies were reviewed; however, preventing these behaviors before they occur has not been a priority. Schools are the ideal place to have discussions about preventive strategies. These discussions can give students the skills to cope with pressures and frustration from society, peers and media influence.

The National Sexual Assault Hotline announced June 22<sup>nd</sup> that they received their 1,000,000th call for counseling and support since 1994. In 2005, the National Hotline helped 137,039 women, men and children. "Public education and outreach by local crisis centers have increased public awareness of sexual violence and have contributed to a 58 percent decline in crimes of sexual violence since 1993" (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network, RAINN, July 22<sup>nd</sup> 2006). However, the Bennington Police Department report that there is a 95% increase in reported sexual violent acts since 2005 in Bennington County.

On a Vermont Public Radio series in August, a 13 year old remarked that he "had already gone through his pornography stage experience at age 11, and was more mature now." A group of 5<sup>th</sup> grade children said, "They would never tell their parents they saw porn on the internet." One parent claimed their 14 year old was too young to have a conversation about porn. 60% of youth lie about their age in chat rooms, websites and text messaging. Adults do not have the technical know-how to prevent this exposure.

If students are not given the strategies to change behaviors and realize the effect on peers, the continuum of teasing, flirting, bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, dating violence, child abuse, domestic violence, sexual assault will persist and will continue to be accepted in our community. When PAVE asked a nurse why teens do not call for PAVE services when admitted to the hospital for sexual assault, her response was, "The girls say, 'That's just what happens now'."

PAVE's Education programs promote preventive strategies to give youth the skills they need to reduce violence and unacceptable behaviors and to learn to treat each other better. "One of the key values inherent in primary prevention is that every program offers information about domestic and sexual violence. Even if students never become victims they may have opportunities in the future to help others in preventing or stopping assaults" *Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (January 2003)*.

Prevention is a community responsibility. Giving our youth the opportunity to talk about these issues will reduce fear and lessen confusion. It will give them strategies to cope with today's media, technology, violence and social pressures.

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## SEXUAL OFFENDERS IN BENNINGTON *Angela Bills, PAVE Advocate, Bennington Police Department*

**Sex Offenders in Bennington.** Yes, I said sex offenders in Bennington, the community where we live and work. It is so easy to watch programs on television about the danger of sexual predators and let ourselves be ignorant of the fact that we are living in a community where sexual predators are a problem. We allow ourselves to be blind to the reality that we are at risk; our children are at risk.

I know we've all seen the recent *Dateline* news reports of how predators found "would-be young girls" on the internet and initiated sexual rendezvous with them at which time the news anchor comes out from the next room and interviews these men— young and old, professionals and laborers. If we focus on just online predators, they are pretty scary to adults, but to our children they are not. They give attention. Our children talk to them online for long periods of time—weeks and months. These men become friends of our children—Friends-Not Strangers-Not Scary.

If online predators were the only sex offenders to be aware of, to make our children aware of, that would make our jobs as parents a bit easier—make us less terrified (we would just not use the internet, or at the very least closely monitor it). However, these are not the only sexual predators that we need to be aware of. Other predators are closer than we would like to believe.

There are approximately eighty-two (82) registered sexual predators living in the village of Bennington and North Bennington right now, today. Of the eighty-two registered sexual predators living within Bennington/North Bennington, sixty-two (62) of those prey on children and twenty (20) who prey on adults.

September is approaching...and the dog days of summer are over. There are things that we should be thinking of, ways to talk to our kids about safeguarding themselves against sexual predators. Does your child (children) walk to school? Do they walk alone? Do you know who lives on the streets your children take to school? Do you know if your child takes the same route everyday? To whom do your children talk on their short journey to school? These are definitely questions we should be asking our children and ourselves.

In the State of Vermont there is no law that restricts registered sex offenders' movements, residency, proximity to schools, parks, recreation centers, etc., just because they are sex offenders. Offenders *could* be restricted if they are under supervision of the Department of Corrections, but often they are not. In addition, once they are finished with supervision, few restrictions, if any, are placed on them as to where they can reside, with whom they may have contact or in what proximity to children they may be.

