

SAFV Voices

Sitkans Against Family Violence

March 2011

The Link Between Bullying and Domestic Violence

By Chevon Kothari, Executive Director, Mountain Crisis Services, Mariposa, California

Many people have asked: how is preventing bullying going to prevent domestic violence?

Bullying and domestic violence are cyclical – those children who witness domestic violence are at a much higher risk of becoming both bullies and victims of bullying. Conversely, those children who bully or are victims of bullying (without any resolution or intervention by adults in their lives) end up learning social norms in relationships that can look a lot like domestic violence. In other words, if a bully learns that there are no consequences for his or her negative treatment of other children, they learn that this behavior is OK in all of their relationships, including relationships with dating partners or spouses later in life. Also, if a child always falls victim to bullying, with no outside help or intervention, this child may grow to feel that this is the best they deserve to be treated in their relationships – hence making them more vulnerable to domestic violence later in life.

A recent study from researchers at the University of Washington (UW) and Indiana University, found that children who were exposed to violence in the home engaged in higher levels of physical bullying than children who were not witnesses to such behavior. The study is one of the first in the United States to specifically examine the association between child exposure to domestic violence and involvement in bullying.

"Children learn from seeing what their primary caregivers do. They are very attuned and very observant about what goes on in a household," said



Dr. Nerissa Bauer, lead author of the study and a former UW pediatrician who is now an assistant professor of pediatrics at Indian and Riley Children's Hospital. "Parents are very powerful role models and children will mimic the behavior of parents, wanting to be like them. They may believe violence is OK and they can use it with peers. After all, they may think, 'If Daddy can do this, perhaps I can hit this kid to get my way.' When parents engage in violence, children may assume violence is the right way to do things," she said.

Researchers further stress the importance of early intervention – of doctors, teachers, counselors and other adults in children's lives to not only recognize and intervene in bullying, but to recognize when domestic violence may be occurring and to get victims and children the help they may need. Not all children exposed to violence will respond in the same way, but there are many indirect effects and problems that you can see, such as engaging in bullying, not being able to make friends, not eating or those with extended school absences.

The researchers express that their study illustrates the importance of looking at how family events affect children over time and the power of the inter-generational transmission of violence. Todd Herrenkohl, UW associate professor of social work and co-author of the study, states, "A key is early identification of this kind of problem, but it is never too late to intervene to break the cycle of violence."

For more information about this study, contact Todd Herrenkohl at the University of Washington at (206) 221-7873 or tih@u.washington.edu.

SAFV Prevention News

Community Survey for Parent/Child Programming

Pathways to a Safer Sitka, an interagency community group dedicated to making Sitka a safe and respectful place for all, wants to hear from you about how to make Sitka a better place to have and raise a family.

By filling out a short community survey for parent/child programming, you will help us develop family programming that will best meet the needs of all Sitkans. Please pick up a survey from Kettleton Memorial Library, from any social service agency in town, or online at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/T6J63Z6>. You may return completed surveys to Sitkans Against Family Violence at 207 Seward St. or to any of the above mentioned places. Thank you for your help!

Initial Results of Survey for Boys and Male Programming

In the last newsletter, a Pathways to a Safer Sitka survey regarding programming for boys and men was highlighted. Primary prevention programs and opportunities for men and boys has been identified as a gap in the current programming in Sitka.

We have received 71 responses to this survey, which we will utilize to develop and implement strength based and skill building programming for boys and men in Sitka.

The survey results identified the middle school age group as the group most in need of programming. Two types of programs were highlighted as the most highly desired for Sitka, mentoring and outdoor programs. As part of the program, respect for self and others, healthy communication, healthy emotions and conflict resolution were viewed as the most important pieces that any new program should include and develop.

The Sitka Youth Leadership Committee

The Sitka Youth Leadership Committee (SYLC) is a youth-led committee dedicated to promoting respect and building bridges amongst youth in Sitka and across Alaska. This year, youth in SYLC are building on last year's Respect Campaign by designing sweatshirts, launching a community invisible story project with the *Sitka Choose Respect* mural project, leading discussions with their peers about respect, and planning an outdoor leadership trip. SYLC was awarded a mini-grant from the Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault to help support their proposed activities and provide stipends to members who make a serious commitment to the group. SYLC was selected by the Banff Film Festival organizers to be the recipients of this year's proceeds to help support the outdoor leadership trip planned for the spring. Participants in SYLC are interested in bridging the gap and providing positive social opportunities for youth from the three high schools in Sitka. If you are a youth leader who believes in equality, respect and non-violence and want to make a positive impact on your community please join us on Wednesdays from 7-8:30 at SAFV.

