



# BEHIND THE SCENES

## PROJECT AGAINST VIOLENT ENCOUNTERS

*Bennington County Domestic And Sexual Violence Services*

*March 2008 — Nancy Feinberg, Editor*

### THE WAR AT HOME

*Joan M. Sakalas, Ph.D., Executive Director*

As I rode in the car today I listened to a Vermont Public Radio report on Veterans of the Vietnam and Iraq wars and the high numbers suffering from PTSD and other psychological disorders. The moderator stated that those who experience war are changed forever. Changed forever – that phrase suggested a parallel to me.

Almost every day we read about the abuse that takes place in our homes, in our “loving” relationships. At PAVE we see families, injured forever by what they have seen and heard. We see mothers who tried to “protect” their children by remaining in a relationship that had little or no love but offered what they thought was “stability” to their children. Many of those women come to us after years of isolation, after years of denigration, after years of physical and verbal threats. They are changed forever by the war they experienced in their home. Yet, in our society we valorize family life and continue to pretend that families are safe, positive and nurturing places for children and wonderfully supportive places for their parents. Just as the military acknowledges the fact that large numbers of men and women who return from the Iraq war are suffering from the effects of their experience of violence, we as a community must acknowledge the need to face reality and take collective responsibility for the damage done in our families.

Is it irreversible damage? NOT NECESSARILY! However, the danger and the pain will continue to grow as a problem if our supports and attitudes towards abuse do not change. Most often abuse in families is “the dirty little secret” that is a part of the family legacy. Members of families who speak out and reveal that secret are often faced with banishment from the family, a sense of guilt for violating the family trust and, on top of that, they often must live with the harsh judgment of the community. How often do we hear – “She must have done something to provoke him.” “He loves her so much – he was just frustrated.” “That child would test anyone’s patience.”

What do the effects of this war in our homes look like? This story illustrates what some of the battles look like. Lisa is twenty-seven and has two sons by her husband, Brock. She works as a waitress although she dreams of someday going to college and Brock works sometimes as a carpenter. They’ve shared their lives for ten years and are

raising two boys – Eric, age 6 and Brock, Jr., age 10. Although Lisa’s family didn’t really like Brock, when she became pregnant, they all agreed that marriage would be best.

In the early years Brock said he loved her, not every day but enough for Lisa to believe. However, over time Lisa heard rumors that Brock was involved with other women. She also heard that he had told his buddies that, “if she didn’t pay the rent on the trailer and put food on the table, he’d leave her fat ass tomorrow.”

Today when Brock arrives home from a day hunting with his buddies, he tells Lisa that she is “fat, ugly and worthless.” As she continues to prepare dinner she is confused and asks, “What changed? What did I do?” She knows that finances have been tight lately but she’s taken on more hours so that they don’t get too far behind. Their two boys can be a challenge but she tries to keep them out of Brock’s way. Besides life has pretty much been like this for years.

He makes his position even more clear as he punches the wall next to her head and tells her that the next time his fist will connect with her face. He tells her that he is done with her and that she needs to get out in two days because he has met someone else who really understands and appreciates him. The new love is scheduled to move in on the weekend. Lisa becomes very quiet and leaves the room.

Upstairs Eric and Brock, Jr. are in their room waiting for Lisa to call them to dinner. However, as they listen to their parents, they are not certain whether there will be dinner tonight. They are not certain, in fact, where they will be in two days. Will they still live in their home or leave with their mother?

A day later Brock notes that Lisa has not begun to pack. Eric and Brock, Jr. sit quietly at the kitchen table doing their homework. Brock, Jr. worries when his father gets angry. Lisa tells Brock that she’s been at work and hasn’t had time to pack. Besides, they have always worked things out in the past. She touches his arm and asks whether they can just talk it through.