Of the eighty-two registered sex offenders in Bennington and North Bennington, sixty-five (65) live within two blocks of three elementary schools and the high school. **Sixty-five.**

My goal in writing this article is to urge our community to think about making a safer environment for our children. Raising awareness about sexual predators is a way for us to start. We need to do a better job watching out for our children—all kids, not just mine, not just yours, but all of the children in our community. In addition, talk or write to your legislators about changing the laws restricting sex offenders. ▲

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**A GLOBAL ISSUE, A LOCAL CENTER** *Christine Williams, Family Time Program Coordinator*

I was fortunate to attend the annual Supervised Visitation Network (SVN) Conference in Rapid City, South Dakota, this spring. The SVN is “a multi-national, non-profit membership organization that is literally a network of agencies and individuals [that] are interested in assuring that children can have safe, conflict-free access to parents with whom they do not reside” (SVN website 2006, svnetwork.net/members/). As of July 2006, there were over 500 memberships in the SVN, including over 900 individuals within these memberships.

The three day conference offered numerous workshops each day. Unfortunately however, choosing among the coinciding workshops was difficult. Fortunately most who attended the conference are very friendly and enthusiastic about their work and were quite willing to share in discussion and conversation about the workshops they attended. Moreover, there was ample resource sharing in the form of handouts, sample forms, websites, and books.

The experience was exciting and rejuvenating —to be with so many who share many of the same struggles, challenges, and joys involved with Supervised Visitation. Although there are many similarities between members, there are just as many dissimilarities—one being that not all Supervised Visitation Centers are part of a Domestic and Sexual Violence agency. There are Supervised Visitation Centers that are “for profit,” and some that are actually an arm of the court. There are many more areas in which members of the SVN vary, yet it is a most enlightening time to see and hear what is going on with other programs—not only within our country but also in different countries—regarding the growth, awareness, and continuing need for Supervised Visitation Centers. Given the numbers of people and all the diverse backgrounds and experiences of attendees at this conference there is much to learn and inform each other about particularly regarding Domestic and Sexual Violence perspectives. It is also indispensable to educate ourselves about the particular needs, measures, and considerations, that are imperative in providing Supervised Visitation services to support the safety of all involved.

The conference was a time to reflect about how we at *Family Time* provide services; what works well, and what areas need changing or improvement. With increased knowledge and awareness we could enhance our program and therefore our service delivery, but, I will say, overall, I am very proud and pleased with how validating this experience was. It demonstrated **how innovative and creative our little program in Vermont is**. Not only do we provide a safe place for access to occur, we also offer many expanded and progressive services in the area of Supervised Visitation. Two such programs are the *Nurturing Parenting Program* and *Come Draw with Me* that we will offer again this fall in elementary schools.

As long as there is a need for Supervised Visitation, we shall continue to enhance our programming and seek improvement as a result of the insights we gained at the conference. Nonetheless, we feel good about the services we do provide and about being a part of *Family Time*.▲

**THE LUCK OF THE DRAW** *Debby Stanlewicz, Transitional Housing Advocate*

Unfortunately, my clientele has grown drastically in the last month. I say unfortunately, because that means more women need my services. The “up” side is that PAVE has services to offer. I have truly been impressed with the perseverance of the women who want to make a change in their lives. They have been applying for affordable housing, calling on apartment leads, and out, “hitting the bricks,” looking at apartments/houses. The trick has been to find housing that best meets their needs and finances. But through hard work and wanting to make a better life for themselves and their children; nine more women have found a new home. Many of these women need help furnishing their new home with furniture, towels, sheets, blankets, curtains, pots and pans, silverware, etc. Donations are always welcome to assist in making their new place a home. This allows families to feel safe and secure again. If anyone has items that could help us accomplish this mission, please feel free to call the office.

“**It is the Luck of the Draw**” that enables women to find a happy home again. It is purely luck sometimes that a place becomes available. The fresh start is made easier when they like their new place and know that they can afford it on their own. This week I assisted a family that was in a shelter. The four year old little boy had been through a lot by the hands of his father; he did not want to go home ever again. His mom found an apartment for them and we went over their household budget to see if they could afford it. Through planning, utilizing available services and her willingness to be part of our Transitional Housing Program, we were able to obtain the apartment for her and her children. This four year old boy came up to me with his arms out and gave me a big hug. His wonderful words to me were, “Thank you for finding me a home.” Those beautiful words make my job all the more fulfilling and give me hope that I can help many other women and their children “find a new home.”▲

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*When doing your estate planning, please remember PAVE.*  
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# “WILL IT TAKE A BULLET IN MY HEAD TO GET HIM TO STOP?”

