



Revolution

a semi-annual journal for those working to stop sexual and domestic violence

In this edition:

Working to end sexual violence &
working to end domestic violence:
intersections and differences

Volume 1, Issue 1
Winter 2006



Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence
ACTIONALLIANCE

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Launch the Revolution
by the Alliance Co-Directors
page 2

**Two Movements,
Two Paths, One Goal**
by Lacey Sloan
page 3

**Transforming VAASA
and VADV**
by Alice Twining
page 7

**Agency Snapshots:
Sexual & Domestic
Violence Agencies**
page 9

**Domestic Violence
& Sexual Assault Agencies:
Differences & Similarities**
by Melissa DeDomenico-Payne
page 11

**Open and Willing:
Creating a New Coalition**
by Kristi VanAudenhove
page 15

“When you invite
people to think,
you are inviting
revolution”

Ivone Gebara,
Brazilian philosopher
and theologian ecofeminist

Looking Ahead
by Tammi Slovinsky
page 21

Next edition: Prevention in Virginia: Summer 2006

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Launch the Revolution

By Ruth Micklem, Kristi VanAudenhove & Jeanine Woodruff, Alliance Co-Directors

In October 2004 the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance was born out of a four-year labor of love between Virginians Aligned Against Sexual Assault and Virginians Against Domestic Violence. As labor frequently is, the process was a lot of hard work—more painful than they tell you it will be—and ultimately, incredibly rewarding.

This first issue of the new Alliance journal, *Revolution*, invites you to ponder the differences and similarities between the work to end sexual violence in America, and the work to end domestic violence in that same culture. We have shared a few observations about our process of creating the Alliance, and Lacey Sloan graces us with a national perspective that mirrors the perspective that many of us brought into the transformation process.

Sexual and domestic violence are each acts of abuse of socially attained power and are deeply personal violations. Sexual violence is deeply personal no matter the relationship with the perpetrator because of the sex—our most intimate and private form of physical contact twisted by violence. Domestic violence is deeply personal no matter the form of violence because of the relationship with the perpetrator—our most intimate and private relationship twisted by violence. Complicating things further, sexual and domestic violence are often

intertwined in the lives of children, women and men.

“Sexual and domestic violence are acts of abuse of socially attained power and are deeply personal violations.”

when perpetrators of the violence are held immediately and clearly accountable in their families and in their communities, and when victims of the violence are supported in their healing and recovery without stigma. We are on the right track in addressing unintentional sexual and domestic violence when we provide every young person with an understanding of sex and relationships that is based on values

Ending both sexual and domestic violence will require that we build communities in which people do not intentionally or unintentionally pervert sex or relationships through violence. We are on the right track in addressing intentional sexual and domestic violence

of equality, respect, and health—and reinforce that skills that promote healthy relationships and joyful sexuality. We are on the right track addressing all forms of sexual and domestic violence when we ally with those who are working to end racism, religious oppression, hate crimes, and other forms of social injustice that like

sexual and domestic violence arise out of a morally bankrupt belief that any one person is superior to another.

Here in Virginia, we are going to do that together—as one unified voice and one powerful coalition!!!



Two Movements, Two Paths, One Goal

By Lacey M. Sloan, Ph.D., MSSW

Second wave feminism of the 1960's brought attention to violence in the lives of women and girls. As women shared stories of rape and abuse, they soon began to organize to support each other through the establishment of safe houses, crisis lines, and self-defense classes. It remains unclear why violence against women evolved into separate domestic violence and sexual assault movements, but it is clear that the two movements have had different degrees of success in the convening 30 years. The successes and failures of local domestic violence and sexual assault programs and state coalitions has paralleled that of the national domestic violence and sexual assault organizations.