This time, Brock reminds Lisa that he already told her what he wants and asks what words she doesn’t understand. He reminds her that he already told her what he would do if she didn’t start to move. Brock tells Eric and Brock, Jr. to leave the room. Once they are gone, Brock steps toward Lisa with his fist raised. He tells her, “maybe you need a

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reminder; maybe I need to teach you a lesson.” He delivers on his threat and punches her in the face. Three teeth are broken.

There are lessons for all of us in this story. As a community, how do we expect families to behave? How can we speak so much about loving and valuing children while we tolerate abuse? Just like soldiers returning from war – Eric, Brock, Jr. and Lisa are wounded. Lisa can replace her teeth but what will help her understand that someone who professed love could hurt and abandon her? How will Eric and Brock, Jr. understand what it is to be a man or woman? Have they learned a lesson about men – that anger is the only acceptable emotion men can express? Are men in fact entitled to use violence inside the family – is that what being “in charge” means? Will Brock treat his “new love” any better than he treated Lisa?

So what can we do about this war in our families? Right now angry men like Brock and the wounded like Lisa, Eric and Brock, Jr. are in our neighborhoods. They don’t announce that they hurt and try very hard to keep their secrets.

So what can we do?

- We can make it very clear as a community that violence behind the closed doors of our homes will not be tolerated.
- Men can begin to think of what being a man involves. Is violent behavior really acceptable?
- What does it mean to be an adult? Can we continue to hold up our childhood or frustration or uncontrollable anger as an excuse for “bad behavior”?
- Women can begin to think of what being a woman involves. Does being a “caregiver” mean that you should tolerate “bad behavior”?
- We all can ask whether the model of women as “servants” of men serves both women and men. Are we sacrificing the loss of women’s talents to some sort of pornographic fantasy?

Finally, we do have power in our communities. But we must open the conversation and make some clear decisions about our expectations. A “wink and a nod” to domestic and sexual abuse leads to more abuse. If we want change, we need to change. □

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## WHAT ABOUT THE CHILDREN?

*Hilary Batchelor, Education Department*

Imagine...

- Your mom gets a black eye and is verbally abused while you are locked in your room.
- Your brother, but never you, is constantly hit by your father, and your mom doesn’t stop it.
- Your alcoholic, diabetic dad expects you, at age 7, to give him his medication, take care of him when he is drunk and, if you don’t, beats you.
- At age 5, hiding under the kitchen table watching your mom get beaten almost daily.
- At age 8, you and your brother are forgotten at a store because your mother is drunk.
- At age 7, your grandma is babysitting for you. She tells you that her boyfriend is in the driveway and probably has a gun. The police come and take everyone away to a safer place. It is 11 at night.
- When you get off the bus, your father tells you that you are going with him. You don’t know where your mother and sister are. Dad tells you to shut up when you ask.
- You are 13 now. You tell your mom that when you were 6 dad beat you. Mom chooses to stay in the home with dad and you.
- You watched your mother get beaten constantly when you were little. Mom was pregnant, depressed, had asthma and never got out of bed. Why should you have gotten up and gone to school? Now you are 21, have been physically abused. You don’t deserve any better.

- You are 3 and daddy grabs you from your mom. He threatens to take you away. He pulls out all the phone lines and breaks the phones. Now he is jail.
- Your uncle takes care of you while mom works at night. He brings friends over and drinks and smokes pot. He says if you tell mom, bad things will happen to you. His friend comes in your bedroom.

These are real stories from children and teens—children who have someone to tell their stories to. Many don’t. Many live in the secrecy of their family lives. A student said, “When an adult tells you something bad is a secret, it makes you feel awful because you feel like you are lying all the time.”

Children do not understand that this is not a normal healthy situation. Living with uncertainty; apprehension, anxiety, and unease should not be an everyday occurrence. Can adults understand what the impact is on these children unless they have had similar experiences? Do adults in the midst of violent relationships realize the impact? We do hope adults do not wish these experiences on any child.

How do traumatic events impact children? There are multiple responses depending on age, severity of the trauma, resiliency, and duration of the exposure. The effect of trauma depends, also, on how the child is supported after the experience is revealed.