For more info call 747-3370 or visit our facebook page: www.facebook.com/pages/Sitka-Youth-Leadership-



Pictured from left to right: Julia Smith(SAFV), Nelson Kanuk(MEHS), Tessa Baldwin(MEHS), Mariah Issacs (MEHS), and Nick Bouker (MEHS).

Rural Community DVSA Primary Prevention Pilot Program Grant

State awards domestic violence prevention grants for rural Alaska

Grantees will serve the areas around Bethel, Dillingham, Kodiak and Sitka

ANCHORAGE — The State of Alaska on Friday, Jan. 28, awarded four grants to build violence-free communities in rural areas. Successful applicants proposed new ideas, demonstrated community involvement and set measurable goals to reduce domestic violence and sexual assault in their regions. A grant of \$372,642 in the first year and up to \$1 million per year over the next three years, depending on future funding appropriations, was awarded to Safe and Fear-Free Environment in Dillingham; the grant will also serve Aleknagik.

Three grants of \$200,000 per year for this year and the next three years were awarded each to Sitkans Against Family Violence, which serves Sitka, Kake and Angoon; Association of Village Council Presidents to serve Bethel and surrounding villages; and Kodiak Area Native Association to serve Kodiak, Port Lions, Akhiok, Karluk, Old Harbor, Ouzinkie and Larsen Bay.

The grants will be overseen by the Department of Health & Social Services' Division of Behavioral Health as part of Gov. Sean Parnell's statewide initiative to end Alaska's epidemic of domestic violence and sexual assault within a decade.

Recent research has linked traumatic childhood experiences, including living with domestic violence and sexual assault, to later health issues such as obesity, alcohol addiction, tobacco use and injected drug use.

"We believe the work in these communities will be an important new approach to breaking the cycle of violence, sexual assault and substance abuse — especially the use and abuse of alcohol," Behavioral Health Director Melissa Stone said.

As one of the four communities selected for the Rural Community Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Pilot Program grant, SAFV and Sitka continue at the forefront of primary prevention work in Alaska. This award will accelerate the work of the primary prevention of the domestic violence and sexual assault coalition, Pathways to a Safer Sitka. Dedicated to helping community members understand and demonstrate respectful and safe relationships, Pathways to a Safer Sitka created the following goals:

- Sitka schools are actively working to promote safe and respectful relationships and build protective factors against Intimate Partner Violence;
- Youth are active and engaged within the community

promoting respect and non-violence;

- Boys and men are proactive within the community in building mutual respect and equality between men and women;
- Key agencies will work together to strengthen and support opportunities for family growth and connectedness; and
- Healthcare organizations actively work to address Intimate Partner Violence.

During the first year of the award, Pathways to a Safer Sitka will:

- explore new, promising areas of prevention that build protective factors through arts and traditional culture;
- build upon existing programming which has proven successful; and
- increase agency and community capacity around domestic violence and sexual assault through targeted continuing education and trainings. This combination will create a web of strengths and protective factors encompassing all age groups, genders, and cultures providing the community the social capital and network to resist violence in all of its forms.

A highlight of some of the programs to come:

Culture and Language Program: Because a firm grounding in indigenous culture and language is a prerequisite for cultural health and well-being, Sitka Tribe of Alaska, Sitka Native Education Program, the Sitka School District, Head Start and SAFV will develop and implement a language and cultural program that will be carried over to the Sitka School District; develop and pilot a pre-K language, literacy and culture program; and provide increased opportunities for community-based, family oriented language and cultural programming.

