



MONTGOMERY COUNTY GOVERNMENT

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COORDINATING COUNCIL

2010 ANNUAL REPORT



MISSION

- ♦ *To reduce the incidence of domestic violence and create a safe community for families to live free of abuse.*

SEPTEMBER 20, 2010



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THE HONORABLE PHIL ANDREWS
COUNCILMEMBER
MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL

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ASSOCIATE JUDGE
CIRCUIT COURT FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY
FOR THE HONORABLE
JOHN W. DEBELIUS III
ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE
CIRCUIT COURT FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY

SHIRLEY BRANDMAN
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBER
MONTGOMERY COUNTY SCHOOLS

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FOR JOHN J. MCCARTHY
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FOR JUDITH VAUGHAN-PRATHER
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COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

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*FOR **ARTHUR M. WALLENSTEIN**,*
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DUDLEY WARNER
SENIOR ADMINISTRATOR
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*FOR **UMA AHLUWALIA**, DIRECTOR*
MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

THE HONORABLE EUGENE WOLFE
ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE
DISTRICT COURT OF MARYLAND FOR
MONTGOMERY COUNTY

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VICE CHAIR, DVCC
COMMUNITY MEMBER

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CYNTHIA MOGEL *OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF*



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COUNCIL INFORMATION

TERM OF SERVICE

There are sixteen voting members of the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council who serve without compensation and are appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the County Council. Five are Ex-Officio members who serve at the request of the County Executive: the Administrative Judge of the Circuit Court; the Administrative Judge of the District Court; the Sheriff; the State's Attorney; and the Regional Administrator for the Maryland Division of Parole and Probation. There are five Ex-Officio members who are appointed by the County Executive: a member of the County Council, the Directors of the Departments of Correction and Rehabilitation, Health and Human Services, Police, Commission for Women, and Montgomery County Public School, Board of Education. In addition, there are five members of the general public appointed by the County Executive for renewable three year terms, one of whom is an attorney representing domestic violence victims, and four who have a demonstrated interest in domestic violence issues, including at least one who is a survivor of domestic violence.



SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

The Domestic Violence Coordinating Council meets bi-monthly on the second Thursday of the month and has met twenty-five times since September 2006. Meetings are open to the public.

LEADERSHIP

In November 2009 the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council elected as its Chair, Hannah Sassoon, Domestic Violence Coordinator, representing the Office of the Sheriff and as Vice Chair, Bernard Auchter, Community Member.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the fourth year since its creation, the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council has advanced its mission of reducing the incidence of domestic violence and creating a safe community where families are free of abuse. In 2009-2010 the three committees, Victim Services, Education and Outreach and Legislative and Policy Planning have each identified focus areas and made progress on executing recommendations from the previous report. This report summarizes the accomplishments of the past year, makes recommendations for the next and submits an action plan for each proposal.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- ◆ Coordination of a three day Family Justice Center (FJC) strategic planning session in March 2010 with numerous representatives from multiple County agencies and organizations in attendance;
- ◆ Coordination of a multi-jurisdiction workshop on creating a FJC for representatives from neighboring jurisdictions to discuss the mission of the FJC;
- ◆ Creation of the joint Montgomery County FJC and FJC Foundation quarterly newsletter;
- ◆ Coordination of 1st Annual FJC Foundation Benefit scheduled for October 3, 2010;
- ◆ Collaboration with Verizon Wireless, Maryland Judiciary and Administrative Office of the Courts regarding the installation of the video conferencing at the FJC;
- ◆ Augmentation of on-site agency partnerships at the FJC to include House of Ruth, MD counselors, Interfaith Community Against Domestic Violence Chaplains and MCPD on-site detective;
- ◆ Collaboration with University of Maryland on Internship Program at the FJC;
- ◆ Participation in Law Day, April 2010 to promote awareness of the FJC among attorneys practicing in Montgomery County;
- ◆ Establishment of partnership with Value Village that provides gift certificates for FJC clients and their children in need of basic necessities;
- ◆ Creation of Spanish and English FJC Police Cards for officers to give to victims when they respond to domestic violence calls;
- ◆ Organization of Montgomery County FJC Foundation Appreciation Reception in October 2009 to recognize sponsors and volunteers;
- ◆ Recognition from the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence for the establishment of the FJC and bringing together agencies to provide services that enhance the knowledge and increase the safety of domestic violence victims;
- ◆ Collaboration with multiple County agencies and community organizations for the 1st Choose Respect Teen Dating Conference, November 2009;
- ◆ Coordination of the 1st Choose Respect Teen Dating Public Service Announcement Contest, held in conjunction with the conference. Winners appeared on Fox 5 Morning News;
- ◆ Approval and implementation of the Healthy Teen Dating Curriculum in Montgomery County Public Schools;
- ◆ Introduction and support of Bill 41-10, Domestic Violence Coordinating Council- Youth Membership;
- ◆ Presentation of the Healthy Teen Dating Curriculum to conference participants at the NAACP Health Conference in October 2009, Interagency Coalition Against Teen Pregnancy in March 2010, the Interfaith Community Against Domestic Violence in April 2010 and MCPS Youth Violence Symposium in June 2010;



