



MONTGOMERY COUNTY GOVERNMENT

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COORDINATING COUNCIL

2012 ANNUAL REPORT



MISSION

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

SEPTEMBER 15, 2012



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MEMBERSHIP EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

MARIA ALVARADO

*COMMISSIONER
FOR JUDITH VAUGHAN-PRATHER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
MONTGOMERY COUNTY
COMMISSION FOR WOMEN*

THE HONORABLE PHIL ANDREWS
CHAIR, DVCC
*COUNCILMEMBER
MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL*

THE HONORABLE MARIELSA BERNARD
*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 PRESIDENT
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS*

LAURA CHASE
*DEPUTY STATE'S ATTORNEY
FOR JOHN J. MCCARTHY
MONTGOMERY COUNTY STATE'S ATTORNEY*

RUSSELL HAMILL
*ASSISTANT CHIEF OF POLICE
FOR J. THOMAS MANGER, CHIEF
MONTGOMERY COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF POLICE*

HANNAH SASSOON

*VICE CHAIR, DVCC
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COORDINATOR
FOR DARREN M. POPKIN, SHERIFF
MONTGOMERY COUNTY OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF*

WILLIAM SOLLOD
*FIELD SUPERVISOR II
FOR YOLANDA BETHEA
REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR
MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY &
CORRECTIONAL SERVICES*

SHARON TREXLER
*CHIEF
MONTGOMERY COUNTY
PRE-TRIAL SERVICES
FOR ARTHUR M. WALLENSTEIN,
DIRECTOR
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION AND
REHABILITATION*

DUDLEY WARNER
*SENIOR ADMINISTRATOR
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND CRISIS SERVICES
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*

PUBLIC MEMBERS

DONNA BAIRD
COMMUNITY MEMBER

DOROTHY FAIT, ESQ.
*COMMUNITY MEMBER
ATTORNEY AT LAW
FAIT, WISE & DILIMA, LLP*

RESA LEVY
COMMUNITY MEMBER

DONNA RISMILLER, ESQ.
*ATTORNEY MEMBER
ATTORNEY AT LAW
RISMILLER LAW GROUP, LLC*

TIFFANY SUN
STUDENT MEMBER

ANA VALDEZ
COMMUNITY MEMBER

STAFF

CYNTHIA MOGEL *OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF*



COORDINATING COUNCIL INFORMATION

TERM OF SERVICE

There are seventeen 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 Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services. 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. In 2010 the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council's code pertaining to membership was amended to add a student member. The student member is a high school junior or senior who is appointed to serve a one year term which can be renewed for one additional year.

SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

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

LEADERSHIP

In November 2011 the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council elected as its Chair, Phil Andrews, Councilmember representing Montgomery County Council and as Vice Chair, Hannah Sassoon, Domestic Violence Coordinator, representing the Office of the Sheriff.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the sixth 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 2011-2012 the four committees, Victim Services, Education and Outreach, Legislative and Policy Planning and Offender Program and Policy, have each identified focus areas and made progress on executing recommendations from the previous report. This report summarizes the accomplishments of the past year and makes recommendations for the next year.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- ◆ Full operation and institutionalization of the video conferencing services at the FJC;
- ◆ Purchase of forensic interview equipment for the FJC;
- ◆ Workshop presentation of “Innovative Court Practices at Family Justice Centers” at the Annual Family Justice Center Alliance Conference in April, 2012;
- ◆ Coordination with the Family Justice Center Foundation, Inc. for the 2nd Annual FJC Foundation Benefit held October 2, 2011;
- ◆ Collaboration with multiple County agencies and community organizations for the 3rd Annual Choose Respect Montgomery Teen Dating Conference, March 2012;
- ◆ Coordination of the 3rd Choose Respect Teen Dating Public Service Announcement Contest, held in conjunction with National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month;
- ◆ Outreach with 76 Choose Respect Montgomery Teen Dating presentations to 2,214 youth participants from Montgomery County Public Schools;
- ◆ Presentation of the Choose Respect Montgomery Teen Dating curriculum to various youth groups in the community to include, MC Street Outreach Network, Boys and Girls Club of the Greater Washington Area and Parenting Teens at Family Services, Inc. the Keys to Success Program;
- ◆ Presentation of a modified Choose Respect Montgomery Teen Dating Curriculum to incarcerated youth at MCCF;
- ◆ Presentation of a Healthy Relationship Curriculum to incarcerated females at MCCF;
- ◆ Implementation of a modified Choose Respect Montgomery Curriculum to incarcerated youth at MCCF by MCCF staff;
- ◆ Presentation of the Choose Respect Montgomery Teen Dating curriculum to 100 male football players at Springbrook High School;
- ◆ Implementation of Teen Dating Violence Memorandum of Understanding among Montgomery County State’s Attorney’s and Sheriff’s Office, Montgomery County Public Schools and Department of Juvenile Services;
- ◆ Presentation to 400 MCPS Counselors regarding the MOU and civil legal options for teen victims of dating violence;
- ◆ Coordination of an FJC tour for Department of Juvenile Services Case Workers to enhance their understanding of services available to teen victims of dating abuse;
- ◆ Translation of the Healthy Teen Dating Curriculum handouts to French;
- ◆ Participation in the School and Community United in Partnership (SCUP) Conference September, 2011 to promote awareness of teen dating violence prevention initiatives and the FJC;
- ◆ Participation in the MCPS Back-to-School Fair, August, 2012 to launch the 2013 Teen Dating PSA Contest and to promote awareness of the FJC;