We cannot anticipate how children will react, but having worked with child survivors of domestic violence I have seen youth who are needy, protective, depressed, chronically ill, overly vulnerable, and/or completely closed. Several act out

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for attention, and have academic and social problems. Some are or have been the caretakers for adults and other family members at an early age. They are labeled as troubled children. Some hurt others; or are compassionate and excessively caring. Many have dual diagnosis of behavior and psychological disorders and are taking multiple medications. Some take risks, and may bully others; others quietly hurt themselves by cutting or other self destructive behaviors. Still others demonstrate signs of low self-esteem and inappropriate reactions to others. Many contemplate suicide.

When I go into classrooms to talk about how kids can keep themselves safe if someone is hurting them, there is a certain look of understanding in the eyes of some of the students. They can relate, yet some say if they brought this information home their parent or caretaker would "give it to me." These children are in a flight, fright or freeze mode as a reaction to their experiences. If you got food poisoning from eating a certain food your response would be to never eat that food again and stay away from it. Many children are being fed something poisonous daily. They may experience that same feeling of fear, and want to flee when they get off the bus. They can't always run away or cannot choose whether or not they are in harmful situations, and may suffer with trepidation day after day. When I asked an older teen what she could suggest as strategies for younger children who are living with domestic violence, her gut reaction was to say "run for the hills."

As adults, can we:

- Lessen the impact of domestic violence on our children? Not all....
- Give our youth a way out to safely reveal their experiences? Not always...

- Support children who have survived traumatic experiences or those we suspect are living with family violence? Yes.

We can take the time to listen; we can encourage their creativity and expression of feelings; we can be compassionate when their reactions are extreme, and give them a sense of stability when they are outside the home. We can take the time to give them individual attention or projects that make them feel special. One teacher said she had a student, who was acting out, put the flag up in the classroom each day. "It gave him a feeling of being unique."

Healing from trauma does not have a time limit. It may take years and leave long-lasting psychological effects. No one can tell children to "get over it." Biologically, children's brains are not ready to move forward when they are traumatized.

We would like to prevent the impact of domestic violence on children but do not always have the power or knowledge. With many children there is a need for a team of supports, and still they may continue to suffer. Adults do not have to assume all distressed children are living with violence but it may be the case. Stay aware, use compassion, help with preventative measures, and think about the children.

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## HEART HEALTHY

*Debby Stanlewicz, Transitional Housing Advocate*

There are two things I think about when I hear the term, "A Healthy Heart." One is the obvious, our heart as an organ, beating regularly every day of our lives. The other is when we think with our hearts, our emotions. As an advocate for domestic/sexual violence victims, I realize that we are working with both "hearts." The emotional component is the one most of us would think is affected. The constant battering of words day in and day out (not including any physical assaults) has a negative affect on a person's

emotional well-being and how they feel about themselves. They start to feel unworthy of anyone and believe what the offender says to them. They may feel that they brought on the behavior against them and that it is justified. "He's right. I am fat and stupid. Who would want someone like that?" Over time the feelings of not being worthy and lost increase. Women react to these emotions differently. Some go into self-destructive behaviors, some become defensive, and others internalize it and become depressed. All of these behaviors have self-defeating results. What these women have gone through is trauma. Trauma makes us react with a flight, fight or freeze behavior.

Over time if the abuse has been

happening for years it's our other heart that is affected. These emotions and the stress induced environment have a negative affect on our bodies. Some people develop a heart condition, stomach problems, breathing difficulties, headaches, fibroids, cancers, etc. The abuse and the emotions, built up within a person, come out in our bodies. Both hearts have been affected. What we choose to do about how we feel is up to each individual, but many times our bodies finally have to tell us enough is enough. I hope that we all learn how to listen to both our hearts and learn to think of ourselves first. It's hard to do when you have been told otherwise. However, with healthy supports, it can be done. Please listen to your heart. □



## TOO BUSY TO LISTEN

Jean Howie, Acting Program Coordinator

For the past eleven years I've been a working Mom, several of these years as a single employed parent. Prior to working for PAVE, I worked at Bennington School assisting in supervising the school day. For the last seven years, I have been an employee of PAVE, where I monitor supervised visitation through *Family Time* and become more and more invested in the program and the services offered. I have attended numerous relevant trainings and seminars, co-facilitated the Nurturing Parenting children's curriculum, and assisted in any/all areas of *Family Time*'s general practices. Just recently I stepped in to manage the program during our Director's maternity leave.