## STALKING IN THE UNITED STATES<sup>1</sup>

*Sandy Kelly, PAVE Advocate, Department of Corrections*

When the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC) (April 1998) launched their partnership to study violence against women, previously there was no national data on stalking and its impact. This first-ever national survey has already made a major contribution to our legislators, policymakers, intervention agencies, public health departments, and our criminal justice communities. Interest in stalking over the past 10 years has produced anti-stalking laws in all 50 states. Modification and revision to our stalking statutes is an on going process. As we learn more about this crime, we need to adjust our laws accordingly.

Legal definitions of stalking vary widely from state to state. Most states define stalking as the willful, malicious, and repeated following and harassing of another person. In some states, definitions include activities such as lying-in wait, surveillance, nonconsensual communication, telephone harassment, and vandalism.

Many anti-stalking laws continue to include in their definition a requirement that the stalker make a direct threat of violence against his victim. This requirement is archaic and goes against any hopes of a successful prosecution. Even though victims are often extremely frightened of the offender's behaviors, with fears of being

**“Sometimes I unlock my car and find a rose on the seat—no note, just the rose. Somehow he got into my car and left it there; it's all he needs to do to terrorize me.”**

seriously harmed or even killed, seldom is it reported that the stalker engages in such overt ways as to contact the victim directly. Contact is usually done through means of following, spying, standing outside their work or home, repeated phone calls, notes or items left in unexpected places. To ask that our courts prove that the stalker made direct threats to the victim is not consistent with how we know stalkers conduct their terror.

Any risk management of stalking behaviors must first look at the “intervention dilemma.” This dilemma involves concerns that taking direct action towards the stalker to reduce stalking may actually increase the risk of violence. The stalker may feel challenged or become enraged, causing greater risk of harm to the victim. In some situations not taking any direct action may be the best way to go. Because of this dilemma, great care needs to be given to the assessment of the situation and the action plan that will be put in place.

Obtaining a protective order is one example of direct action. Research shows that a protective order, even though it is frequently violated, has some positive effect. When violations are reported it creates legal documentation, and the police are more likely to respond faster in cases with restraining orders. Past history of how a stalker reacted to previous orders may be the best indicator of how he will react to an order placed on him. If a decision is made to use a protective order, it is extremely important for the victim to make a commitment to report all violations of the order. To not enforce an order sends a message to the stalker that it is okay to not abide by it and to continue with the harassment. A victim who obtains a protective order should be aware of developing a false sense of security. Protective orders as well as other “dramatic moments” are especially high risk times. Examples of high risk situations may be arrests, court hearings for custody or divorce, anniversary dates, family holidays, job loss.

What can a victim do to protect herself? If a victim is concerned about an upcoming event, steps should be taken to prepare: go out of town, stay in an unknown location, notify law enforcement and victim advocate. Take threats seriously; document and record suspicious sightings. Report every incident to the police (stalking is not a single incident). Protect personal information, such as credit card numbers and passwords. Safety network with your child's school and you workplace. Add extra security at home by changing locks, adding lighting. Keep your gas tank full. Avoid contact and don't engage in conversation. Send a clear message (stalkers either misinterpret or hear what they want to hear). The message should be: NO RELATIONSHIP IS WANTED!

<sup>1</sup> Statistics and quotations taken from *Survey From the National Center fro Victims of Crime*. The Stalking Resource Center. Washington, D.C. 1998. ▲

### STALKING STATISTICS

- One out of every 12 U.S. women has been stalked in her life.
- 13% of college women have been stalked.
- One out of every 45 U.S. men has been stalked in his life.
- Four out of five stalking victims are women
- Average victim age is 28
- 87% of stalkers are men, most all knew their victim.
- 81% of victims that were stalked by an intimate partner also had been previously assaulted.

### HOW TO IDENTIFY STALKING

- Is the harassing or threatening behavior an isolated incident or is it repeated behavior?
- Would the behavior cause a reasonable person to fear for her safety due to unlawful sexual conduct, bodily injury, verbal or written threats, telephone or electronic threats, vandalism, etc.?
- Does the behavior or whereabouts of the stalker serve a legitimate purpose?
- What do we know about the perpetrator and his past history? Have risk factors escalated?