By the early 1970's, the separate paths of the sexual assault and domestic violence movements were set. At the local level, rape crisis and battered women's services were formally organized, usually as separate organizations. By the late 1970's, the first domestic violence and sexual assault state coalitions organized—again, separately—to provide support to the growing number of local programs (for example, the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault and the Wisconsin Coalition Against Woman Abuse both formed in 1977). In the late 1970s, it was only natural that the national coalitions—the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence and the National Coalition Against Sexual Assault would form as separate organizations. For the past 30 years, these two movements worked to end violence against women.

The domestic violence movement has

generally been more successful with messaging, obtaining funding, and gaining societal support. Over the years, despite many successful collaborations, some tension existed at the local, state, and national levels between the two movements. The tension is primarily focused on funding, although turf has more recently become an issue. As the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) changes the landscape, more local and state organizations are examining whether or not it is time to combine resources to end violence against women.

Funding

“It remains unclear why violence against women evolved into separate domestic violence and sexual assault movements, but it is clear that the two movements have had different degrees of success in the convening 30 years.”

One of the first successes of the battered women's movement was the acquisition of state funding for battered women's shelters. Today, while every state provides funding for domestic violence programs, many states have yet to provide funding for sexual assault programs. Unfortunately, many legislators don't even realize the difference between domestic violence and sexual assault and think they have funded both when funding domestic violence programs. Most early state domestic violence coalitions not only worked for funding for local

programs, but also for funding for the coalition. By including the state coalition in funding legislation, domestic violence coalitions were positioned to be more effective in obtaining additional resources for both the state coalition and local programs. For example, the Texas Council on Family Violence (TCFV) included itself in early funding legislation for shelters. Within 20 years, the amount of state funds allocated to the coalition (over \$1 million) exceeded the amount of state funding awarded to all 70 sexual assault programs in the state (\$350,000)¹.

For a variety of reasons, many early sexual assault coalitions did not pursue funding for themselves, focusing efforts on funding for local programs. Some sexual assault coalitions resisted forming as non-profit organizations because of concern over lobbying restrictions. Others were reluctant to pursue funding for the coalition when local programs were under-funded. Of course, this was a critical mistake, as failure to seek resources for the state coalitions left the coalitions unable to seek funds for local programs.

The failure of sexual assault programs and state sexual assault coalitions to obtain funding impacted the success of the national coalition. While the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV) was successful in obtaining funds to open a national office (and today operates two offices), the National Coalition Against Sexual Assault (NCASA) was never successful in funding a national office.

In the early 1990's, NCASA failed to obtain adequate resources to open and maintain a national office. When NCASA was unable to accept an offer of funding to operate a national hotline, RAINN (Rape Awareness and Incest Network) was created. RAINN refused to collaborate with NCASA and although many sexual assault programs are "members" of the RAINN telephone relay system, there remains much hostility towards RAINN². By 1995, NCASA's board of directors dissolved the organization, leaving the sexual assault movement without a national voice.

The inequality in state and federal funding creates an obvious tension as sexual assault programs remain under-funded and often feel a lack of support from their allies in the domestic violence movement.

In combined (also called "dual" or "joint") sexual assault and domestic violence programs this tension may be most palpable. In combined programs, domestic violence services can receive more than tenfold the amount of funding committed to the sexual assault program. While agency directors may argue that this is due to the level of federal and state funding available for domestic violence, most of these combined programs do not

designate unrestricted funds for sexual assault services, instead these funds are typically funneled into domestic violence services. There is little argument that shelter services are more costly than sexual assault services, and shelters can easily use all funds directed their way.

In addition to being successful in obtaining funding for basic services, the domestic violence movement, both federally and at the state level, was able to obtain funding to serve children. From the 1980's forward, funding for domestic violence has always included funding for the children of battered

women. Conversely, the sexual assault movement has rarely been funded to serve children³, despite the fact that 1/3 of the victims served by sexual assault programs are children who are victims of sexual assault, including incest. Today, other organizations exist that have laid claim to serving child victims.

"In combined programs, domestic violence services can receive more than tenfold the amount of funding committed to the sexual assault program."