ACCOMPLISHMENTS CONTINUED

- ◆ Coordination of presentations from Crittenton Services, Family Services, Inc. and Court Watch Montgomery at general DVCC meetings to expand understanding of related domestic violence services and organizations in Montgomery County;
- ◆ Renewal of the Department of Justice grant to support seven County positions within the domestic violence coordinated community response and two non-profit contracts to include the House of Ruth, MD and Catholic Charities Legal Immigration Services;
- ◆ Continuation of collaboration with University of Maryland for an Internship Program at the FJC;
- ◆ Continuation of the joint Montgomery County FJC and FJC Foundation quarterly newsletter;
- ◆ Augmentation of on-site agency partnerships at the FJC to include Career Catchers;
- ◆ Continuation of partnerships with Catholic Charities, House of Ruth, MD counselors, the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services and Montgomery County's Department of Correction's Pre-trial Supervision Unit;
- ◆ Partnership with Women Who Care Ministries to provide snacks and drinks for FJC clients and their children;
- ◆ Participation in a meeting with Sister City Governor, Miguel Ventura and delegation from Morazan, El Salvador to discuss domestic violence and teen dating violence interventions;
- ◆ Coordination of the Montgomery Bar Associations Toy and Gift Card Holiday Drive to benefit FJC clients and their children;
- ◆ Participation in Law Day to promote awareness of the FJC among attorneys practicing in Montgomery County;
- ◆ Participation in a Divorce Roundtable discussion to promote awareness of the FJC;
- ◆ Participation in Kaiser Permanente Day to promote awareness of the FJC;
- ◆ Partnership with BLH Technologies, Inc. for donation of stuffed animals and children's books;
- ◆ Coordination of FJC Day at Green Turtle in Olney, wherein 10% of the proceeds for the day were donated to the FJC Foundation;
- ◆ Continuation of Panera Bread "Doughnation" grant through the Family Justice Center Foundation;
- ◆ Continuation and evaluation of Lethality Assessment Protocol (LAP) throughout Montgomery County;
- ◆ Ongoing distribution of Spanish and English FJC Police Cards for officers and deputies to give to victims when they respond to domestic violence calls and Interim Orders;
- ◆ Ongoing distribution of FJC brochures in English and Spanish to public and community partners;
- ◆ Collaboration with the Office of Intergovernmental Relations and the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence on numerous bills in the 2011 Maryland General Assembly including the listed below that will take effect October 1, 2012:

HB 1146/SB 647 ▪ Domestically Related Crimes - Reporting

This legislation requires that if a defendant is convicted of a crime or receives probation before judgment, on the request of a state's attorney, the court shall determine whether a crime is domestically related. If the court determines that it is domestically related, that finding shall become part of the court record and reported to the Criminal Justice Information System Central Repository.

HB 769/SB 291 ▪ Unemployment Insurance Coverage - Victims of Domestic Violence

The law requires that the need to quit employment be directly caused by domestic violence and the belief that continued employment would jeopardize the safety of the individual or the individual's immediate family. Additionally, the law requires recent legal documentation including a protective order, other court order or a police record.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NEXT YEAR:

- ◆ Collaboration with partner agencies on the increased use of both PTSU and AIP services;
- ◆ Exploration of a multi-tiered Abuser Intervention Program (AIP) and Judicial Review Process;
- ◆ Collaboration with AIP on an evaluation process to determine the effectiveness of the intervention;
- ◆ Collaboration among FJC agency partners, FJC Foundation and community volunteers for ongoing sustainability and effective operation of the Montgomery County Family Justice Center;
- ◆ Implementation of the recommendations from the Administrative Office of the Courts video conferencing pilot program;
- ◆ Continuation of outreach to increase awareness of domestic violence and victim service at the FJC;
- ◆ Ongoing collaboration with county agencies, organizations and schools to increase awareness and prevention of teen dating violence;
- ◆ Ongoing collaboration with partner agencies to address the needs of teen dating violence victims;
- ◆ Exploration of Coaching Boys Into Men Program to engage young men in the violence prevention initiative;
- ◆ Collaboration with partner agencies and the Office of Intergovernmental Relations in support of legislation that supports the mission of the DVCC;
- ◆ Collaboration on the expanded use of the Lethality Assessment Program.



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, ongoing sustainability of the FJC through the strengthening of partnerships and community support, expansion of services, as well as outreach to the community regarding FJC services.

FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER (FJC)

Since opening its doors in April 2009, approximately four-thousand 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. Eighty Family Justice Centers currently exist in the United States. There are ten international Family Justice Centers and another one hundred forty Centers are in development worldwide. Family Justice Centers are recognized nationally by the law enforcement, medical and mental health communities as a “best-practice” for responding to victims of domestic violence. Domestic violence victims who come to the FJC are able to receive a broad array of critical Montgomery County services. These services include advocacy in the form of individualized, comprehensive safety plans; assistance with the filing of protective orders and navigating the court system; representation at protective order hearings; specific programs available to immigrant victims under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA); law enforcement intervention in criminal prosecution of offenders; counseling for victims and their children in both individual and group settings; employment assistance program; 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 opened over three years 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, House of Ruth Maryland (HRM), and Montgomery County Police Department were added in the first year and continue to provide specialized services to FJC clients. During the second year of operation personnel from the Montgomery County Department of Correction and Rehabilitation and the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Community Supervision were added to collaborate closely with the State’s Attorney’s Office about offender cases and accountability.

