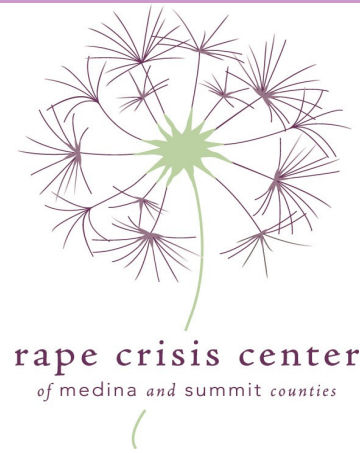


Seeds of Hope



Symposium 2010



rape crisis center
of medina and summit counties

Volume 1, Issue 7

Summer 2010

The Summit County Sexual Assault Coalition is pleased to announce that attendance was up 100% from last year's symposium. This year the coalition partnered with the University of Akron and Greenleaf Family Center to offer participants the latest information on sexual violence as well as continuing education credits on topics such as stalking, child sexual abuse, updates on offender registration and Senate Bill 19.

This year's theme focused on collaboration, networking and sharing resources. The opening session introduced a panel of five victim service providers who often collaborate on cases. The panel included the Rape Crisis Center, Battered Women's Shelter, D.O.V.E. (Developing Options for Violent Emergencies), V.A.P. (Victim Assistance Program) and GASP (Guardians Against Sexual Predators). Panel members shared mission statements and talked about services before answering questions. "I'm lucky to be a professional in Summit County with so many resources to utilize." was just one of the comments made by a member of the audience.

Speakers from local and state organizations including the Ohio Attorney General's Office covered a wide range of topics including policy changes on sexual violence, stalking, adult and child sexual assault investigations and offender accountability.

One attendee appreciated the stalking workshop which featured a high profile local case, "This presentation was very good! It kept me interested the whole time. I think using cases close to home kept everyone in tune."

This year, the coalition offered participants more learning opportunities by hosting three sessions with two classes



L to R Deb Costa, RCC Director; Terri Heckman, BWS/RCC Executive Director; Jill Bunnell, RN of D.O.V.E.; Rev. Robert Denton, VAP; Deb Reiss of G.A.S.P.

per session throughout the day. Lunch was included and gave attendees a chance to network with each other. Symposium committee Chairperson Dodie Sacia stated, "One of the most rewarding benefits of the symposium was the opportunity for attendees to network with each other to improve outcomes for survivors of sexual assault."

Speakers were pleased with attendance and state of the art classroom facilities at the University of Akron. Copresenter Detective Dan Lance, stated, "I was most impressed with the extent of organizations represented. It was encouraging to see so many groups looking to enhance their ability to serve the needs of victims."

Special thanks goes to the symposium committee members, especially Chairperson Dodie Sacia, who did an incredible job coordinating this year's event. Thanks and recognition also goes to Mary Wilson, Kent State Assistant Professor; Joann Boling and Kerry Jackson, University of Akron Police Department, Dr. Grace Chen, Professor, Uni-

versity of Akron, Dana Zedak, RCC and BWS and Melissa McClain, Children's Care Center. The coalition is already planning the 2011 symposium by utilizing this year's suggestions made by attendee's. Topic's for next years consideration include sexual violence in the work place and sexual violence and disabilities. Thanks to all.

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-Deb Costa, RCC Director

Health and Healing Through Self Care

Anyone who has traveled by airplane has sat through the important safety instructions telling passengers that, "In the event cabin pressure is lost, oxygen masks will fall from overhead compartments. Put on your own mask before assisting others." The crew wants you to put on your mask first because you cannot help yourself or fellow passengers if you are passed out from lack of oxygen. You must take care of yourself first in order to help others.

This analogy explains the concept of self-care perfectly. In everyday life, we must take care of our own needs before we can care for the people around us. For most, this concept seems foreign. Many spend their days focused on the needs of partners, children, family, friends, and co-workers. In this era of packing every minute full of activity, we forget about ourselves. We forget that we need to provide for ourselves before we can truly provide for those around us.