The Violence Against Women Act

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) of 1994 provided an infusion of funding for sexual assault and domestic violence programs across the country. The money available for sexual assault programs was a particular boost as many sexual assault programs still operated only on local funding and Health Block Grant funding. The money brought

"...the sexual assault movement has rarely been funded to serve children, despite the fact that 1/3 of the victims served by sexual assault programs are children who are victims of sexual assault..."

by VAWA also brought interest in sexual assault by programs that had previously done little or nothing to end sexual violence. Domestic violence programs that had not previously served sexual assault victims began to seek funding to address the issue of sexual violence. Many

in the sexual assault movement were suspicious of whether or not these programs were really expanding services to include sexual assault survivors or services, or merely maintaining the status quo but counting the sexual victimization experienced by victims of domestic violence in order to obtain/retain funds.

Despite the funds VAWA brings to the effort to re-

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spond to violence against women, the disparity in funds allocated for domestic violence and sexual assault continues to exacerbate the tensions between the two movements. Ninety percent of the victims served by VAWA funds are victims of domestic violence. Several VAWA grant programs are restricted to domestic violence (i.e., Grants to Encourage Arrest Policies; Rural Domestic Violence and Child Victimization Program; Family Justice Center grants) or primarily focused on services needed by victims of domestic violence (Safe Havens Supervised Visitation and Exchange programs; Legal Assistance for Victims; Transitional Housing), even though these grant programs fund responses that could be equally beneficial for sexual assault victims. Another tension in VAWA funding is that some grant programs provide funding for the children of battered women (i.e., Safe Havens & the Rural grant program), but no VAWA funding is allowed for child victims of sexual abuse (other than victims of date rape). A final inequity is that VAWA funds Batterer Intervention Programs (BIP), but not Sex Offender Treatment programs. BIPs are considered part of the continuum of services for battered women, since many women will remain with or return to their batterers. However, the failure to fund sex offender treatment programs ignores that fact that even if a rapist does not assault the same victim more than once (although many will), he will rape another woman.

“The disparity in funds allocated to domestic violence and sexual assault continues to exacerbate tensions between the two movements.”

“A final inequity is that VAWA funds Batterer Intervention Programs, but not Sex Offender Treatment programs.”

Messaging

The true success—or failure—of the sexual assault and domestic violence movements has been in societal acceptance of the messaging of these two movements. There are several areas of messaging that have been undertaken over the past 30 years: basic identity, violence and sex, offenders, and image. Each of these are discussed below.

Basic Identity

The success of the domestic violence movement stems, in large part, in its ability to successfully market its message. By the time the National

Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV) was organized in 1978, the first repackaging of battered women had occurred. Instead of the message focusing on battered women, this piece of the violence against women’s movement had become “domestic violence.”

The term domestic violence moves the focus from individual abused women to women and children. Problems affecting those who are deemed not culpable for the problems in their lives—such as children and people affected by disease—

are more likely to attract funding. So, as violence perpetrated by men against their intimate partners became identified with violence perpetrated against children, the issue became much more palatable for the masses.

Similarly, by the time the National Coalition Against Sexual Assault organized in 1979, the term “sexual assault” was used to reflect the violent (versus sexual) nature of the crime. However, unlike the domestic violence movement, the sexual assault movement has not been as successful in providing a succinct message that mainstream America could embrace. And, despite the fact that 1/3 of the primary victims served by sexual assault programs are children, sexual assault programs are rarely identified with services for children. Sexual assault myths persist, with concerns about false allegations continuing to nag at the public beliefs about rape.

Violence and Sex

One of the great successes of the domestic violence movement has been to educate society that “no one deserves to be hurt.” In pre-1970’s, violence perpetrated in the home was considered to be a private matter. However, the domestic violence movement delivered powerful messages that helped society realize that no one asks to be hit and that no matter whether you are related to your offender or not, hitting is a crime. Nothing that looks like a slap, punch or other physical violence is consensual.