ACCOMPLISHMENTS CONTINUED

- ◆ Presentation of the Healthy Teen Dating Curriculum to various youth groups in the community to include, teens in MCDR RecExtra Program, Identity, HOC Teen Club and MC Street Outreach Network;
- ◆ Continuation and evaluation of Lethality Assessment Protocol (LAP) throughout Montgomery County;
- ◆ Presentations on legal rights and challenges facing abused women to conference participants at CFW International Conference in July 2010 and 2nd Annual Empowerment Workshop for African Women in October 2009;
- ◆ Ongoing recruitment of attorneys for the Pro Bono Lawyers Initiative Program to refer domestic violence victims to pro bono attorneys for representation at protective order hearings;
- ◆ Ongoing distribution of FJC brochures in English and Spanish to public and community partners;
- ◆ Ongoing display of FJC Bus Cards in English and Spanish to target victims of domestic violence and promote community awareness of the center;
- ◆ Collaboration with the Office of Intergovernmental Relations and the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence on numerous bills in the 2010 Maryland General Assembly including:
 - HB 534/SB329 Extension of Domestic Violence Protective Order
 - HB 700- Protective Order Burden of Proof

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NEXT YEAR:

- ◆ Review of policies and practices to increase offender accountability;
- ◆ Exploration and enhancement of programs to meet the needs of teen dating violence victims;
- ◆ Collaboration among FJC agency partners, FJC Foundation and community volunteers for ongoing sustainability and effective operation of the Montgomery County Family Justice Center;
- ◆ Collaboration with county schools on widespread implementation of the Healthy Teen Dating Curriculum.





VICTIM SERVICES COMMITTEE

CHAIR: HANNAH SASSOON

The Victim Services Committee has been actively collaborating with FJC agency partners, FJC Foundation and community volunteers for ongoing sustainability and effective operation of the FJC. Primary objectives successfully achieved in the previous year are outlined below and include, the expansion of services at the FJC, ongoing sustainability of the FJC through the strengthening of partnerships and community support, as well as outreach to the community regarding FJC services.

FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER

Since opening its doors in April 2009, one-thousand nine hundred victims representing over one hundred different countries of origin have sought services at the Montgomery County FJC with the goal of ending domestic violence in their lives. Fifty Family Justice Centers currently exist around the world and are recognized nationally by the law enforcement, medical and mental health communities as the best-practice for responding to victims of domestic violence. Domestic violence victims who come to the FJC will be able to receive a broad array of critical Montgomery County services. These services include law enforcement intervention in the form of individualized, comprehensive safety plans; assistance with the filing of protective orders and navigating the court system, including specific programs available to immigrants under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA); counseling for victims and their children in both individual and group settings; on-site child care services to support victims through the intake and legal process; and help with obtaining basic needs, such as shelter, food, housing, and transportation often all lost to victims and their families forced to flee their homes.

The Montgomery County FJC initially opened over a year ago with three primary on-site County agencies to include the State's Attorney's Office, Montgomery County Department Health and Human Services and the Sheriff's Office. Catholic Charities and the House of Ruth, Maryland (HRM) were also initial community organizations that continue to provide specialized services to FJC clients. To further meet the needs of victims, in the past year the FJC has expanded its on-site services. This increase of services include the addition of HRM counselors to meet the demand for counseling services for victims and their children, volunteer Chaplains from the Interfaith Community Against Domestic Violence to address the spiritual needs of victims and a detective from the Montgomery County Department of Police who is available to gather evidence on a pending criminal case or begin an investigation based on a criminal complaint.