To further meet the needs of victims, the FJC, through support from Montgomery County Community Grants, expanded its services in the past year. This increase of services includes the addition of Career Catchers to offer victims of domestic violence support as they move forward to financial self-sufficiency and empowerment, as well as partial funding for a position at the Immigration Legal Services Program of Catholic Charities to coordinate the services of the pro bono attorneys at the FJC. Additional funding was also received from a Department of Justice grant, a grant from the Governor’s Office of Crime Control and Prevention and a Montgomery County Family Justice Center Foundation (MCFJCF) grant to support bi-lingual therapeutic services through the House of Ruth, Maryland for victims and their children. Support for client transportation services was also provided by the MCFJCF. Through the Foundation’s support the FJC was able to contract taxi services to provide clients transportation to and from the FJC.

To further augment client services at the FJC, volunteers are regularly recruited and trained to assist with direct services, child care, intake and receptionist duties. The FJC’s partnership with the intern program



at the University of Maryland (UMD) is ongoing and very successful, as it has facilitated the placement of 2 interns and 3 UMD volunteers since it was established in August, 2010.

The members from the Victim Services Committee also work jointly with the MCFJCF, whose mission it is to support the charitable and educational activities of the Montgomery County Family Justice Center. The MCFJCF, expanded its membership to ten board members this year and has a five member advisory board. Through its numerous activities, the MCFJCF has been instrumental in raising community and corporate awareness of domestic violence and garnering support for the FJC. The Foundation’s largest fundraising event, the 2nd Annual FJC Foundation Benefit, was held on October 2, 2011 and was a huge success with over 250 supporters in attendance. The Benefit Committee, led by Benefit Chair Catherine Leggett, is planning the 3rd Annual MCFJC Foundation Benefit, scheduled for October 14, 2012 at the Hyatt Regency in Bethesda, Maryland.

RECOMMENDATION: The Victim Services Committee recommends ongoing collaboration among FJC agency partners, FJC Foundation and community volunteers for ongoing sustainability and effective operation of the Montgomery County Family Justice Center.

VIDEO CONFERENCING

As a result of productive coordination between the Victim Services Committee, local court personnel and information and technology staff, video conferencing of ex-parte temporary protective orders between the Montgomery County Family Justice Center and the District and Circuit Courts began as a pilot project in December 2010. Subsequent to a research study on the pilot project by the University of Maryland on the effectiveness of the video conferencing, the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) recommended that the project be institutionalized. Chief Judge Robert M. Bell signed an order (Addendum A) on August 16, 2012 approving the recommendations of the Administrative Office of the Courts.

The goal of a video link between the FJC and the courts is to increase victim safety and to make the courts more accessible to victims. Additional benefits are to allow petitioners an opportunity to access other services if there is a wait time for a hearing and to permit the children to play in a child friendly, safe environment. This practice helps to ease the stress on children and reduces the disruption often caused by children in the courtroom. Since the program was instituted at the FJC, three hundred ten (310) clients have used the service. In the last year there was a 23% increase in the requests for the service as compared to the previous year.

In addition to it being an extremely worthwhile resource for clients, the video conferencing project in Montgomery County has been recognized as a model program across the United States. A delegation from Montgomery County was invited to conduct a workshop at the Family Justice Center Alliance Conference held in New Orleans in April, 2012. Attendees at this international conference represented existing and developing FJCs from around the globe. Sheriff Darren Popkin, Judge Louise Scrivener, Jo Ann Ricchiuti and Hannah Sassoon paneled a workshop titled, “Innovative Court Practices at Family Justice Centers” that included a discussion on collaborating with the judiciary, identifying community partners, technology, funding and the challenges Montgomery County encountered in implementing the pilot project.

RECOMMENDATION: Based on the effectiveness of the service and the institutionalization of video conferencing in



Video conferencing session at the FJC.



Montgomery County by Judge Robert M. Bell, the Victim Services Committee along with the affiliated partners plan to review and implement the recommendations of the AOC report.

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 and FJC Police Cards. Both are available in English and Spanish. The brochures include specific information regarding eligibility for services at the FJC, location, hours of operation, as well as available services. The police cards, the size of business cards, have been widely distributed to all district stations within the Montgomery County Police Department and deputies within the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office. 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, continues to be produced and keeps FJC partners and community supporters aware of all FJC events, progress at the Center and recognizes those who have made a special contribution to the Center.

Direct outreach through participation in the Montgomery County Bar Association's Law Day Divorce Roundtable discussion has also been very effective with promoting awareness of the FJC to local attorneys. Additional outreach was conducted with all Montgomery County Police Department Lieutenants and Sergeants from the various district stations. They were invited to participate in a tour of the FJC, which enhanced their understanding of the services offered there and provided them with a glimpse of the welcoming environment.

RECOMMENDATION: The Victim Services Committee recommends ongoing outreach to the community and community partners to increase awareness of domestic violence and services that are offered at the FJC to victims and their children.

FORENSIC INTERVIEW SERVICES

In August, 2011 the Victim Services Committee in collaboration with the Family Justice Center Foundation received a grant from Verizon for the purchase of forensic video equipment. This high tech equipment will be installed in client meeting rooms at the FJC and will provide a greatly needed expansion of services. The forensic interview equipment will be a welcome addition at the FJC because it will promote victim safety and offender accountability by allowing detectives and prosecutors to conduct timely interviews and gather evidence in domestic violence cases and thereby strengthen the prosecution of cases. Domestic violence victims and witnesses will also have the benefit of meeting with detectives in a safe and comfortable environment when they present for services at the FJC. The use of video evidence in court is also valuable because it decreases the probability of misinterpretation and incorrect paraphrasing. The Victim Services Committee, FJC partners and the FJC Foundation plan to work together in the next few months to install the video equipment.