Conversely, the sexual assault movement struggles to instill an image of rape or sexual assault separate from sex. Changing terminology from “rape” to “sexual assault” left the word “sex” in the name of

the offense. Given our society's difficulty, even in the year 2006, to discuss sex, it is not surprising that society remains unwilling to discuss sexual assault. Also, the act of penetration can be either sex or sexual assault—consent is the factor that separates the two. Unlike physical violence, there is something that “looks” like sexual assault (i.e., sex). It is the concern with false allegations of sexual assault that the sexual assault movement has not been able to overcome. Although the history of disbelief of rape victims has its history in English law, the majority of people still believe women frequently falsely accuse men of rape. It is easy for many to imagine that a victim has failed to honestly communicate her intent, or to buy into the idea of the vengeful or regretting woman “crying” rape.

Offenders

There is a longstanding societal more that “men should not hit women.” There are many movie scenes where the gentleman walks away or barely flinches when slapped by a woman. Many a movie hero has intervened to stop a man from hurting a woman. Despite this ideal, woman abuse has a long history and there is disagreement about society's right to get involved when this more is violated. Over the past 30 years, the battered women's movement has been successful in changing societal acceptance of violence between intimate partners as a private matter to understanding it as a criminal matter worthy of intervention. Many a sheriff, prosecutor, and politician now use language to describe domestic violence that is straight from the writings of radical feminists such as Andrea Dworkin.

Conversely, 30 years of anti-rape education still finds a stiff wave of belief in rape myths. Famous movie scenes romanticize rape, with the victim fulfilled by the experience (e.g. Scarlett O'Hara's rape by Rhett Butler in *Gone with the Wind*). The socialization of males in our society includes boys being taught that they must persuade girls to have sex, and girls are still taught that they should not agree to have sex. Of course, persuading someone to have sex is not against the law, and even coercion is rarely criminal⁴. Today, most people would agree that if one party says “no” or resists, then the other party must not make any further actions to engage in sex. Yet, there is an assumption in our society that men have the right to sexual access to women unless permis-

sion is specifically withdrawn (hence, the need for women to say “no”). However, there is some ambivalence about whether one “no” is adequate, or the degree to which resistance must be displayed. In a recent conversation with a nationally recognized violence against women expert, it was suggested that one of the reasons for the success of the domestic violence movement over the sexual assault movement is that more men have actually persuaded, coerced or forced a woman to engage in sex than have physically abused a woman. Therefore, domestic violence is an easier act for men to join against, whereas sexual assault is more difficult because of the culpability of more men. Whether this is accurate or not is unknown, but it is likely that men can more easily fear finding themselves “falsely” accused of rape than find themselves falsely accused of hitting a woman.

“The true success—or failure—of the sexual assault and domestic violence movements has been in societal acceptance of the messaging of these two movements.”

A final note on offenders. In both the sexual assault and domestic violence movements, women are recognized as the primary victims of crimes perpetrated by men. At the same time, both sexual assault and domestic violence programs recognize that men may be victims of either same sex or heterosexual assaults. However, with a few notable exceptions, rape crisis centers have been quicker than domestic violence

programs to adapt services and outreach to male victims. This is probably due to research that indicates that until age 12, male children are victimized at similar rates to female children. Since rape crisis centers typically work with both child victims and adults molested as children, approximately 10% of the primary victims served are male. Conversely, many domestic violence programs still resist housing adolescent male children in their shelters, much less adult men.