Through years of experience working with children I always took for granted that I would just be a perfect mother. Through the hustle and bustle of everyday life I never realized how significant my actions and reactions were in creating who my own son has become today.

Recently I had a wonderful experience in co-facilitating our Parenting Class. I worked for several weeks with the children, and the last few weeks with the parents. I am a firm believer that it is a gift when I can recognize a problem in my life, as it is only when I am aware an issue exists, that I can begin to address it. I am a perfectionist, a characteristic that has proven to be to my detriment during certain times in my

life. Through the Parenting Class, I was given the opportunity to evaluate this characteristic.

One particular evening, we were discussing the importance of listening and validating our children and being empathetic. Previously, I held the belief that I always did these things and did them well. Following this class I went home and ended up talking with my son. He was angry that his email wouldn't work. Although I caught myself prior to responding, my initial response was going to be, "You should be grateful that you have a computer at home. Think of the kids that don't..." Keep in mind, this interaction with my son occurred within twenty minutes of the Parenting Class where we were talking of the importance of listening and validating our children. Luckily, this time, I caught myself and responded, "I'm sorry you can't check your email. Maybe in a little while it will work." As a result my son knows I listened to him, rather than my minimizing how he felt. How many thousands of times, throughout my "busy" day, have I **not** taken a moment to listen to my son? What is more important than this?

Today I try to be more aware of how I am treating my son and know that my behavior will significantly affect his opinion of himself in the future. As a role model in his life, I believe that is one of my responsibilities regardless of how "busy" I am. I want him to know that what he says and how he feels are important. This will affect his level of confidence and self-esteem as he enters his pre-teen years. If I'm "too busy" or just answer "maybe later" then he will never believe that what he has to say matters to anyone. □

## A LESS OBVIOUS NEED

Tara Parks, *Family Time* Assistant

Needs confront people with a requirement for action. The word "need" can be defined as an internal state of disequilibrium that causes individuals to pursue any courses of action in order to regain their internal equilibrium (Steers and Porter, 1983). If you're hungry, how does that make your body feel? Needs do not account for individual differences because all people have the same basic needs. Some basic needs include the obvious: food, water, and safety. However, other needs are not as apparent such as emotional stability and self-esteem. When a child's basic needs are not being met their actions can often be disguised as negative behaviors.

One of a child's first and foremost needs is to feel safe in their immediate environments, including home and school, with consistent, reliable and loving care. Relating appropriately to children in these settings is perhaps the most powerful tactic for insuring their protection outside of their usual surroundings. This type of emotional stability increases a child's chances for a safe and productive future. These same skills help children avoid violence and can later lead them to better relationships, a more fulfilling life and better careers. Children who learn to manage their feelings

are more likely to do well in school and to make lasting friendships. On the other hand schoolchildren who constantly argue are most likely to have problems in school and trouble making friends. This type of behavior can later lead to quitting school, having problems with the law and abusing drugs or alcohol.