It may seem overwhelming or even selfish to add time just for you to your to-do list. However, it is the most important thing you can do all week, especially when coping with

sexual assault. Whether you are a survivor, co-survivor, advocate, or simply someone who cares deeply about others, you need to take time for yourself. Self-care does not have to involve a lot of time or big changes. Self-care can be as simple as reading a few poems every evening before bed or allowing the kids



to watch T.V. for 30 minutes after dinner while you unwind. The key is finding out what makes you feel good or refreshed and honoring it in some way everyday. If you are a nature lover, hang a birdfeeder outside your kitchen window so you can watch birds while doing your daily tasks. If

you enjoy exercise, take a walk on your lunch break.

A good self-care plan includes time every day to relax for at least 15 minutes. It should also contain time each week to provide for each of the following areas of your well being: physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual. This can include going to a play, having friends over, eating a salad, reading a book, praying, going for a walk, learning a new skill, meditating, repainting your bedroom, taking your family to the zoo...The possibilities are endless! The most important thing is that you choose something you enjoy and that you can realistically accomplish. It is also nice because one activity can provide for more than one of the areas of well being at a time.

Self-care is simple once you take the time to plan for it. Don't think of it as a one more thing to get done.

Look forward to it as the time you take to recharge yourself. Once recharged, you will be able to accomplish your tasks more efficiently and with more joy. You may even find your path to health and healing straighten out before you.

Denice W., Direct Service Advocate

RCC Volunteer Training FALL 2010

Mon., Nov. 1st 5:30-9:00p; Wed., Nov. 3rd 5:30-9:00p; Sat., Nov. 6th 9a-4p; Mon., Nov. 8th 5:30-9:00p; Wed., Nov. 10th 5:30-9:00p; Mon., Nov. 15th 5:30-9:00p; Wed. Nov. 17th 5:30-9:00p.

This seven day training is supplemented with online educational materials available at <http://rccmsc.org/>.

Please contact Jennifer Kay Jeter at **330-860-5624** for information on the training or to obtain an application.

Editor's Comments

Summer at RCC has been extremely busy. Training and events have allowed us opportunities to reach numerous individuals in Medina and Summit Counties. It has also uncovered the need for additional services.

Read "Up Close with Dodie Sacia" on page 3 to see how one volunteer has made a difference to those

that we serve.

RCC Outreach has responded to the needs of incarcerated women by establishing a support group at a local correctional facility. Direct Service Advocate, Mary Chipman, outlines the relationship between RCC and Cliff Skeen Community Based Correctional Facility on page 5.

As 2010, continues to evolve we will round out the year with **Peace Week** activities (page 3), **Take Back the Night** on **October 15th** and an additional volunteer training in November.

Our success is yours,

Jennifer Kay Jeter, Editor

Up Close with Dodie Sacia

How long have you been volunteering with Rape Crisis? What is the Court Watch program and how did you get involved with it?

I began the Rape Crisis Center volunteer training in June 2008, but was active in participating in community awareness events in 2007. The RCC Court Watch program involves observing county and municipal courtrooms to follow all types of sexual assault cases. Through my involvement in advocating for sexual assault survivors, I learned that justice for survivors often comes at a very high emotional price. It takes an extraordinary amount of courage to report this type of very personal crime and to face an intimidating criminal justice system. In my attempt to understand the system, I realized very quickly that rape survivors are treated much differently than any other type of crime victim. The more cases I watched, the more I realized that there is a great need for improving outcomes and holding perpetrators accountable for the damage they inflict not only on the survivor, but on everyone who cares about them. As a concerned citizen, I felt that if I expected things to change, I needed to become a presence in the

courtrooms to show my unconditional support for survivors and their families.

What do you find rewarding about doing Court Watch? What

are the frustrations?