Image

Both the sexual assault and domestic violence movements have tried to reject early portrayals of themselves as radical feminists, man-haters, lesbians, and anti-family activists. Of course, the irony is that many of the founders of the violence against women's movement were (and are to this day) radical feminists, lesbians, and activists. It has been one of the challenges with which both sexual assault and domestic violence programs have struggled: how to become viable components in the

continued on page 19

Transforming VAASA and VADV

Tales from a Transformation Committee member

By Alice Twining, Ed.D., LCP

As President of the Board of Directors of Virginians Against Domestic Violence (VADV) during the transformation that joined Virginians Aligned Against Sexual Assault (VAASA) and VADV in 2004, I was involved in the process from the big picture perspective as well as the personal experience of change. Discussions about joining together to form a training and meeting center had started a decade before, but the first formal step in this recent change was a joint meeting of the two coalition's executive committees in November 2000. Looking back now, the years of planning, background research and meetings with hundreds of members accomplished the goal of bringing the two organizations together as a corporation, and much more.

Almost half of the state coalitions working to end sexual and domestic violence in the United States have become single entities. Other coalitions called us and were interested in Virginia's method of joining together because of our emphasis on values, attitudes and beliefs. Participants underscored the value that local programs are the driving force of the Alliance. Concern for the thirty coalition staff was taken seriously. The importance of equity in addressing issues of sexual and domestic violence was validated, and a commitment was made to promote intentional inclusion of all voices, emphasizing those traditionally oppressed and/or marginalized in anti-violence work.

The Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance now has a mission, vision, strategic plan, and operations to carry out these goals. Alliance agencies and members have formed a larger network of individuals and groups all over Virginia

who believe that ALL people have the right to a life free of violence. What does this mean to each of us, and especially to survivors of sexual and domestic violence?

Reflecting on these steps toward transformation, the journey for me was a path with dips, turns and peak experiences. The pinnacle of the process was the early development of principles to guide us, including respect, honesty, openness, and acknowledgement of self-interest. Many people drove many miles to do this work. No matter how many ideas and discussions needed to happen to help the coalitions change, the ultimate focus was that trust was essential in order for people and agencies to take the risks involved to change as well. It wasn't a perfect process. It was a very human process.

"The pinnacle of the process was the early development of principles to guide us, including respect, honesty, openness, and acknowledgement of self-interest."

As a clinical psychologist for thirty years, sitting with women, children and other marginalized survivors of trauma and injustice, one sees the courage and struggle in each person as they move one step closer to peace and justice. In the process of encouraging survivors to access the resources inside themselves and in their communities, there is a constant awareness of the commonalities that bind us in our shared need for safety and security. We are all vulnerable to hurt and betrayal.

Transformation committee meetings sometimes reflected similar levels of vulnerability, and included the fear of losing control over organizations that had been built over decades with hope, energy and tears. Living in a world that uses power and violence systematically as well as randomly, workers in our movement have listened to survivors from all walks of life. Knowing with heightened awareness how

people and institutions can harm one another, fear sometimes filled meeting rooms like an impending landslide that started and ultimately ended in silence. Steps forward united with steps back, and as an often confused participant, aloneness gave rise to my own self-care. Sometimes my low energy was overcome with the support of many kindred spirits who were reminders of the importance of never giving up on an important journey.

Being part of this movement is not an easy path.

“...the last four years feel like another major step forward in the long history of social change in Virginia, with more steps to equality and shared power still to come.”

The work to end violence against the powerless and poor, the oppressed and discriminated against is a mighty struggle. It often feels like pushing millions of boulders at the same time.

Then there are moments when a boulder turns into many pebbles on the road, and a march of bodies and voices picks them up and moves them to a new place, such as watching a law in a Senate committee change to improve the criminal legal system’s response to marital rape. Then the success of a movement that has coalesced feels tremendous. Boulders can, after all, turn to sand with friction.

In sorting through our differences in the transformation process, it was paramount to remember the similarities in our work to advocate for safety, growth, health, and societal change for all survivors of sexual and domestic violence. I saw some of our historical differences as a result of funding sources’ actions to bureaucratize and separate us into artificial entities – we had to set up shop with separate boards and bookkeepers. Our histories as grass roots movements created some different strategies that made our work look different – crisis centers vs. shelters. Some of our differences were because many, many people made the histories of each coalition. I remember my happy gasp in the first minute of the first joint meeting in November, 2000: I looked around the circle and knew most of the people! We all were the same –all healers and seekers of societal change – supportive and caring.