To further augment client services at the FJC, volunteers are regularly recruited and trained to assist with child care, intake and receptionist duties. Several of the volunteers are also bi-lingual and assist with translation during client interviews. Beginning in August 2010 the FJC in partnership with the University of Maryland, Family Sciences Department began an internship program. The selected intern will complete 120 service hours at the FJC during the fall semester and provide a variety of client services under the supervision of the FJC Director.

The members from the Victim Services Committee also work jointly with the Montgomery County Family Justice Center Foundation (MCFJC), whose mission is to support the charitable and educational activities of the Montgomery County Family Justice Center. The MCFJC, with nine board members and a four member advisory board have been instrumental in raising community awareness and support for the FJC. The Foundation has been working on three primary initiatives, to include the Lawyer's Initiative, the Business



Initiative and the 1st FJC Foundation Annual Benefit. The Lawyer's Initiative, organized by FJC Foundation Board Member Donna Rismiller, is a collaborative effort between the Foundation and the HRM to provide pro bono or lo bono representation for Family Justice Center clients. The Business Initiative is an effort by the FJC board members to engage businesses in the local community and garner their support of the FJC. The 1st Annual FJC Foundation Benefit is scheduled for October 3, 2010 and is led by Benefit Chair, Catherine Leggett. The Benefit is the largest fundraising event for the Foundation to date.

STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION III

In mid-March 2010, the Montgomery County Family Justice Center (MCFJC) and its partners welcomed Casey Gwinn, President and Co-Founder of the National Family Justice Alliance and Judi Adams, Strategic Planner and Vice President of Adams & Adams Consulting and Training, Inc. to Montgomery County for the third and final MCFJC Strategic Planning Session. The three day event was an opportunity for all individuals involved in the creation of the MCFJC, for staff working on site and for newer partners to come together under the guidance of Casey and Judi to focus on the collective vision of the MCFJC, reiterate values, discuss operational issues and set priorities for the future. As a result of the meeting FJC partners and staff experienced a revitalized cohesiveness and jointly concluded that a significant amount of progress has been made in just one year.

In addition to the meeting with staff the Casey Gwinn and Judi Adams took the opportunity to meet with the Board of Directors and friends of and donors to the FJC to learn more about the national movement and to discuss how they could continue to support the work of the FJC.

They also meet with representatives from neighboring jurisdictions in Maryland who were interested in moving forward with a FJC based on the Montgomery County model. The Montgomery County FJC has taken the lead in Maryland to expand the growth of Centers. The FJC has hosted numerous tours and assisted other jurisdiction in their planning for the development of a FJC in their community. The goal is to create an alliance which will collaborate on common issues facing the movement.

VIDEO CONFERENCING

In May 2009, following Chief Judge Robert M. Bell's issuance of the Administrative Order permitting the use of video conferencing for ex-parte, temporary Protective Orders, the Victim Services Committee has been working in partnership with local court personnel and information and technology staff to set-up video conferencing services at the Montgomery County FJC. The addition of the video conferencing at the FJC will allow victims of domestic violence seeking services to complete a petition and obtain a temporary order from a judge in the District or Circuit Courts without leaving the safety of the FJC. Furthermore video conferencing at the FJC will allow victims to seek critical services while awaiting a judge's review of their petitions. Their children will also have the benefit of remaining in the FJC play area while the temporary order is obtained.

The planning team has made great progress and has been successful in developing a process. The courts have developed a plan for the distribution of cases between the District and Circuit Courts. The equipment for the video conferencing provided by Verizon Wireless has been received. A training manual explaining the operation of the video conferencing system is currently being devised. It is expected that the video conferencing system will be installed and functioning by the end of 2010, making the MCFJC a "true" one-stop shop and a pilot for the State of Maryland.



OUTREACH TO THE CITIZENS OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY

To help ensure that the citizens of Montgomery County are aware of the Center and the services offered, the Victim Services Committee in collaboration with the FJC Foundation continued to distribute the FJC brochures, which are available in both English and Spanish. The brochures include specific information regarding eligibility for services at the FJC, location, hours of operation, as well as available services.

In 2010 the Victim Services Committee with support from the FJC Foundation initiated additional outreach projects to further increase awareness of the FJC. One initiative involved the creation of the FJC Police Cards. These palm cards, pictured below are the size of business cards were printed in both English and Spanish have been widely distributed to all district stations within the Montgomery County Police Department. When officers respond to a domestic violence call they provide the card containing pertinent information about the FJC to the identified victim and let them know that they can walk-in to the FJC for further assessment and services.