EDUCATION AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE

CHAIR: DONNA RISMILLER

The Education and Outreach Committee has continued to focus on its teen dating violence prevention initiative during the past year. This initiative titled Choose Respect Montgomery includes three primary activities: the annual conference for teens and their parents, the public service announcement contest and the healthy teen dating curriculum. These activities, recommendations for improvement, as well as the more recent collaborative efforts with mental health youth service agencies and the Department of Juvenile Services to meet the needs of teen dating violence victims are listed below.

CHOOSE RESPECT MONTGOMERY-TEEN DATING VIOLENCE PREVENTION INITIATIVE

TEEN DATING CONFERENCE

The 3rd Annual Choose Respect Montgomery Teen Dating Conference was held this year on Saturday, March 24, 2012 at the Takoma Park Campus of Montgomery College. The conference, sponsored by the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (DVCC), Verizon Wireless and the Takoma Park Campus of Montgomery College and numerous Montgomery County agencies and groups, is organized to promote respect in dating relationships and raise the community's awareness about the prevalence of teen dating violence. Additionally, since everyone has a role to play in creating a safe, violence free community, workshops this year also included a special focus on how to stand up to stop teen dating violence and not be just a bystander.

More than 160 teens, parents, educators, youth service providers and public officials attended the half day conference. The conference opened with an energetic welcoming from our emcee, Hot 99.5 DJ Toby Knapp, followed by a presentation of a Teen Dating Violence Proclamation by DVCC Chair and Councilmember Phil Andrews and Councilmember Nancy Floreen. Sheriff Darren Popkin also recognized the DVCC for its enduring commitment to promote healthy dating practices among our youth and raise awareness about the dangers of teen dating violence. Attendees were then entertained by Holloway Youth Project, a performing arts youth development organization that tackles teen issues through creative acting performance. Their piece corresponded with the overall conference theme and demonstrated the intense distress and ambivalence a victim of teen dating abuse experiences, as well as the effectiveness of an unrelenting peer who was there to help the victim navigate her way out of the relationship.

Following the workshop segment of the conference, the participants joined Vicki Boston, Director of Retail Stores for Maryland and DC for Verizon Wireless, and Donna Rismiller, Chair of the DVCC's Education and Outreach Committee, for the recognition of the participants and winners of the **3rd Annual Choose Respect Public Service Announcement Contest.**

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



The responses from the conference evaluations were positive from all three groups, with 96% of the attendees reporting overall approval of the event. Teens at the conference also reported learning worthwhile information and seemed to understand the importance of being a responsible witness, the theme of the event. Many reported that getting involved to help a friend in the right way can make a difference. Parents and youth service providers reported learning more about community resources and steps to take to prevent teen dating violence. The surveys are assessed by conference planners and strongly taken into consideration when planning future events.

The DVCC is very appreciative of the event sponsorship from Verizon Wireless, the Takoma Park Campus of Montgomery College and its numerous County and Community partners. Plans for the 4th annual conference scheduled for spring 2013 are underway.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT CONTEST

For the third consecutive year the DVCC sponsored the Teen Dating Public Service Announcement Contest for local teens. It was held this past February, 2012 in recognition of National Teen Dating Violence Prevention and Awareness Month. The contest is intended to evoke teens’ interest, awareness and perspective on the issue of teen dating violence. The contest challenges them to submit a brief video production that focuses on a topic related to teen dating violence. They are also asked to include resource information such as the phone number to a local or national helpline. Prizes include a cash prize, recognition for their school or community group and the opportunity to have their production broadcast locally.

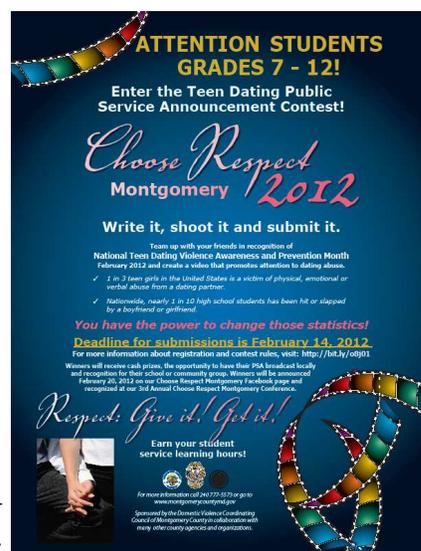
This year the contest was sponsored by Verizon Wireless. Winning submissions received cash prizes and recognition for their school. Fifteen videos were received from 50 teens this year. To view the three projects judged as the contest’s best, go to the following:

- 1st place award: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tyobIpRalGg>
- 2nd place award: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=idil6LAzpw8>
- 3rd place award: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oNMykA0J82g>

The DVCC and its partners believe the contest provides a worthwhile opportunity for teens and launched the 2013 contest at the Montgomery County Public School’s Back-to-School Fair on August 25th. The upcoming contest will again be held in recognition of National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month scheduled for February, 2013. Entries will be accepted in English and Spanish and cash prizes will be awarded to the 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners in addition to the opportunity to have the winning production broadcast locally. The sponsoring school, youth group, teacher or adult leader will also receive recognition.