Many of our transformation agreements were important to reach through consensus. As values and guide-

lines were unanimously supported, frozen breath was released. The fear that domestic violence work would absorb sexual assault work weighed heavily in many meetings. As people continually lifted up the value of sexual assault centers, trust grew and the paths of history transitioned into a united road that emphasized equity in funding and recognition of sexual violence work. The memories of incest survivors I’d sat with in my office since 1976 floated through my awareness every time we moved through this important issue. Their voices kept saying “we are all one.” I listened.

When new and previously silenced voices sought to infuse the transformation committee with important priorities and new structures, the fear of loss set in. I could back up and shut down, feel attacked or embrace a deeper level of change. Naming this surge of new energy as a fundamental human rights movement was invigorating and releasing. The recognition that many forms of oppression intersect with sexual and domestic violence was true and right.

In perspective, the last four years feels like another major step forward in the long history of social change in Virginia, with more steps to equality and shared power still to come. As one small person in the transformation process, I could choose to feel inadequate or powerful beyond measure. As a member of the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance, I am continually liberated from my own fear.



Alice Twining is a licensed clinical and forensic psychologist who has been working in the field since 1976. She was a psychotherapist and adult educator, teaching at the college level for 14 years. Alice joined the VADV Training Institute in 1997, and was Board President of VADV from 1999-2004. She has been the Program Director at the YWCA of Hampton Roads and at Samaritan House, where she most recently worked as Clinical Trainer.

“In sorting through our differences in the transformation process, it was paramount to remember the similarities in our work to advocate for safety, growth, health, and societal change for all survivors of sexual and domestic violence.”

Agency snapshots:

what are the benefits to being a stand alone vs. a joint program?

Virginia has 11 stand-alone Sexual Assault Crisis Centers, 23 stand-alone Domestic Violence Programs, and 26 “joint” (combined sexual assault and domestic violence) agencies.

We asked a few directors to describe the strengths of their approach, based on whether they were stand-alone or joint agencies. Here are their thoughts.

Sexual Assault Resource Agency, Charlottesville

Kristine Hall, (former) Director

What are the benefits to being a stand-alone Sexual Assault Crisis Center?

As an agency with a sole focus, we are able to devote all resources to the issue of sexual violence. Additionally, since we have sexual assault in our agency name, people who have experienced sexual violence know where they go for help. This might not be the case with a joint program that is mostly known for its shelter and domestic violence programs.

In some ways the stand-alone set-up is a tangible representation of the dichotomized view of domestic violence and sexual violence in our communities—sexual assault crisis centers deal with stranger assault that affects adult women and domestic violence programs work with women beaten by their husbands. Yet, sexual and domestic violence experienced by women, children, and men in our communities are more varied than these narrowly defined terms. Sometimes community members don't recognize that crisis centers can help with child sexual victimization or sexual violence perpetrated by a dating partner, family member, or friend. Similarly, I believe they might not always recognize that domestic violence programs can help with sexual violence perpetrated by a dating partner or intimate partner, as well as the effects on children.

Did you ever consider becoming a joint agency?

Since we were established in 1974, the Sexual Assault Resource Agency has always been a stand-alone sexual assault crisis center. Currently, as well as historically, we have worked collaboratively with the local stand-alone domestic violence program to deliver effective, comprehensive, and efficient services to the communities that we serve. Approximately ten years ago, the Shelter for Help in Emergency and the Sexual Assault Resource Agency had serious discussions about joining the programs. However, the decision of the Boards at that time was to maintain two distinct organizations while identifying opportunities for joint projects and collaboration.

ACTS/Turning Points, Dumfries

Kay Mathews, Director

What are the benefits to being a stand-alone Domestic Violence Program?