In addition to the business cards, the Victim Services Committee along with the FJC Foundation created a quarterly newsletter. The newsletter first published in October 2009, is produced to keep FJC partners and community supporters aware of all FJC events, progress at the Center and to recognize those who have made a special contribution to the Center.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER <i>A community partnership providing help for hurting families</i>  600 Jefferson Plaza Rockville, Maryland 20852 240-773-0444 Monday-Friday 8:30 am-5:00 pm After hours 240-777-4000 www.montgomerycountymd.gov/FJC	<u>WHO IS ELIGIBLE?</u> Anyone who is a victim of or has been a victim of domestic violence. Children are welcome to use the child playroom while their parent is receiving services. There are <u>no</u> fees for services. <u>AVAILABLE SERVICES</u> Safety planning Assistance with obtaining protective orders Legal Representation for protective orders Legal assistance for victims with immigration issues Assistance with criminal cases Counseling for victims and their children <u>LOCATION</u> The "Eagle Building" at 600 Jefferson Plaza, 5th Floor, Rockville, MD. It is directly in front of Richard Montgomery High School and next to Marlo Furniture. The FJC is accessible by public transportation and is near the courts.
CENTRO DE JUSTICIA FAMILIAR DEL CONDADO DE MONTGOMERY <i>Una asociación de la comunidad que proporciona ayuda para las familias perjudicadas</i>  600 Jefferson Plaza Rockville, Maryland 20852 240-773-0444 Lunes a Viernes 8:30 de la mañana hasta la 5:00 de la tarde Después de las 5:00 de la tarde, llamar 240-777-4000 www.montgomerycountymd.gov/FJC	<u>QUIEN ES ELEGIBLE?</u> Cualquiera que este sufriendo o ha sufrido violencia domestica. Niños son bienvenidos a usar el área apropiado para ellos mientras sus padres estén recibiendo servicios. <u>No</u> se cobra por servicios. <u>SERVICIOS DISPONIBLES</u> Planificación de seguridad Apoyo Legal- un personal de apoyo le puede asistir en llenar una orden de protección o con cargos criminales. Representación legal para Peticiones de Orden de Protección Civiles Un abogado puede reunirse con usted confidencialmente y explicarle las provisiones para proteger inmigrantes maltratados Consejería para usted y sus niños <u>LOCALIZACIÓN</u> El edificio con el águila en frente. Esta localizado en el 600 E. Jefferson Plaza, Salón 500, Rockville, Maryland Esta al frente del colegio Richard Montgomery. Es accesible por transportación pública, la estación de Metro de Rockville y esta cerca a las cortes judiciales. Estacionamiento gratuito debajo el edificio



EDUCATION AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE

CHAIR: DONNA RISMILLER

The Education and Outreach Committee has been focused on its teen dating violence prevention initiative this past year. The multiple activities and accomplishments of this committee are listed below and primarily include partnering with Montgomery County Schools on the approval and implementation of the Healthy Teen Dating Curriculum, collaborating with multiple County and community agencies on the 1st Annual Choose Respect Teen Dating Conference and PSA Contest and exploring ways to meet the needs of teen dating violence victims.

TEEN DATING VIOLENCE PREVENTION

CHOOSE RESPECT MONTGOMERY TEEN DATING CONFERENCE

On November 14, 2009, in recognition of Domestic Violence Awareness Month the DVCC's Education and Outreach Committee, in partnership with numerous County agencies and community organizations, hosted the 1st Annual Choose Respect Montgomery Teen Dating Conference for local teens and their parents. Over 160 teens and parents attended the conference and participated in educational workshops throughout the day on topics related to healthy and unhealthy teen dating behaviors and misuse of technology.

The day opened with an outstanding performance by City at Peace DC. Five young members of the youth development organization acted out a real life abusive teen dating scenario. The performance was informative and offered the perfect balance between the reality of abusive teen relationships and comedic relief.

The conference also included the presentation of the Teen Dating Proclamation from County Councilmember Phil Andrews, as well as speeches from Montgomery County State's Attorney John McCarthy, Chief Deputy Sheriff Darren Popkin, a youth survivor of domestic violence and Bill Mitchell, President of the Kristin Mitchell Foundation and father of Kristin, whose abusive relationship ended in her murder just after her college graduation.

The feedback from both teens and parents was overwhelmingly positive. The teens reported learning the warning signs of an abusive relationship the various types of abuse, numbers to call for help and to not stay quiet, but to talk to an adult if you are being abused. Several participants said no improvements to the conference were necessary.