Respect Mural Project: The mural project will use community art as a collaborative process to raise awareness of the high rates of bullying and intimate partner violence within Sitka. We will use the knowledge and expertise of local artist Ellen Frankenstein and her nonprofit organization, artchange, inc., to engage the community in a Beyond Words conversation crossing cultural, gender, generational and agency/institution divides to explore the hard issues of violence within the community and how to move from 'the ugly to the beautiful.' The mural will serve as a permanent visual re-

Sitka Choose Respect Mural Project

The *Sitka Choose Respect* mural project was proposed by Sitka's Domestic and Sexual Violence Task Force and selected as one of the top four projects at the 4th Annual Sitka Health Summit in October 2010. Community members rallied around the creation of a Respect Mural in order to raise awareness of the high rates of bullying, domestic violence and sexual assault within Sitka.

The *Sitka Choose Respect* mural project will use community art to spark dialogue around respect: what it means to be inclusive, listen to each other's stories, and honor local history. Through this process we will explore the seriousness of bullying, domestic violence and sexual assault, reveal our commonalities, and seek creative solutions to these issues within Sitka. The materials produced from these discussions will be used to inform the overall design of a public art mural to be displayed in Sitka as a reminder of the community's commitment to ending violence. The mural itself will be painted on panels and hung on a prominent exterior wall in downtown Sitka.

Already, Julia Smith and Ellen Frankenstein are working with youth at Blatchley Middle School engaging the students in a *Beyond Words* process. This process uses writing, theater, photography, drawing, collage and spoken word to gather and share our invisible stories—the hidden and often shared experiences that connect us to one another.

Representatives from the Sitka Youth Leadership Committee (SYLC) in partnership with the Respect Mural committee are actively working to launch a community engagement project to solicit untold and invisible stories. Starting in mid-March, we will release 1-2 prompts each week inviting members of the community to share their invisible stories—whether they be funny, serious and everything in between. Drop boxes will be

placed in various places around town where you can submit your story anonymously. These stories will help inspire the muralists as well as foster dialogue and understanding across Sitka. Stay tuned for more information about this project.

Because art is a powerful tool for expression and transformation and the rates of intimate partner violence are at epidemic levels in Alaska, we believe the *Sitka Choose Respect* mural project will mobilize Sitka towards positive change; reveal our commonalities through stories; and develop connectivity, compassion and respect across cultural, generational, and gender divides. For more information, to lend your support, or invite us to work with your group or classroom, please contact Julia Smith at 907-747-3370 or jsmith@safv.org or Ellen Frankenstein at artchangeinc@gmail.com or 907-738-2174.

Artists interested in being considered for the mural may go to www.artchangeinc.org where they will find the *Call to Artists* application, due March 21, 2011.

The Sitka Choose Respect mural project is sponsored by RurAL CAP, Sitka White Elephant, the Sitka Health Summit, and the State of Alaska Department of Health and Social Services.

The Sitka Choose Respect committee consists of representatives from: artchange,inc, Brave Heart Volunteers, Sitkans Against Family Violence, Sitka Tribe of Alaska, Pathways to a Safer Sitka, the Sitka Tree and Landscape Committee, the City Assembly, the Greater Sitka Arts Council and members of the Domestic Violence Task-force.

(Continued from page 3)

reminder of the community's commitment to ending domestic violence and sexual assault.

Community/agency Capacity Building: Because community and agency support are critical components of our prevention plan, it is important that all members of the community are as up-to-date and knowledgeable of prevention as possible. We will provide quarterly educational seminars, some geared to community members at

large and others more focused on social service agency staff, to create a community-wide working knowledge of prevention.

This is an exciting time for prevention work at both the local and state level. If you are interested in becoming more involved or would like more information on Pathways to a Safer Sitka, please contact Julia Smith at 747-3370 or jsmith@safv.org.

Girls on the Run



Girls on the Run has started its third spring season in Sitka! This year, we have two teams full of enthusiastic runners at Keet Gooshi Heen and are looking forward to our final 5k this spring.

Girls on the Run is one of the established and successful programs that are part of the Pathways to a Safer Sitka violence prevention initiative.



Please come out and cheer on these girls as they complete their season at the 5k at Sitka National Historic Park on May 15th !

Lifesaving Legislation for Domestic Violence Victims Signed into Law

The National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) commended President Barack Obama for signing into law the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act. The legislation is the only dedicated federal funding for domestic violence service programs nationwide. It passed on Capitol Hill as part of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, and President Obama signed it into law on Dec. 20, 2010.