TEEN DATING CURRICULUM

The curriculum, which is titled Choose Respect Montgomery Teen Dating Curriculum, is available in both English and Spanish. It is an instructional presentation based on nationally recognized dating abuse prevention curricula to include: The Center for Disease Control, Choose Respect, Liz Claiborne, Love is Not



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



Abuse and Break the Cycle. The 45 minute curriculum allows multiple opportunities for student involvement and is designed for classroom presentations but can also be utilized for various other youth groups in the community. The presentation is a PowerPoint featuring brief videos on various dating abuse topics such as verbal abuse, abuse through technology and how to intervene as a responsible witness. The winning video from the Choose Respect Montgomery Teen Dating Public Service Announcement Contest is also included in the presentation. The conversations with teens during the presentation specifically focus on:

- 1) components of healthy dating behaviors such as trust and safe, non-threatening communication;
- 2) identification of early warning signs of abusive dating behavior to include control, isolation, criticism and manipulation;
- 3) identification of the roles in abusive dating relationships; and
- 4) addressing dating violence when it is witnessed in school or among social circles.

Local resources and national teen dating abuse help lines and websites are also discussed. Every participant is also given a Choose Respect Montgomery bookmark which contains the contact information for the Montgomery County Family Justice Center and the National Dating Abuse Helpline. Active participants during the presentation also receive a silicone Choose Respect Montgomery bracelet. The bracelet contains the phrase, “Respect: Give it! Get it! Get involved!” and is a prompt, when worn that reminds them that they are deserving of respect in relationships, they have a personal responsibility to be respectful, and a responsibility to do something about dating abuse when they see it.

The Choose Respect Montgomery Teen Dating Curriculum is offered at no cost and was approved for middle and high school students by the Montgomery County Public School Administration and the Montgomery County Public School’s Citizen Advisory Board on Family Life and Human Development. Requests for the presentation are received at the Sheriff’s Office from various school personnel, such as health teachers, counselors and school principals. The school principal ultimately approves the presentation for the particular student audience. Family Violence Division Prosecutors and Community Prosecutors from the Montgomery County State’s Attorney’s Office conduct the presentations. Prior to a school visit all school personnel are notified of the visit and provided with a list of community resources. The resource list helps to prepare school staff in the event that a teen comes to them and expresses a concern regarding a teen dating violence matter.

Educators are very enthusiastic about the presentation and five high schools in the County regularly request the presentation for their new incoming students each year or semester. Mr. James Koutsos, Principal at Clarksburg High School, on November 23, 2011 wrote, “Our students and staff truly enjoyed the visit and presentation. We look forward to partnering with you in the future to benefit our students and community.” Stephanie Waller, Resource Counselor at Albert Einstein High School also expressed her school’s view of the presentation and sent the following statement in an email, “We thank you for coming and providing a fun, meaningful presentation about healthy teen dating to our students. There has been an over pour of positive comments about the presentation! Thank you so very much for sharing this important information with our students!” Teachers and school counselors also have suggested the presentation to personnel at other schools. Subsequent invitations from the schools and recommendations of the program to other school personnel attributed to a 78% increase in the number of students who participated in the presentation from the previous year. Community groups like the County’s Street Outreach Network, that provide programming for at risk youth also regularly request the presentation for the middle school teens enrolled in their program.

In its second year since implementation, 81 Choose Respect Montgomery Teen Dating presentations were conducted by six dedicated presenters to 2,314 youth participants from MCPS and community groups.



RECOMMENDATION: The Choose Respect Montgomery initiative has been a successful prevention and outreach project of the DVCC's over the previous two years. It is the recommendation of the Education and Outreach Committee to continue collaboration with county agencies, organizations and schools to increase awareness and prevention of teen dating violence through the Choose Respect Montgomery initiative.

INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION TO IMPROVE SERVICES FOR VICTIMS OF TEEN DATING VIOLENCE

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Recognizing that teens in abusive relationships in many states including Maryland do not have the same legal protections or services that adult victims receive, the Education and Outreach Committee concentrated a significant amount of attention in the past year on collaborating with key agencies that work with teen victims including the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office and State's Attorney's Office, Montgomery County Public Schools and Maryland Department of Juvenile Services. Together representatives from these entities developed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that supports the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council's effort of creating uniform arrangements for the exchange of information between signatory agencies and facilitating access to Peace Orders for teen victims when the perpetrator is a minor. It establishes the protocols that will direct the exchange of information between the agencies on matters of mutual interest and responsibility, in order to address teen dating violence in the community and reduce the risk of violence to the youth in Montgomery County.

Since MCPS counselors are an integral part of the MOU and have the option to assist teens with the completion of a Peace Order, members of the Education and Outreach Committee coordinated a presentation with all MCPS middle and high school counselors in order to inform them of the MOU and to provide training on the juvenile Peace Order process. A meeting was also coordinated with staff from the Department of Juvenile Services in order to discuss the MOU and to familiarize the staff with services offered to teen victims at the Montgomery County Family Justice Center.

COUNSELING SERVICES FOR YOUTH VICTIMS

In April, 2012 members of the Education and Outreach Committee met with Luis Cardona, Youth Violence Prevention Coordinator for Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and staff from the Street Outreach Network (SON), Mental Health Association and Identity to discuss mental health services for youth victims of violence. Mr. Cardona expressed that they all are working ardously to break the cycle of violence in the lives of the youth they encounter. They expressed concern for a lack of sufficient therapeutic services in the County for these individuals and indicated that based on their experience they recognize that youth respond best to therapeutic peer group intervention and advised that more funding is needed for these type of services. Additionally they suggested more case management support for youth who proceed with civil and criminal court procedures. Committee members shared information about services available to youth at the Family Justice Center as well as the Safe Start Program for children exposed to violence in their homes. The Education and Outreach Committee in the upcoming year will continue to have dialog with Mr. Cardona and his staff regarding service needs for youth victims in Montgomery County and work together to clearly identify gaps and explore improvements.