The committee plans to have another Teen Dating Conference and is considering April, 2011 as the next event date. The committee also agreed that in order to reach youth from all parts of the county it would alternate venues, having it in the southern part of the county one year and up county the following year.



The poster pictured above was displayed around the community and in schools to promote awareness of the Choose Respect Montgomery Teen Dating Conference.



CHOOSE RESPECT PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT CONTEST



Poster inviting all middle and high school students to participated in the PSA contest..

In order to evoke teens' interest and obtain their perspective on the topic of teen dating abuse, the Education and Outreach Committee of the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council and the State's Attorney's Office sponsored a PSA contest for local teens. The students competed for a \$250.00 cash prize and the opportunity to have their PSA broadcast by a local television or radio station. The top three finalists of the contest were invited to the Choose Respect Montgomery Conference. Maryland's Attorney General, Douglas Gansler, introduced each PSA and announced the winner.

Andrew Willey and Emma Burnett, both 11th graders from Poolesville High School took home the top prize for their production of Teen Abuse: A True Story. Their PSA focused on helping a friend in an abusive relationship. It was a very creative production and included original music from a band at their school. On December 18, 2009 the winners along with Attorney General Gansler appeared on FOX 5 Morning News to discuss the topic of teen dating violence and their PSA.

HEALTHY TEEN DATING CURRICULUM

In 2009 the Education and Outreach Committee created a Healthy Teen Dating Curriculum as the primary tool to utilize in its teen dating violence (TDV) prevention initiative. The curriculum is based on information obtained by three nationally recognized programs: Liz Claiborne's Love is Not Abuse, The CDC's Choose Respect and Break the Cycle's curriculum. It is a 45 minute PowerPoint presentation with several videos on topics related to TDV embedded as visual aides. The primary focus of the presentation is to educate teens about components of both healthy and unhealthy relationships, roles in abusive relationships, local and national help resources and how to speak out against abuse. An attorney from the Montgomery County State's Attorney's Office conducts the presentation and a trained therapist from the Abused Persons Program of Montgomery County's Department of Health and Human Service is also in attendance to address any mental health related questions or concerns a teen may have.

Throughout the past year committee members presented the curriculum to many youth to include, those enrolled in the Montgomery County Recreation Department's RecExtra Program, HOC's Teen Club, Identity and the Montgomery County Street Outreach Network. Awareness of the curriculum was also promoted during several conferences throughout the year.

The Education and Outreach Committee members worked diligently through 2009 and 2010 to obtain approval of the curriculum from MCPS administration and the Citizen's Advisory Council on School Health and Human Development. In April 2010 the curriculum was ultimately approved for presentation in MCPS middle and high schools with final approval by the school's principal necessary. Since then the curriculum has been shown to students at both Northwood and Northwest High Schools. The committee currently is receiving inquiries about the presentation for the upcoming 2010-2011 school year. Meetings have also been scheduled for this fall with MCPS School Counselors and Pupil Personnel Workers in order to make them aware of the curriculum and its benefits to the students.



DVCC MEMBERSHIP

Recognizing the importance of the youth prospective on DVCC initiatives and that youth leaders are instrumental to youth participation in any prevention initiative, DVCC members voted to amend the membership terms of the DVCC to include a youth member. In July 2010 Bill 41-10, Domestic Violence Coordinating Council- Youth Membership was introduced and approved by the Montgomery County Council. It is expected that a youth member will be selected during the fall 2010.

EXPLORATION OF LEGAL OPTIONS FOR VICTIMS OF DATING VIOLENCE

In March 2010 the Education and Outreach Committee met with staff from the Department of Juvenile Services in an effort to identify the ways in which services and legal remedies for victims of dating violence can improve. During the meeting committee members learned more details about the Peace Order filing process for juveniles and recognized particular areas where the safety of teen victims could be improved. The Education and Outreach Committee also researched the legal processes for teens residing in other states and learned that some states do not require a teen to obtain parental permission before filing for civil protection from dating violence. Others offer immediate protection with no wait period. In Maryland it can take up to 30 days for a Temporary Peace Order filed against a juvenile to be heard by a judge. Further exploration in this area will continue to be the committee's priority for the upcoming year. Committee members also plan to partner with the CJCC to advocate for necessary changes in the legislation.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Education and outreach activities continue to be a priority for committee members. In 2009-2010 presentations on legal rights and challenges facing abused women was conducted for conference participants at CFW International Conference in July 2010 and 2nd Annual Empowerment Workshop for African Women in October 2009.