“We applaud President Obama and his administration for once again standing up for survivors of domestic violence,” said Sue Else, NNEDV’s president. “The Family Violence Prevention and Services Act provides crucial investments in effective, lifesaving domestic violence services.” Since the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act expired in 2008, NNEDV and its member coalitions against domestic violence in every state and U.S. territory have staunchly advocated for its reauthorization. It

provides much-needed funding for domestic violence shelters, crisis hotlines, counseling, and other services that support survivors of domestic violence and their children.

Approximately 400,000 adults and children access services funded through this legislation annually at more than 1,500 shelters and outreach centers.

“The federal government makes it clear that domestic violence is a serious issue and comprehensive services need to be available to survivors,” said Else. In addition to supporting the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act, President Obama and Vice President Biden have created the White House Council on Women and Girls and named the first-ever White House Advisor on Violence Against Women, Lynn Rosenthal.

“A special thanks also goes to the U.S. House and Senate,” said Else. “Without the bold bipartisan leadership of our allies in Congress, today’s accomplishment would not have been possible.”

Source: www.andvsa.org

April is Sexual Assault Awareness and Child Abuse Prevention Month

For this reason, we want to point you to a video series that was broadcast recently by KTUU-TV on Channel 2 News. It shines the light on teen prostitution in Alaska, and as a parent, grandparent, caregiver, or teacher you need to know that there is something like this.

Stones in the Backpack: The Burden of Teen Prostitution

By Rhonda McBride—Anchorage, February 28

Prostitution is not an easy subject to talk about, especially for those who have engaged in it -- but Heather McMenamini-Bozart, a recovering drug addict who spent 10 years enslaved to a sex trafficker named Don Webster, wants to change that. McMenamini-Bozart was one of 40 witnesses who put Webster behind bars in February 2008. Webster was convicted of exploiting women and girls between the ages of 13 and 30.

McMenamin-Bozart believes childhood trauma made it easy for Webster to lure her into the sex trade. Presented with a pile of stones alongside a backpack on a table and asked to think of each one as a bad experience growing up, she quickly began to list a litany of woes. "Growing up without a father," McMenamini-Bozart said, putting the first stone into the backpack. She said the next stone she put in represented child molestation; then she picked up another, and another. "The drugs and alcohol inside my family," McMenamini-Bozart said. "Feeling like an outcast at home. Or not having any food or clothing or being picked up at school." Before long, the backpack was filled with about 20 stones. "It just becomes one big bag," she said as she tried to lift it up. "That's what you're carrying around on you. It's a lot of weight, a lot of weight on a child's shoulder."

When McMenamini-Bozart first crossed paths with Webster, she was 22. When they met at an Anchorage strip club, she believes he instantly recognized that she had grown up emotionally needy. At that time, she says Webster went by the name of Jerry Starr. "(He) portrayed himself as a man who was interested in meeting me as a boyfriend," she said. "He introduced me to crack cocaine and he got me hooked that way."

She was soon to discover that she wasn't alone, that she was one of many girls Starr had seduced with drugs and charm. "He could have sold you ocean-front

property in Arizona," McMenamini-Bozart said. "He was that good." As part of his prostitution ring, Starr maintained several houses of women, hooked on drugs and turning tricks. "It was a smooth operation, if you want to look at it that way," McMenamini-Bozart said. Several of his houses were in middle-class neighborhoods, where McMenamini-Bozart was also expected to help groom younger girls to work in the trade. "When the young girls are first introduced to this, they latch on -- they'll find one of the older girls to latch onto, kind of maybe a big sister role, or a mother role," she said.

Starr wanted the women to think of him as the family patriarch. "He would have us call him Daddy. So he was like our lover, our father, our supporter, our everything," McMenamini-Bozart said. She says Starr was always on the look-out for broken girls. "Then he builds them up by lavishing them with gifts, telling them how much he wants to take care of them, putting them in nice places and giving them nice homes and clothes," McMenamini-Bozart said.