RECOMMENDATION: Education and Outreach Committee members recommend ongoing collaboration with partner agencies to address the needs of teen dating violence victims.



ENGAGING YOUNG MEN IN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Until recently, intimate partner violence prevention, which has its roots in the feminist movement had been viewed solely as a women’s issue. Anti-violence organizations and programs have historically been established by and operated by and for women. By creating spaces where women exposed to intimate partner and sexual violence could find safety, support, and healing, founding members of these movements established effective practices and community-based activism. In recent years however attention has been drawn to the importance of engaging men and boys in violence prevention. Many promising programs that involve young men are being introduced across the United States including Futures Without Violence’s program Coaching Boys Into Men.

COACHING BOYS INTO MEN

Coaching Boys Into Men (CBIM) is a free toolkit that can be implemented by any coach and used with any male sports team. The tools available are comprehensive and assist coaches with planning important discussions with athletes about respect for women and girls, and that violence doesn’t equal strength. Through CBIM athletes learn skills to avoid violence an abuse in their relationships.

In the next year members of the Education and Outreach Committee plan to conduct an in-depth examination of the program and partner with the Football Coach at Springbrook High School on a pilot implementation of the project.

RECOMMENDATION: The Education and Outreach Committee recommends expanding violence prevention outreach by engaging young men in the violence prevention initiative.





LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY PLANNING COMMITTEE

CHAIR: DOROTHY FAIT

The Legislative and Policy Planning Committee in 2011-2012 has focused on two primary initiatives: the Lethality Assessment Program (LAP) and domestic violence related legislation. The multiple activities and accomplishments of this committee are listed below and primarily include ongoing implementation and evaluation of the Lethality Assessment Program and coordination with the Office of Intergovernmental Relations and the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence on domestic violence related legislation in the Maryland General Assembly.

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 LAP is homicide prevention through engagement and encouragement of high danger victims 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 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 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, Takoma Park, Chevy Chase, Gaithersburg City Police Departments and the Maryland National Capital Park Police. For the period July 2011 through March 2012, 729 LAP surveys were completed by these law enforcement offices. Of the victims surveyed, 442 were considered high risk by either screening in "according to protocol" or based on officers' belief. Over one half, 277, of those high risk victims were put in direct contact with a counselor at the Abused Persons Program or the Crisis Center.

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 2012 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, 2012:

HB 1146/SB 647 ■ Domestically Related Crimes - Reporting

This legislation requires that if a defendant is convicted of a crime or receives probation before judgment



before judgment, on the request of a state’s attorney, the court shall determine whether a crime is domestically related. If the court determines that it is domestically related, that finding shall become part of the court record and reported to the Criminal Justice Information System Central Repository. A “domestically related crime” is a crime committed by a defendant against a victim who is eligible for relief under a protective order or who had a sexual relationship with the defendant within twelve months before the commission of the crime.

HB 769/SB 291 ▪ Unemployment Insurance Coverage - Victims of Domestic Violence

The law requires that the need to quit employment be directly caused by domestic violence and the belief that continued employment would jeopardize the safety of the individual or the individual’s immediate family. Additionally, the law requires recent legal documentation including a protective order, other court order or a police record.

The Maryland General Assembly also passed legislation that provides a technical fix to temporary and interim peace and protective orders that allows for an automatic extension of the order in the event the courts are closed on the day that the order expires.

RECOMMENDATION: The Legislative and Policy Planning Committee recommends on-going collaboration with the Office of Intergovernmental Relations in support of legislation that supports the mission of the DVCC. DVCC members plan to meet with the Delegate Kathleen Dumais, representative of the 15th Legislative District in the Maryland House of Delegates regarding upcoming domestic violence related legislation.



OFFENDER PROGRAM AND POLICY COMMITTEE

The Offender Program and Policy Committee includes members from various Montgomery County and Maryland State agencies that focus on domestic violence offender intervention. Committee members met nine times in the previous year and focused on evaluating offender services within their individual departments, examining the offender intervention system as a whole and considering best practices in offender treatment. The details of the committee's departmental and system review and recommendations are outlined below and are based on the committee's view of an ideal domestic violence offender intervention system. The implementation of many of the committee's system-wide recommendations will require further examination and ultimately coordinated collaboration efforts with a variety of other community agencies and professionals.

EXAMINATION OF OFFENDER INTERVENTION PROGRAMS

PRE-TRIAL SUPERVISION

Montgomery County's Pre-Trial Services, within the Department of Correction and Rehabilitation, is designed to assure that all eligible defendants are provided the opportunity for pre-trial release while upholding public safety by maintaining community monitoring and referral to services that will increase the likelihood of appearance for trial and reduce the risk for re-arrest. Due to the nature of an intimate partner relationship between defendant and victim and higher tendencies for recidivism in domestic violence cases, there is increased concern for victim safety when criminally charged domestic violence offenders are released pending trial. Many factors such as the defendant's previous criminal and domestic abuse history, substance abuse issues, mental health status, history of violating court orders are vital considerations that must be weighed when the defendant is released from confinement. Mandated conditions of release vary based on a defendant's history and can include many options from intense monitoring via electronic global positioning (GPS), a curfew and participation in domestic violence offender treatment programs, to regular in person reporting to a Pre-trial Supervision Unit (PTSU) case supervisor.