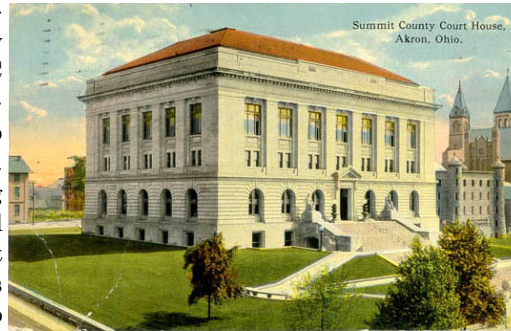
The most rewarding thing is seeing the relief in the eyes of survivors when they receive the justice they deserve. It validates their need to be believed, their need to feel safe, and to know that their participation in the criminal justice process has come to a successful end. Obviously, the frustrations occur when you see further pain resulting from perpetrators not being held accountable for their crimes. This is a time when advocacy is vitally important to survivors.

Letting them know you believe them, regardless of the outcome, can help them begin to heal.

How much time do you put in? What keeps you motivated?

I participate in a variety of Rape Crisis activities. Although court watching is my primary focus, I also enjoy community awareness events like "Take Back the Night" and fund-raising activities such as "Walk a Mile in Her Shoes". I like to take advantage of training opportunities offered by RCC, programs available through the Ohio Attorney General's office and NCVIC webinars (National Center for Victims of Crime). In general I volunteer between 20-40 hours per week, depending on court schedules. My motivation comes from the hope that if we all speak out against sexual assault that one day it will become easier for survivors to come forward and harder for perpetrators to escape punishment. I am constantly inspired by the strength and courage of survivors and their families.

Mary C., Direct Service Advocate



Akron Peace Project

The Battered Women's Shelter and Rape Crisis Center of Summit & Medina Counties have come together with The Love Initiative to create the AKRON PEACE PROJECT.

The Akron Peace Project's objective is to encourage peace within our self, home, and community. The project is hosting an activity-filled week that will take place September 25th -October 2nd, 2010 throughout the City of Akron.

With the help of volunteers, sponsors, and supporters, activities will include an official proclamation of "Akron Peace Week" by the City of Akron, dog walk, speakers, open discussions, art



show, meditation, travelling International Peace Museum exhibit, film, music (featuring Zach, founder of the Love Initiative and co-founder of Akron Peace Project) and more!

Proceeds stemming from this event will help support the Battered Women's Shelter and Rape Crisis Center in their efforts to support survivors of domestic and sexual violence on their road to healing and peace. Information and list of events may be found on our Facebook page by searching "Akron Peace Project."

For more information on the project and events or on ways that you

can become involved, please email Rebecca Hewit at beckyh@scmcbws.org or Zach Freidhof at zach@zachmusic.net.

If you would like to sponsor or make a charitable contribution to support the AKRON PEACE PROJECT, please contact Dana Zedak at dana@scmcbws.org.

You may also make secure donations to the AKRON PEACE PROJECT through our Firstgiving site at <http://www.firstgiving.com/akronpeaceproject>

We hope to see you there!

-Rebecca H.
Direct Service Advocate

Rape Trauma Syndrome vs. Post-Traumatic Stress

...is there a difference?

No.

In the early days of the Rape Crisis movement, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) was not recognized. Rape Crisis workers saw the same cluster of symptoms over and over again in survivors and called it Rape Trauma Syndrome because there was no other name for it.

During the horrors of the Vietnam War, it was so obvious that soldiers were returning home shattered and in need of professional help that a presidential commission was appointed to study them. In 1980, PTSD was recognized for the first time as a mental disorder in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) of the American Psychological Association.

According to the current edition of the DSM, to be diagnosed with PTSD an individual must have experienced or witnessed a traumatic event that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury, and the person must have felt intense fear, helplessness, or horror. In addition, the per-

son must re-experience the trauma, avoid reminders of the trauma and have numbing of feelings, experience increased arousal (for example, trouble sleeping or hypervigilance), and have significant distress or impairment in functioning.

Many PTSD sufferers say they feel as if the traumatic event “just occurred yesterday,” almost as if time has stood still. This can add to their pain because they feel guilty for not moving on. Some have described PTSD as “a scar on the soul,” and for many who have experienced it, recovery involves making meaning out of the trauma. Survivors may need to go deep within themselves to gain insight and understanding about the world in which they live and their place in it, and they may need to talk about their experience over and over in order to fully process it.