The FJC bus card project continued into 2010 with bus posters in both English and Spanish being displayed on County Ride-on buses. The colorful bus cards provide all the information about the hours, location and services offered at the FJC.

In conjunction with the Healthy Teen Dating Curriculum, the committee has informed school personnel and community educators about the Safe Start counseling program for child witnesses of domestic violence.





LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY PLANNING COMMITTEE

CHAIR: DOROTHY FAIT

The Legislative and Policy Planning Committee in 2009-2010 has focused on three primary initiatives. The multiple activities and accomplishments of this committee are listed below and primarily include ongoing implementation and evaluation of the Lethality Assessment Protocol (LAP), coordination with the Office of Intergovernmental Relations and the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence on domestic violence related legislation in the general assembly and exploration of policies and practices to increase offender accountability.

LETHALITY ASSESSMENT AND PROTOCOL

In August 2008 the Montgomery County Department of Police, Office of the Sheriff and municipal police departments implemented LAP, a danger assessment tool for officers to utilize when they respond to domestic violence calls. Deputies in the Sheriff's Office also use the LAP in cases where the victim files for an Interim protective order and there was no police intervention. The purpose of the Lethality Assessment Protocol is to help those victims at the greatest risk of harm to access domestic violence services.

The protocol requires officers to ask the victim of an intimate partner assault a series of 11 questions at the scene of an incident. If the victim answers in the affirmative to 4 of the questions or in the affirmative to one of the 3 "automatic trigger" questions, or if the officer has concerns based on his/her professional experience, the victim is screened into the protocol. The responding officer then advises the victim of the high danger assessment and will contact the Crisis Center hotline and attempt to connect the victim with a counselor for safety planning.

Patrol officers have embraced the LAP in Montgomery County. It provides them with a useful tool and direction when responding to often difficult domestic violence calls. Quarterly reports are prepared by participating Maryland jurisdictions which show the ratio between the number of victims who complete a LAP survey and talk with a crisis counselor.

The Family Crimes Division (FCD) of the Montgomery County Police Department has maintained the records and collected all pertinent data from LAP surveys conducted by Montgomery County Police Department and Rockville and Gaithersburg City Police Departments. For the period August 2009 to July 2010, 1192 LAP surveys were completed by these law enforcement offices. Of the victims surveyed, 724 were considered high risk by either screening in "according to protocol" or based on officers' belief. Two thirds, 475 of those high risk victims were put in direct contact with a counselor at the Abused Persons Program or the Crisis Center. An additional 172 victims who were willing and interested in speaking with APP but were unable to do so at the time, were provided with the program/contact information. They agreed to call APP at a later time or the following day. During the last year in Montgomery County only 77 victims declined to speak with anyone. A total of 647 or 89% of high risk victims became aware of the County's domestic violence services or were willing to speak to a counselor as a result of the LAP.

LAP data were also collected from the Abused Persons Program to determine the number of domestic violence victims that followed up with counseling services, whether it is for telephone crisis counseling, in-person safety planning or counseling sessions. The statistics indicate a good number have continued in counseling and/or working with APP victim advocates on safety planning and legal processes. Most of these clients would not have come to the program without this protocol.



LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

The Domestic Violence Coordinating Council worked with the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence and the Office of Intergovernmental Relations in support of the 2010 domestic violence legislative agenda in the General Assembly in Annapolis.

The following is a summary of domestic violence legislation that passed and will take effect October 1, 2010:

HB500/SB252 -Child Support Guidelines -After years of study and a drawn out legislative battle, the revised Child Support Guidelines were passed. This was the first revision in the Guidelines, originally enacted more than twenty years ago. The new Guidelines contain an updated grid of the "market basket" numbers which more accurately reflect the cost of raising a child. The Bill also applies to families with incomes up to \$15,000 per month. The enactment of the Guidelines is not grounds for requesting an increase, as the enactment does not constitute a material change in circumstances, as stated in the law. The law provides that it shall "take effect" October 1, 2010.

HB534/SB329 -Extension of Domestic Violence Protective Order -This law allows a Court to extend a Protective Order for up to two years if a respondent commits a subsequent act of abuse while the original Protective Order is in place.