We never have to question how to direct or divide resources. The community views us as the expert in the area and we can keep our message very direct and focused. Having a sexual assault program within the community allows us to refer appropriate individuals to them, where they have the expertise and can serve that victim in a focused way. When we have victims with issues relevant to both programs we can work as arms of the collective body to address both issues.

Did you ever consider becoming a joint agency?

When the program was founded (in 1981), domestic violence was the primary concern. Without doubt there were issues of sexual abuse within those relationships, but the overarching issue was domestic violence. To my knowledge there has never been discussion of merging the two programs, although there are certain advantages that could come from such a union. Enormous care and attention would need to be given that one issue not eclipses the other, and that the community could be educated to recognize the intersection of sexual and domestic violence.

Sexual Assault Response and Awareness, Alexandria

Melissa Schmisek, (former) Director

What is the benefit of being a **stand-alone Sexual Assault Crisis Center**?

As a stand-alone program, the SARA Program is able to focus 100 percent of its time on sexual violence, which in turn enables staff to develop an expertise in serving clients, conducting community outreach and education, and working with allied professionals. Additionally, a stand-alone program brings much needed attention to the issue of sexual violence, which often gets secondary attention after domestic violence.

The SARA Program was founded in 1975 as the Rape Victim Companion Program with the intent to serve sexual violence clients only. The SARA Program has never discussed merging with its sister agency, the Domestic Violence Program. However, departments outside the Office on Women have suggested on at least one occasion that the SARA Program and the Domestic Violence Program merge. Both programs strongly rejected this idea, which quickly ended any further discussion related to combining the programs.

Project Horizon, Lexington

Judy Castele, Director

How did your agency become a **joint program**?

Project Horizon began as a domestic violence agency serving the Rockbridge area in 1982. In 1996, Project Horizon merged with the Rockbridge Area Coalition Against Sexual Assault and began providing both domestic violence and sexual assault services under one roof. Since that time, the agency has continued to strengthen its services to survivors of both family violence and sexual violence and the general community. Each Project Horizon advocate works with both sexual and domestic violence issues, which allows continuity in serving clients with multiple victimizations. Since Project Horizon was originally a domestic violence agency and there was a large community push several years ago to add a shelter aspect to our services, the public seems to recognize our domestic violence services more so than our sexual violence services. To help even out this inequity, our education and outreach efforts are coordinated to bring a greater awareness of both sexual and domestic violence throughout the year.

Project Hope at Quin Rivers

Liz Cascone, Director

What is the benefit of a **joint program**?

I think having a joint focus on sexual and domestic violence can provide comprehensive services for survivors of violence. So often, sexual and domestic violence occur simultaneously or within a family unit and being able to assist people who experience both meets a lot of needs, especially in a rural area like ours. Staff have training opportunities so that they can learn similarities between sexual and domestic violence, but also learn what the unique and distinct differences are. I believe that oppression is linked to both sexual and domestic violence and if you're working for peace and equality, you are working towards a world where sexual and domestic violence are not used to control other individuals.

Does the community respond to SA and DV differently?

Yes, I think that the community responds to SA and DV differently. The program is often referred to as "the domestic violence program," especially in the community. For many reasons, domestic violence has had more "popular" attention than sexual assault/abuse. Sexual assault/abuse is more silenced in the community, therefore harder to outreach those who are survivors. Program staff always are reminding others from the community that we serve survivors of sexual assault and as a program we must do outreach that is unique so that it really resonates that sexual assault survivors can seek services here. One time, during our "Awareness Week" at a local high school, I was speaking to a student and one of the administrators at the school saw me. He later told a teacher that if Project Hope talks about sexual assault with students it will "open up a can of worms." I think this illustrates how the community and culture helps to silence survivors.

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Similarly, they might not always recognize that domestic violence programs can help with sexual violence perpetrated by a dating partner or intimate partner, as well as the effects on children."

--Kristine Hall, SARA