In my opinion, the emotional needs of schoolchildren often go unattended inside the classroom amongst the daily strain to get things accomplished. Educators are faced with numerous curriculum requirements and standardized tests, which at times seem to hinder the underlying purpose behind their teaching. Often it seems that children move from a preschool classroom, where their emotional growth is nurtured and intertwined with the curriculum, to a school room where there is no time to bend the rules and lesson plans that must be followed strictly. When a child is persistent about expressing their feelings or opinions during class time, they are frequently asked to leave the room because their minor outbursts are not part of the agenda. It is apparent that teachers are forced to follow these types of standards in order to meet the goals pre-designed by the school that does not account for individual children and their needs. Although children may have other supports in the school such as a counselor, children need to, and should,

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have their feelings validated in order to feel accepted in their classroom group. Although education is of course essential, a child will not grow to learn complex knowledge or skills if their emotional needs are not met. Emotional growth has proven to be a lifelong learning process that should not end at the age of five or six when the child enters Elementary School.

Through many observations in school settings, I have noticed that cognition and curriculum are often the teachers' main emphasis. This, however, is not a realistic idea. Looking at children's developmental needs, the most important dynamics of life are the emotional and social aspects. In interactions with children, parents and educators have a great deal of power and influence. Compared with adults, children could be considered helpless and emotionally vulnerable. Often, as parents and educators attempt to help young children to become more independent and competent, they can overlook this factor and unknowingly overpower the will of the child. If this happens a child's creativity, vitality and feelings may be suppressed, which can have long lasting ill effects. Even with the best of intentions, parents and educators can harm young children, when their adult behavior does not reflect an awareness of, and sensitivity to, children's social emotional strengths and vulnerabilities.

I believe that although children's perception of life may seem distorted or even erroneous to adults, their voices actually give us the most valuable evidence of the challenges they face. I feel that adults are able to learn much more from children when we listen to their stories without questions. I've learned that if we listen with open ears children give us

the signs needed for exploration and intervention. Adult reactions show children whether or not their feelings are recognized and valued. This kind of listening encourages children to diffuse strong feelings, discover underlying issues and create solutions to the problem. In summary, children learn to manage feelings by the way we, their caretakers, respond to them. Therefore, it is particularly important to practice active listening to facilitate healthy emotional development, sufficient coping skills and a higher level of self-esteem.

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## WHY WON'T THEY REPORT?

*Linda Campbell, Assistant Director*

Sexual violence is sweeping the nation in epidemic proportions. Bringing it closer to home, since 2004 PAVE has seen a 38% increase in the number of sexual assault victims (from 39 to 102) reaching out for services .

Sexual violence is the ultimate expression of power and control. For the victim it is a degradation of the soul. Sexual violence contributes to the deterioration of our communities and impacts everyone. It occurs in our families and marriages, in the media and workplace, on school grounds and college campuses. This silent, violent crime is the most under reported violent crime in our country; three out of four assaults are never reported to the police. Why won't victims report this horrific crime? There are laws meant to protect and services meant to help them recover.

Imagine that you are with a group of colleagues, peers and/or friends and you have just been asked to share your BEST sexual experience. How would you feel? Would you feel nervous, embarrassed or angry that you've been asked to share such an intimate experience? If you agreed to this request, what would you say? Would you describe what lead up to this wonderful moment? Would you talk about what

you were wearing or where it happened? Would you say who the person was and describe the most intimate details?

Now imagine you're alone, sitting in a chair, and a police officer with a gun and a walkie-talkie that he's turned down, but you can still hear, is asking you in his most professional and appropriate way to describe the most intimate details of this WORST, sexual experience. He asks so many questions. What did you do? What did you do after that? What did he do? Where did it happen? Were there any witnesses? Imagine that after all this, you know that tomorrow you are going to have to share your worst sexual experience again with a detective, and then next week with a prosecutor, and both will ask for more and more details of your worst sexual experience. Now imagine that you know that in a year or so you will get to stand up in a room full of strangers. Once more you will be asked to share your worst sexual experience. This time the defense attorney will ask for all the details and he will not be as kind and professional as the detective who interviewed you. In fact, he will try to paint a picture that somehow this was your fault, or that it didn't happen at all. This time the person who raped you will sit right there in front of you. Would you have the courage to report?