PTSD symptoms can be acute and last for a few months, or they can be chronic and last for years or even a lifetime. It is common for sexual assault survivors to experience some PTSD symptoms in the first few months following a sexual assault, but

sometimes the symptoms last longer and seriously interfere with life functioning. While it is the Rape Crisis Center’s philosophy that healing is possible and that all survivors are deserving of hope and empowerment, we recognize that some survivors may need clinical counseling and medication to assist in recovery.

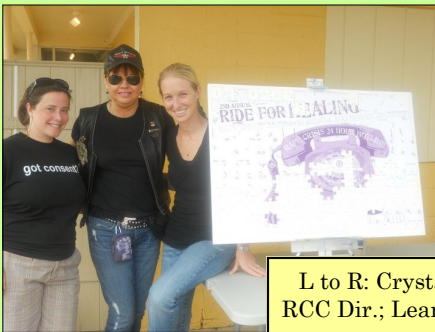
One surprising therapy for PTSD is called Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing, which involves the client following the movement of a therapist’s finger back and forth while concentrating on the trauma. The client then discusses with the therapist any feelings that come up. There is clinical evidence that supports this method in some clients.

Sexual assault is traumatic. While not all survivors experience PTSD, all deserve support and understanding and to know they are not to blame for what happened. Rape Crisis is a safe place for survivors to connect with advocates and other survivors as part of their healing journey.

Mary C., Direct Service Advocate

Help us Finish the Puzzle

The 2nd annual **Ride for Healing** motorcycle run benefiting the Rape Crisis Center of Medina and Summit Counties took place August 14th raising over \$4,500.00 to help operate the 24 hour hotline. The Ride, sponsored by Century Harley of Medina and the Firehouse Grill in Creston, Ohio, brought people together for a great cause. Supporters helped put the pieces back together by purchasing puzzle pieces; creating a big picture of a hotline phone.



L to R: Crystal Baker, Dir. of Services; Deb Costa, RCC Dir.; Leanne Polio, Assoc. Dir. of Resource Dev.

Riders traveled the scenic route from Century Harley Davidson in Medina to the Firehouse Grill in Creston, Ohio to put the picture together.

The goal was to raise \$5,000.00 dollars which supplements the operating costs of the 24 hour hotline. Unfortunately, Rape Crisis fell short of reaching the goal which means the puzzle is yet to be complete. Therefore RCC is reaching out to the community to please help complete the puzzle by purchasing a puzzle piece for \$25.00 each. You can purchase Puzzle pieces today by sending a

tax deductible check to: The Rape Crisis Center of Medina & Summit Counties at 759 West Market St. Akron, Ohio 44303 or pieces can be purchased online at <http://www.firstgiving.com/danazedak.1>. Please put the word PUZZLE in the memo line as we write the name of the donor on each and every piece. Once the puzzle is complete RCC will frame and display it for all to see.

-Deb Costa, RCC Director

Parental Kidnapping

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), an organization which provides services for the prevention of abducted, endangered, and sexually exploited children, reports that 797,500 children are reported missing in a one-year period of time, and that since 1984 over 203,900 children have been

victims of abductions perpetrated by a family member.

One such victim is Eli, the 2 year old son of Akron native, Sara Edwards. Eli was taken by his father on a family visit to Turkey. Despite the custody arrangement agreed prior to the departure, Eli's father has refused to comply and return to Ohio to provide Sara with her custodial rights. In an effort to return her son to Ohio, Sara has had to fight not only in Ohio courts but Turkish Federal Court while maintaining compliance with the Hague Convention (which oversees International Parental Kidnapping cases). In addition to the emotional expenditure, this battle has amounted to an overwhelming number of

meetings and several thousands of dollars in translator, attorney, and court fees.

Sara recommends that concerned parents explore the resources, instructions and recommendations regarding [child abductions](#) on the U.S. Department of State's website at <http://travel.state.gov/abduction/>. This source provides information on incoming and outgoing U.S. kidnapping cases, prevention tips, possible solutions, and resources.