## CHALLENGES *Nancy Feinberg, Volunteer Coordinator*

How do we become a victim-less society? How do we prevent violence? In the broader picture, how do we ever overcome oppression, sexism, and gender-inequality, objectification of women, machismo (hypermasculinity), cultural elitism and entitlement? How do we begin to R-E-S-P-E-C-T each other and our differences? We care so little about our mothers, sisters, daughters, fathers, brothers, and sons that we rape them, murder them, exploit them or stand by while others assault them. Where is the outcry? This is not just a women's problem. Although the majority of men do not commit these grotesque crimes, the majority of perpetrators are men. How can we prevent our town from being a WAR ZONE?

The women's movement has accomplished a great deal during its thirty-five years of anti-violence advocacy, education and awareness. We treat the injuries and the effects of domestic and sexual violence by supporting victims with shelters and with legal, medical and economic services. Throughout Bennington County, we broadcast the message that *There Is No Excuse For Domestic Abuse* and *End Sexual Violence* along with our 24/7 hotline number. At every level of violence, we try to hold men to some kind of accountability, either by restorative means or civil or criminal proceedings. We treat and manage, but we do not eradicate domestic or sexual violence.

On April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2006, the State of Vermont formally adopted *The Vermont Approach: A Strategic Plan for Comprehensive, Collaborative Sexual Violence Prevention in Vermont 2006-2010*. It is the culmination of the past year's collective efforts of the Anti-Violence Partnership at University of Vermont, the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence (the Network), the Vermont Department of Health, and numerous other practitioners and stakeholders in sexual violence prevention work.

*The Vermont Approach* is a five-year, seven-point strategy and action plan. It includes:

- Providing Statewide Leadership;
- Developing Community Sexual Violence Prevention (SVP) Efforts and New Community SVP Allies
- Changing Media Representations
- Contributing to the SVP Capacity of State and Local Institutions
- Educating Professionals, Families and Individuals
- Learning from and Developing the Vermont Approach
- Generating Income and Budgeting Resources.

Susan E. Roche, associate professor of social work at UVM, the university co-chair of the Anti-Violence Partnership, and coordinator of the project stated, "It's a historic moment and we have something to offer in a thoughtful way: a year's worth of focused study and inquiry" (Reidel,).

*The Vermont Approach* is aimed to "transform those aspects of culture that produce, take for granted and exacerbate sexual and related forms of violence and degradation against adults, teens and children." It combines the public health model of prevention, social norms theory, and the fundamental principles of human rights (Roche, 11).

Judy Rex, director of the Vermont Center for Crime Victim Services and agency co-chair of the Anti-Violence Partnership states: "We've never had a document with an actual plan that includes all the players. It's long overdue" (Reidel). The strategic plan is comprehensive and far reaching. There is obviously so much more to the plan than described above, but it is sorely needed. When we consider that Vermont sexual abuse cases rose 50% in the year 2004, we have an immense task before all of us.

But I do want to say that here, at PAVE, I think there are strides being made every day by the Education Department by developing new ways of thinking about how we treat each other. Cultural shifts do not happen overnight, but sometimes the morning can look positively brighter.

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Violence against women is perhaps the most shameful human rights violation. It knows no boundaries of geography, culture or wealth. As long as it continues, we cannot claim to be making real progress towards equality, development and peace.

~Kofi Annan, Secretary General of the United Nations

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## EMERGENCY RELIEF FROM ABUSE AND THE ROLE OF COURT STAFF *Linda Campbell, Assistant Director*

Applying for an Emergency Relief from Abuse Order (RFA) can be a difficult and frightening experience. For many victims who have been abused for a very long time or very severely, this may be a first step in making life-defining changes. Statistics show that getting an RFA can also increase a victim's risk for safety. In order to move forward, a victim needs support and validation, not judgment. Victims do not always have a PAVE advocate to help them through this process. Court staff has an important role in the RFA process.

The statutes which govern the Relief from Abuse docket are found at 15 V.S.A., Chapter 21, ¶1101 through ¶1115. In addition to the statutes, the docket is governed by Family Court Rules, in particular Rules 4 and 9.