HB1149/SB935 ~ Shielding of Certain Records Upon Denial or Dismissal of a Protective Order or Peace Order -This law was a compromise effort after controversy over the "expungement" Bill proposed last year to allow a respondent to expunge a Protective Order or Peace Order, if the Order was denied or dismissed. This law allows a respondent, in a case that has been dismissed or denied, to request a Court to remove the notation of a Protective Order or Peace Order from the Maryland Judiciary Case Search website and all other public access records. However, domestic violence advocates, judges, and law enforcement officials would have continued access to these records.

HB1382/SB5S4 -Protection for Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Victims in Rental Housing -This law gives protections to victims of domestic violence who live in rental housing. The law provides that if a petitioner/tenant has a final Protective Order or Peace Order, the petitioner may terminate the lease without penalty in order to re-locate. Further, a landlord must change the locks to a petitioner's apartment upon request of the petitioner and at the petitioner's expense. The law also creates a rebuttal presumption that the petitioner is not in breach of the lease if the landlord is attempting to evict the petitioner for the behavior of the abuser.

EXPLORATION OF IMPROVED OFFENDER ACCOUNTABILITY PROGRAMS

During the previous year members have examined several program options in an effort to increase offender accountability. One such alternative that has been explored involves the implementation of a domestic violence Abuser Intervention Program (AIP) at the County's Pre-Release Center (PRC). It is known that a percentage of defendants at PRC are there for domestic violence related offenses or have domestic violence issues in their relationship. Currently there is no specific AIP treatment offered to them during this transitional phase of their incarceration, elevating the concern for victim safety. During the upcoming year the committee will consider the necessary treatment modality for this specific population and implementation of a program at PRC.



In September 2010 the DVCC will welcome staff from the Prince George's County program, Adam's House Program to learn more about their offender treatment program. Adam's House serves males and females in Prince George's County between the ages of 10 to 25 without children and individuals up to age 35 with children. Individual services available include counseling, child support advocacy, crisis intervention and anger management in addition to various health services. Group counseling sessions are offered for domestic violence.

In March 2010 the DVCC reviewed The Governor's Family Violence Council (FVC) Abuser Intervention Program (AIP) Certification Process which aims to certify AIP's for inclusion in the Administrative Office of the Courts Bench Book for Maryland Judges. This handbook is used by judges to refer abusers to appropriate intervention programs. In previous years abuser counseling programs in Maryland participated in a self certification process. The standards for the current certification process outline specific training requirements for AIP treatment staff, intake procedures for offenders and more intensive contact with the victim. The current Montgomery County AIP contractor agency, J&E Associates announced that they are participating in the FVC's certification process.





RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEXT YEAR

Recommendation #1 Review of policies and practices to increase offender accountability

In order to successfully intervene and reduce the incidence of domestic violence in the County, offender accountability must be a priority. It is the responsibility of the coordinated community to assure that effective offender treatment programs that are in place meet the demands of those referred for treatment and address the safety of victims. It is also important that a swift intervention and response process is in place to address violations of domestic violence orders issued by the courts.

In the upcoming year the DVCC will continue its review of the County's offender treatment programs. It will examine how offenders' cases are handled among involved agencies, interactions between these agencies and the courts and how violations are reported to the courts in criminal and civil cases.

Action Plan:

The DVCC will create a committee which will be tasked with defining system and individual accountability, as well as continuing to explore promising practices for increased offender accountability. The implementation of new programs or policy revisions will also be considered by this committee.

Recommendation #2 Collaboration among County Government, FJC agency partners, FJC Foundation and community volunteers for ongoing sustainability and effective operation of the Montgomery County Family Justice Center

Since April 2009, nearly 1900 victims of domestic violence received services at the FJC from on-site partners. The commitment of County Government, the MCFJC Foundation and the community in general has significantly maximized the Center's success in serving some of the County's most vulnerable citizens.

The MCFJC Foundation continues to work in close association with the DVCC for ongoing sustainability of the Center. The Foundation's mission is to support the charitable and educational activities of the FJC and in its first year raised \$125,000 in income and an almost equal amount in in-kind contributions including furniture and furnishings, pro bono legal services, food, as well as books, games and other take a ways for children who visited the Center. The Foundation's 1st Annual Benefit titled, Keeping Them Safe, Giving them Hope and a New Start, on October 3rd is the Foundation's primary fundraising event of the year and aims to raise awareness and resources for the ongoing support of the center. The Lawyers and Business Initiatives of the MCFJC Foundation have been established in the past year and assist victims by providing pro bono or lo bono legal services and support from the business community, respectively.