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Added to this, imagine that you are an elderly person who grew up in a generation where sex wasn't talked about and marital rape was accepted. Now imagine that you are a child who has been assaulted and threatened by someone who you trusted and loved and who claims to love you. A child knows little if anything about the laws or the justice system. Would you have the courage to tell?

Sexual violence differs from all other crimes in that it hurts the victim at the most intimate, personal level. Great strides have been made to support victims, but there is still a

lot of work to be done.

This traumatic crime is still all too often accepted in American culture. It is time to ask ourselves what we as individuals and as a community can do to stop sexual assault. It is time for all entities of our society to acknowledge the potential long-term effects of this crime on victims and our communities and willing speak out with a stronger voice thus making it safer for victims to speak out for themselves. All of us have a stake in addressing this serious problem. Changing attitudes is necessary to changing behavior. Do you have the courage? □

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## HAVE THINGS CHANGED?

*Sandy Kelly, PAVE Advocate, Department of Corrections*

I grew up in the new suburbs outside of Washington DC, easy driving distance to Andrews Air Force Base. The community we lived in, for a time, was mostly other military families, nice houses, good kids, and stay-at-home moms. There was sledding, horseback riding, and neighborhood pickup football games organized by my big brother. On the outside it all looked great. But be careful; don't look too deeply.

My mom did it all. She took care of her then three children, doctors' visits, school events, money management. She was the "perfect wife" looking great, arm and arm with her husband - first Captain, then Major, then Lt Colonel. The promotions continued and so did his status in his military community.

I grew up dreading and going to the Officers Club. It was the mid-60's. In these times, I believe that if a military man wanted to be in one's favor, then it was expected that he would frequent the Officers Club on a pretty regular basis. I hated this place. My father would usually come home late, drunk, and ready to "pick a fight" with who ever got in his way. We would often be prepped by my mom, pending his arrival: "Let's not talk about this tonight." "You know how dad can be. Let's deal with this tomorrow." But you know, no matter how much we tiptoed, things usually got bad.

How could she call the police? Would things get worse once the police left? What were her resources? Who would believe her?

### Some historical perspective:

#### Legal, Late 1960's

Candace Wayne, Attorney, remarked:

One of my clients pressed criminal charges against her husband. The judge asked her if this was the first time she had been beaten up. After observing court proceedings that morning, she knew that if she answered "yes" like all the other women had, her husband would be released with virtually no penalty. So wisely and honestly she answered, "No. This is not the first time." The judge dismissed the case, responding, "Well it

sounds like you must enjoy getting beaten up if it has happened before. There's nothing I can do."

#### Legal, 1977

We have come a long way since "police in Michigan relied on a 'stitch rule' arresting a batterer only if the victim has been injured badly enough to require a specific number of surgical sutures."

#### Activism, 1986

The Vermont Network Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault is formed. Today 16 agencies including PAVE exist around the state of Vermont offering many services such as transitional housing, legal referral services, court services, emergency financial aid, and many more.

Today, even though the police are mandated to remove a batterer from the home, the number of assaults continues to rise. Even though services are more available to victims and their families, women are still very tentative to seek help. So have things changed?

I was recently chatting with the gentleman sitting next to me on a plane. We were both on our way to conferences. He asked what I did for a living, and I told him, "I am an advocate for victims of domestic violence." The next words out of his mouth were, "Why do women stay?" I almost couldn't believe it. There it was, the one statement that I believe we have all heard that continues to plague domestic violence in our culture. What if he had said instead, "Why do some men feel they can hit, batter, and abuse women?" With blinders on, people continue to blame the victim.

We as everyday citizens need to think about what we are saying and to educate ourselves to accurately know who and where the problem is. When you hear, "Why does she stay?" repeat that question back and state what you mean, "Why does he batter?" Certainly the problem does not lie with a woman who has been beaten or becomes homeless with her family because of the abuse.