Maryland's Annotated Code Criminal Procedure 5-202 requires that bail requests are heard by a judicial officer; a Judge or District Court Commissioner. With regard to crimes of violence, suitable bail and any other conditions that will reasonably ensure that the defendant will not flee or pose a danger to another person or the community are statutory guidelines. Several years ago, in an effort to strengthen the statutory code, provide offenders with pretrial intervention services and increase victim safety in domestic violence cases, law enforcement, correctional agencies and the courts in Montgomery County entered into an informal agreement, which recommended that all criminally charged domestic violence offenders be ordered to report to PTSU. Ordering domestic violence offenders into pre-trial supervision is a common practice across most jurisdictions as it provides an ongoing means to assess the level of risk the defendant poses to the victim and impose or alter supervision levels accordingly. In Montgomery County, PTSU case supervisors are part of the coordinated response to domestic violence and maintain effective working relationships with victim service providers, prosecutors, and law enforcement. Through the coordinated response network, PTSU agents have the ability to work together with other members of the response team and swiftly intervene when a defendant violates conditions of his/her release. This practice further increases victim safety and ensures offender accountability. It should also be noted that the same level of intervention is more difficult for a victim acting alone.

RECOMMENDATION: The PTSU system, within the Department of Correction and Rehabilitation, is a



well established functional program in Montgomery County that has an active role in the County's coordinated response to reducing the incidence of domestic violence. It is therefore the committee's recommendations that it collaborate with its community partners and the judiciary to facilitate greater use of PTSU services in all domestic violence cases within the criminal justice system.

The LAP is a risk assessment survey conducted by police and Sheriff's deputies with a domestic violence victim when they respond to intimate partner violence calls or conduct safety interviews. The LAP was instituted in these cases to determine the risk level of the victim and to facilitate the victim's entry into services. High lethality risk factors such as the defendant's use of a weapon in an assault, threats to kill, to whether he is employed are documented on the LAP. In addition to its primary purpose, the LAP can also be used by PTSU caseworkers to offer details about the defendant and abuse history that is not provided on a statement of charges or in an electronic court record. PTSU agents utilize several tools along with criminal history records when conducting a defendant's risk assessment. Because domestic violence is an intimate partner crime that can occur without witnesses and many incidents often are not reported, case supervisors may not always obtain the full details regarding the severity of the current abuse and previous unreported abusive incidents. Providing PTSU case supervisors with the widely used LAP, would be a mechanism to obtain some very relevant details and also allow them to address any discrepancies in the defendant's self reporting. Also access to the LAP would provide PTSU case supervisors insight into the victim's safety concerns and provide an additional assessment tool to determine risk factors and pretrial supervision conditions. The LAP would not become a part of the offender's court record.

RECOMMENDATION: It is the committee's recommendation to work with the Montgomery County Police Department and partner agencies to coordinate the sharing of the LAP with PTSU case supervisors.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES ABUSER INTERVENTION PROGRAM

The offender treatment or Abuser Intervention Program (AIP) for domestic violence offenders in Montgomery County is offered through the Abused Persons Program and contracted through J&E Associates, which is a Maryland State Certified Offender Treatment Program. Referrals to the AIP occur after an offender is arrested for a domestic violence related crime, post conviction or as a condition of a civil order of protection. The initial evaluation process for any individual referred to the offender treatment program includes a mental health and substance abuse assessment. Referrals to these adjunctive therapies are provided when indicated, however the AIP is unable to mandate anyone to comply with mental health treatment recommendations. Following the initial assessment, an offender is assigned to a twenty-three week treatment curriculum, which provides domestic violence education in a group setting with one to two therapists. The group treatment modality consists of a cognitive-behavioral approach and is designed to advance participants through the contemplative stages of change. In FY 2010 there were 556 referrals for offender treatment, of which 114 dropped out during the referral process and 258 completed the program successfully, with a completion rate of 54.9%. The program receives \$250,000.00 of local funds to treat all domestic violence offenders in the County.

As a program certified through the Governor's Family Violence Council (FVC), the current AIP in Montgomery County institutes minimum operating standards and contains the key components to address domestic violence issues among its participants. Furthermore, in a review of AIP research conducted by the FVC, they report that the data have consistently identified a positive benefit from AIP counseling in reducing the prevalence of intimate partner violence and subsequent arrests associated with intimate partner violence. As with many AIPs around the nation however, an evaluation of the Montgomery County program's individual effectiveness and level at which the treatment reduces or halts offenders' tendencies to re-abuse their partners is not fully known. This is in part the result of the confusion that exists regarding how to measure the



success of AIPs and other factors such as maintaining contact with the victim for follow-up reporting and budget constraints. Batterer intervention experts at a 2009 roundtable discussion titled “Doing the Work and Measuring the Progress” agreed that AIPs must show program effectiveness and that success must not be measured in completion or re-arrest rates but on improved outcomes for the victims affected by the violence.

As mentioned above, offenders who are referred to the AIP in Montgomery County are screened for mental health and addictions issues. The data indicate that 30% of the referrals have a mental health diagnosis or substance abuse problem. Despite this initial screening process, all offenders receive the same prescription and are ordered into the same type of treatment group. While there is limited data maintained on AIP treatment in the County, what is known anecdotally is that 1) alcohol is a strong predictor of recidivism and 2) the offenders that commit murder have substance abuse issues and/ or psychopathology.