Supplementary and essential support for the daily operation of the FJC has come from a core group of volunteers committed to helping with various duties at the FJC. The FJC partners are committed to ongoing recruitment of qualified volunteers and have also recently initiated an internship program with the University of Maryland.

To date the FJC partners have managed the Center without additional staff. It is expected with increased awareness of the FJC and the addition of the Video Conferencing services that the demand for victim services at the Center will grow rapidly. Among the several efforts listed above the DVCC will request, when it is economically feasible, the addition of County staff positions at the FJC.

Action Plan:

The Domestic Violence Coordinating Council and FJC partners will continue to collaborate with the FJC



Foundation in order to sustain the operation of the Center, increase awareness of domestic violence assistance for victims and help families maintain violence free homes.

The FJC partner agencies will sustain the recruitment of qualified and diverse volunteers and interns to assist with the daily operation of the FJC and with special events in the next year.

When financially viable, a request for additional permanent staff will be discussed.

Recommendation #3 Review of policies and programs affecting victims of teen dating violence

According to a recent study 1 in 3 adolescent girls in the United States is a victim of physical, emotional, or verbal abuse from a dating partner, a figure that far exceeds victimization rates for other types of violence affecting youth.¹ However, many states, including Maryland, do not provide the same legal protections or services for teen victims of intimate or dating violence that adult victims receive. Currently in Maryland anyone under the age of 18 can not file for legal protection without the consent of a parent or guardian, creating a significant obstacle for most teens who may have difficulty disclosing the violence that exists in their relationship. Also there are no ExParte hearings or opportunities for emergency protection when Peace orders are filed by juvenile victims in Maryland. Under current procedures it may, in fact take up to 30 days before the petitioner appears before a Judge and is granted protection, greatly impacting the safety of the victim.

In March 2010 the DVCC met with representatives from the Department of Juvenile Services and began to explore existing practices and programs in place for teen victims of dating violence. DVCC members also closely examined recommendations made by Break the Cycle, which annually grades each state's responsiveness to the distinct needs of teens and young adults. For 2010 Maryland received a "C" with the following recommendations for improvement:

Allow minors to petition for Protective Orders and Peace Orders on their own behalf and explicitly describe the procedure for doing so.

Allow Protective Orders and Peace Orders to be issued against minor respondents.

Allow victims of intimate partner harassment to access orders of protection.

Allow minors to access all sensitive services without parental involvement.

Action Plan:

The DVCC will continue to explore promising practices, policy and legislative changes necessary to increase the safety of teen dating violence victims.

Recommendation #4 Collaboration with county schools on widespread implementation of the Healthy Teen Dating Curriculum

The prevalence of violence in teen dating relationships in the United States is very concerning; the effect it has on a teen victim's life can be devastating. One study revealed that violent relationships in adolescence can have serious ramifications by putting the victims at higher risk for substance abuse, eating disorders, risky sexual behavior, and adult revictimization.² Another study showed that the severity of intimate partner violence has been shown to be greater in cases where the pattern of violence has been established in adolescence.³ The DVCC in an effort to prevent such damaging outcomes created a Healthy Teen Dating Curriculum based on

1. Davis, Antoinette, MPH. 2008. *Interpersonal and Physical Dating Violence among Teens*. The National Council on Crime and Delinquency Focus. Available at <http://www.nccd-rc.org/nccd/pubs/Dating%20Violence%20Among%20Teens.pdf>.
 2. Silverman, J, Raj A, et al. 2001. *Dating Violence Against Adolescent Girls and Associated Substance Use, Unhealthy Weight Control, Sexual Risk Behavior, Pregnancy, and Suicidality*. JAMA. 286:572-579. Available at <http://jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/reprint/286/5/572>.
 3. S.L. Feld & M.A. Strauss, *Criminology*, 27, 141-161, (1989).



several nationally recognized programs. Collaboration with MCPS to obtain approval of the curriculum began in 2009 with final approval obtained in April 2010. The DVCC remains committed to widespread use of the program and began an awareness campaign with MCPS school personnel in June 2010. Additional presentation to MCPS staff, including School Counselors, Pupil Personnel Workers and School Psychologists are planned for this fall.

Action Plan:

The DVCC will continue to address this important issue of teen dating violence in the next year by coordinating with MCPS Personnel to expose more students to the curriculum.





MONTGOMERY COUNTY GOVERNMENT

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COORDINATING COUNCIL

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