Sara has drawn on her experience and strength to organize "Bring Eli Home," a project that raises awareness surrounding Parental Kidnapping and assists in offsetting the increasing cost of her legal battles to safely bring Eli home. To read Sara and Eli's story, search the list of events, and to securely donate towards Eli's return, please visit www.bringelihome.com.

-Rebecca H. , Direct Service Advocate



Sara and Eli
one month prior to his kidnapping by his father

"Women On Their Way"



Cliff Skeen
Community Based Correctional Facility
Akron, OH

The Rape Crisis Center of Medina and Summit Counties has started a new support group for incarcerated women. "Women On Their Way," or WOW, is a weekly support group that began July 22 at the Cliff Skeen Community Based Correctional Facility, 941 Sherman St., Akron. The group will be divided into four-week units with this month's topic being abusive relationships and breaking the cycle of abuse.

Community based correctional facilities are intended to provide a secure correctional facility to non-violent, felony offenders while offering them training, education, and other services such as chemical dependency treatment, case management, cognitive skills training, employment assistance, parenting classes, community service, etc. The long-range goal is to reduce recidivism. Akron has one CBCF for males and one for females, both operated by Oriana House, Inc.

The first WOW group's month of topics includes types of abuse in relationships; the cycle of abuse and leaving an abusive relationship; the emotional impact of abusive relationships; and healing from an abusive relationship. Cliff Skeen has worked very cooperatively with Rape Crisis, recognizing a great need at the facility. "We have several women in our programs who are victims of abuse - whether it be physical, emotional, mental or sexual types of abuse - and are in dire need of the extra care and service," said Emily Schrank of the Cliff Skeen staff.

Rape Crisis is excited about working with the women of Cliff Skeen and looks forward to many more WOW groups in the future.

Mary C.— Direct Service Advocate

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The Rape Crisis Center of Medina and Summit Counties is committed to ending sexual assault through education and awareness, and to empower, support and advocate for all those affected by this crime.

Return Service Requested

'Tis the Season for ... (In-Kind) Giving

The Rape Crisis Center of Medina and Summit Counties has fared very well in an economic climate that has caused other non-profit agencies to scale back services to survivors. We have done this due to the generosity of individuals, organizations and corporations that have gifted RCC with products, physical labor or administrative assistance. How can you become an In-Kind donor?

Be a Board Member

RCC Board members assist in steering the direction of the agency and are active in the development of fund raising activities. Contact Terri Heckman at **330-374-0740** for additional information.

Choose to Volunteer

RCC hosts three volunteer trainings per year. The upcoming training in November will be held in Akron, OH. This free training will prepare individual's to be a direct service advo-

cate, administrative assistant, donation assistant, member of the Speakers Bureau or event planning assistant for the RCC. Contact Jennifer Kay Jeter at **330-860-5624** for info.

Play Hostess

Contact Jennifer Kay Jeter at **330-860-5624** if you want to host a themed event. In the past, RCC has been the grateful recipient of donations as the result of ...

Adopt RCC— School organizations can choose RCC to be the beneficiary of an already established giving program.

Panty Partys—Request that members of your organization bring new undergarments (sport bras and panties) that will be given to survivors of a sexual assault at the hospital.

Others Have Chosen to...

- Collect/purchase office supply gift cards that are used to purchase toner, paper, file folders,

etc. for the RCC office.

- Collect/purchase grocery store gift cards that are used to purchase snacks for survivors seen at the D.O.V.E. unit.
- Donate bulk granola bars, peanut butter crackers or cheese crackers that are given to clients at the D.O.V.E. unit.
- Donate restaurant, spa or specialty gift certificates that are used for volunteer appreciation and recognition.
- Donate specialty items such as art, antiques, furniture, hotel gift certificates, trip vouchers, spa certificates, restaurant gift certificates, etc. to be used as raffle items for RCC fundraisers.

For additional information on giving contact Leanne Polio at 330-374-0740 ext. 205.

-J. K. Jeter—Outreach /Vol. Coord.