RECOMMENDATION: It is the committee’s recommendation that in order to improve offender treatment in the County and increase victim safety, a multi-tiered model of treatment that is more intensive for offenders who are assessed with addictions and mental health problems be explored. Additionally the committee recommends that the DVCC collaborate with the Abused Persons Program and the AIP treatment contractor to institute an offender treatment evaluation process to evaluate effectiveness of the intervention and determine the level of recidivism at the 6th month and 1 year mark after completion of the AIP program.

In 2009 the Governor’s Family Violence Council developed operational guidelines for Abuser Intervention Programs in Maryland. The purpose of these guidelines is to promote victim safety by establishing minimum operating standards for AIPs in Maryland. Minimum operating standards contained in these guidelines are intended to accomplish the following:

- ◆ establish program responsibility to victims and accountability to courts;
- ◆ ensure referral of abusers to intervention programs that focus on stopping abuse and preventing abusers from evading or minimizing their responsibility for abusive behavior;
- ◆ ensure AIP participation in a coordinated approach to ending intimate partner violence that involves a partnership with the legal community and victim advocacy programs at the local and state level; and
- ◆ ensure outreach to victims.

In addition to these guidelines, the FVC also lists best practice recommendations for AIPs to take into account. The names of certified agencies are listed in the Maryland Judges’ Benchbook, which is used when assigning abusers to AIPs. These standards are in place and certified programs such as the Abused Persons Program and J&E Associates exist in Montgomery County. All too often domestic violence offenders and their attorneys have opted to attend or promote the completion of short term, generic anger management programs that do not meet the FVC’s guidelines. Many of these anger management programs can be completed in a day or online are not deemed appropriate intimate partner violence treatment programs by domestic violence professionals because they do not conduct risk assessments. They also teach anger management techniques rather than focus on offenders’ beliefs about violence and teaching alternatives to violence in intimate relationships. Of greatest concern is that the anger management programs are not affiliated with the victim service programs or the coordinated response network. Therefore they do not conduct outreach to victims or address victims’ safety issues.

RECOMMENDATION: It is the recommendation of the Offender Program and Policy Committee to collaborate with the courts and to increase the referrals of all domestic violence offenders in both the civil and criminal justice systems, to Maryland State Certified AIP programs.



MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY & CORRECTIONAL SERVICES
COMMUNITY SUPERVISION- NORTH REGION

Domestic violence offenders are referred to supervision through the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services following sentencing in a criminal case or release after a period of incarceration. There are departmental policies which stipulate the offender supervision process and specific guidelines outlining protocols of supervision. A domestic violence offender is supervised at the highest level initially. This includes a requirement of twice monthly face to face meetings with the probation agent, home visits, and on-going monthly verification of home address employment and treatment participation. Montgomery County's three supervision offices each have an agent dedicated to supervising domestic violence cases. Each of the specialized domestic violence agents has a caseload in excess of 200 probationers, although about half, or 100 of those cases are actively supervised in the community, whereas the others are not available for active supervision.

The Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services plays an active role in the coordinated community response to domestic violence, agents work closely with AIP and substance abuse programs, victim services programs, PTSU, and have recently developed a very collaborative working relationship with the State's Attorney's Office (SAO). Agents have access to criminal case files at the SAO for information gathering purposes. Warrants for violation of probation conditions in cases of imminent danger to the victim and/or substantial non-compliance with court ordered conditions are expedited by filing jointly with the SAO.

The National Institute of Justice considers Judicial Review Hearings in domestic violence cases an innovative court-based promising practice. Judicial review hearings are the practice of requiring a defendant to appear before the judge at a post-conviction review hearing to demonstrate that he or she is complying with the conditions of probation. It is believed to improve offender compliance and victim safety. Under this practice, probation agents are expected to maintain contact with offenders and their victims. Victim input is sought prior to each review session, compliance by the defendant is valued and rewarded, and violations, when found, result in prompt, graduated sanctions. Depending on the violation, these sanctions may include jail, work release, extra sessions at batterer intervention meetings, additional protective conditions, substance abuse testing and treatment, or more frequent judicial reviews before the judge. If appropriate, judicial review hearings also allow for terms of probation to be modified to support and address the particular needs of the victim and/or defendant.

RECOMMENDATION: The Offender Program and Policy Committee recommends exploration of instituting the Judicial Review Process in Domestic Violence cases in Montgomery County Circuit Court.



ADDENDUM A

IN THE MATTER OF THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF A VIDEO
CONFERENCING PILOT PROJECT
IN BOTH THE CIRCUIT COURT
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY AND
THE DISTRICT COURT IN
MONTGOMERY COUNTY

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IN THE
COURT OF APPEALS
OF MARYLAND

ORDER

Pursuant to the Order issued September 23, 2009, establishing a pilot project in the Circuit Court for Montgomery County and the District Court in Rockville to conduct the hearing of domestic violence *ex parte* petitions by video conference and the subsequent evaluation of the project by the State Court Administration;

I hereby approve the State Court Administrator's recommendation that the project be institutionalized under the condition that the project implement the recommendations of the evaluation.

/s/ Robert M. Bell

Robert M. Bell, Chief Judge
Court of Appeals of Maryland

Filed: August 16, 2012

/s/ Bessie M. Decker

Bessie M. Decker, Clerk
Court of Appeals



MONTGOMERY COUNTY GOVERNMENT

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COORDINATING COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT 2012