Regardless of police mandates to arrest and increased services to victims, if we as community members do not try to understand domestic violence and be active bystanders, this terrible crime and injustice will continue. Maybe the question should be, "What hasn't changed for women?" □

# CALLING ALL NEW VOLUNTEERS

Nancy Feinberg, Volunteer Coordinator

Would knowing how domestic or sexual violence impacts your community, your business, or your life make you think about how you could partner with PAVE? We all have a desire to shape the kind of society we want for our children and ourselves, and we would all benefit if it were healthy and prosperous. However, domestic and sexual violence are prevalent in our community and our nation.

If you're a regular reader of our newsletter or see the headlines in the Bennington Banner almost daily, you know the toll that domestic or sexual violence takes on our community members. The statistics should concern you.

- Domestic violence may affect as many as 1 in 4 households.
- One in seven women will experience forcible rape in her lifetime.
- Thirty-nine to 68 percent of girls and 16 to 30 percent of boys with developmental disabilities will be sexually abused before 18 years of age (The Roeher Institute, 1988c).
- Approximately, 7 out of 10 working women will experience sexual harassment in their careers.
- Bennington County accounts for 6% of Vermont's population, yet 22% of Vermont's child abuse crimes occur here (Patrick McArdle, "Aggressive justice pursued in sex cases," *Rutland Herald*, February 3, 2008).
- In 2006, 40% of all Vermont homicides were domestic violence related. There were six homicides and in addition two domestic violence related suicides. Two of the homicides occurred in the workplace (State of Vermont Domestic Violence

Fatality Review Commission Report, 2007).

Furthermore, if Congress passes the proposed 2009 Federal budget, provisions for vitally important domestic violence programs would be slashed—programs that help with shelter and housing, fuel, and the prosecution of offenders. These cuts would infringe on the neediest of our citizens. The message I hear from the Federal government is "We don't care about your community; fend for yourself. Who told you to hold out for hope that you could do better?"

How can we achieve a violence-free community—free from domestic and sexual violence? Becoming a volunteer advocate would be a start.

## Volunteering is a Two-Way Street

PAVE depends on its volunteers. Over the last twelve months, our volunteer advocates contributed over 6000 in-kind hours, a monetary equivalent of \$90,000. (Grantees look for this type of collaboration when issuing grants.) Volunteering must be beneficial for everyone involved. For PAVE, volunteer involvement helps us to sustain our programs by complementing the work of the staff. Volunteers free up staff to develop more programs and to bring integrated services to the victims and their families in order to help them become contributing members of the community. Volunteers have the ability to help people realize that they do have the power to change their own life. There is no greater testimony of the value of the work we do than when a former service user returns as a volunteer.

You may see other benefits to volunteering. Perhaps it is a way to:

- Actively involve citizenship into your life.
- Give back because someone has helped you.
- Learn about community

resources.

- Help you get into college or find a job.
- Challenge yourself and discover the world outside your comfort zone.
- Build up your confidence, or overcome fears.
- Meet new people.
- Share a common interest.

We are familiar with individuals as volunteers. Perhaps it is time to engage businesses or organizations in useful partnerships?

- Are you a business that places importance on actively taking part in shaping your community?
- Does your organization or business encourage volunteering in its policies?
- Will an improved understanding about community issues create better "ambassadors" for your business and our town?
- Do you have the resources to allow "flex" time to employees who want to volunteer during working hours?
- Will residents of the community support your business or organization because of your proactive stance towards ending domestic and sexual violence?
- Would learning about gender violence make you think differently about what it means to be a real man or a real woman?
- Are you a civic, social, religious, business group that would like to arrange a meeting to talk about volunteer opportunities?

Think about joining us if the questions are important to you. We need to find strength in unity, through collaborations, through creative business partnerships. Volunteering can make a difference in the community. We can always use more volunteers. At PAVE, we never let up. How can we? As long as domestic or sexual violence continues to exist, there is too much at stake. □

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

<b>Board of Directors</b>		<b>Mission Statement</b>  To end domestic and sexual violence and to provide supportive and educational services to individuals, families and the community.
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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

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**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.