Between 8:00 AM and 4:00 PM weekdays, a victim, or "plaintiff"/petitioner of the court, may apply for an RFA at Family Court. After 4:30 PM, and on holidays and weekends, s/he may file at the local police station with an After-Hours' Court Clerk. Bennington County has seven on-call clerks. Plaintiffs applying for an RFA order are usually pro se (without legal representation) and the forms are designed with that in mind.

Family Court staff can inform the victim of the definitions and jurisdictions in order to help the person decide whether or not to file. **Court staff should not make recommendations or statements about the likelihood of a plaintiff's request being granted, should not make judicial decisions, and must not refuse to let someone file for a temporary order.**

If a petitioner needs assistance beyond just obtaining the RFA forms, the court staff may provide information about the statute and definitions in the statute. They can provide information about the boxes on the forms, and can assist people who have literacy or other difficulties filling out the forms. They can also call a Domestic Violence advocate to assist.

According to Family Court practice, an After-Hours' Court Clerk should arrive at the police station within 45 minutes after being called by the answering service. If the answering service gets no response within fifteen minutes after the initial call, they will try the next person on the list, until they have reached a someone.

If an After-Hours' Court Clerk is called and confirms that assistance is needed for an RFA, she/he will ask the following questions to determine whether it is appropriate to meet the person at the police station.

- Are you in a safe place now and will you be able to remain in a safe place until (the next court day)?  
If the answer is "NO" the clerk will go out.  
If the answer is "YES" the following question will be asked:
- Do you feel safe waiting until (next court day) to go to court to file your complaint and are you willing to wait?  
If the answer is "YES" the court clerk will not go out.  
If the answer is "NO" she/he will ask the following questions:
  - Does the other person live in your household?
  - Has the other person ever lived in your household?
  - Is the other person a member of your family?
  - Is the other person an in-law?
  - Have you ever "dated" the other person?
  - Have you ever had any sexual contact with the other person?

If the answer to any of these questions is "YES", the clerk will go out.

If the answer to all of the questions is "NO," the court clerk can let the applicant know that she/he may not qualify, but the clerk will come out if the person wants. **Even if it sounds as though the applicant may not qualify for an RFA, and even if it does not sound like an emergency, it is up to the applicant to decide whether or not to go forward with the RFA.**

When helping someone fill out an RFA, remember to focus on the most recent incident, but briefly describe any prior history of abuse, DV charges, and/or RFA orders. A current police affidavit may be used in place of writing another affidavit as long as it is attached to Family Court Affidavit Form 151 and noted on the form that it is attached. Form 151 must be signed by the petitioner and notarized.

Applying for an RFA is a complicated decision for a victim. The victim may be reluctant and afraid to disclose certain information because of the abuser's threats of retaliation or because events are too humiliating. It is important that the process go smoothly and that victim feel supported and understood. If anyone has concerns about a breakdown in any of the steps in the process, please contact a PAVE advocate at 802-442-2370. ▲

Project Against Violent Encounters  
P.O. Box 227  
Bennington VT 05201

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What do we live for, if it is not  
to make life less difficult for  
each other?  
~ George Eliot

**PAVE 25th Anniversary**  
**"Gala Benefit"**  
**Jazz Concert**

*Saturday, October 14, 2006, 7:00 P.M.*  
*The RILEY CENTER for the Arts at Burr & Burton Academy*  
*Seminary Avenue, Manchester, Vermont*  
*\$25.00 per person — Cash Bar — Complimentary hors d'oeuvres*  
*Reservations (802) 442-2370 (Visa & Mastercard Accepted)*

**Evita Cobo**  
*Jazz Vocalist*

*With: Brad Hatfield, piano;*  
*Peter Kontrimas, Bass; Danny Welchel, Drums*

I want to help make this a safer community.

I have enclosed a tax-deductible check payable to PAVE.  Please charge a donation to my credit card:

VISA  Mastercard Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Card # \_\_\_\_\_ \$25  \$50  \$100  \$500  Other

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Day Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Contact PAVE to discuss volunteer opportunities. Thank you.. Mail to: PAVE, P.O. Box 227, Bennington VT 05201

We are grateful to the volunteers of R.S.V.P. who help assemble this newsletter.