Starr also treated girls to getting their hair and nails done -- but he expected the girls to turn over every dollar they earned, and if he felt he was being shorted he would turn violent. "We had what we call the box," McMenamini-Bozart said. Starr would punish his girls by locking them up in small spaces. In the house McMenamini-Bozart stayed at in East Anchorage, Starr used a crawl space under the house to punish her. "There was a time I got locked into the box and I was stripped down naked, hog-tied and thrown into the box and held down there for three days," she said.

The FBI salvaged a closet from a trailer that Starr used to house another group of prostitutes. It was used in his trial as evidence of his cruelty.

"He had a box no matter where he went; that was his punishment," McMenamini-Bozart said. "We never had lights in them." When girls were released from the

box, Starr would tell them that their Daddy still loved them.

The FBI and the Anchorage Police Department say Starr typified an underground culture of pimping. Like other prostitution kingpins, he would take away driver's licenses and other forms of identification from his women, to break their connection to the outside world and increase their dependence on him. Special Agent Jolene Goeden says Starr would form what is called a "trauma bond" with his women, similar to the Stockholm Syndrome in which hostages become emotionally attached to their captors.

"Breaking them down, building them back up: that loyalty is created out of that, because that young girl or young woman becomes so dependent on him, they think he literally controls their lives," Goeden said. Starr liked young girls because they were easier to control. "Their minds are more moldable, like Play-Doh," McMenammin-Bozart said. Starr would often cruise Spenard or troll the People Mover bus service's Downtown Transit Center, keeping an eye out for broken girls. McMenammin-Bozart says she wanted to warn the girls, but was afraid. She also recognized that like her, they carried a lot of stones in their backpack.


"It was sickening, it was sad," she said. "I wanted to scream out, 'Hey, this isn't what you want! Trust me.'" Once a svelte, aristocratic blonde who had first caught Starr's eye, McMenammin-Bozart found herself in need of cosmetic surgery after a drug dealer hit her in the face with a hammer. "You've got friends dying from drug addiction; you've got the addiction itself," she said. McMenammin-Bozart said during her time with Starr, she only added more stones to her backpack. "The stones are just unbelievable – unbelievable," she said.

McMenamin-Bozart hopes that by speaking out she will educate Alaskans about the true nature of the sex trade and the women who engage in it. "We all have our stories," she said. "It's not like we were little girls sitting in our rooms, playing with our Barbie dolls, talking about one day how I'll wanna grow up and be controlled by a pimp."

McMenamin-Bozart is now 35 and a stay-at-home mom. In March she will celebrate two years of being drug-free. As for Don Webster, aka Jerry Starr, he is serving a 30-year sentence at a federal prison in Beaumont, Texas. His case is on appeal, and a federal judge has ordered him to pay \$3.6 million in restitution to compensate 11 victims.

Investigators arrived at that figure by calculating the amount of money Webster collected through exploitation. Prosecutors say it's not likely that money will ever be paid, because Webster claims he doesn't have it.

If you want to watch or read this and the following four segments, please go to www.ktuu.com and enter "Stones in the backpack" in the search field. You can contact Rhonda McBride at rmcbride@ktuu.com



CHOOSE RESPECT
ALASKANS ENDING THE EPIDEMIC OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

Sitka is a great place. However, some of our fellow Sitkans have been scarred by domestic violence and sexual assault. Let's show our support for these survivors! It's time to make a difference in our town— it's time to Choose Respect.

Join us in a community march and rally

THURSDAY, MARCH 31—NOON

TOTEM SQUARE TO CRESCENT HARBOR SHELTER

This march is organized by SAFV on an initiative by Governor Sean Parnell. For more information, please call 747-3370 or go to ChooseRespect.alaska.gov.

43 ALASKAN COMMUNITIES WILL MARCH THIS DAY AT NOON!

Fourteenth Annual Honoring Women Dinner and Silent Auction

April 2, 6:00 pm at Harrigan Centennial Hall



This Year's Honorees:

Marta Ryman—ANS Camp #4

Ethel Makinen—Sitka Woman's Club

Jennifer Challen—U.S. Coast Guard Spouses and Women's Association

Louise Brady—SAFV

Dorothy Orbison—Community Nominee

**Join us and celebrate the achievements of these women
who make a difference in the lives of Sitka's women and children.**

Tickets for \$40 at Old Harbor Books and at SAFV. Call 747-3370 for more information.



United Way Member Agency
Member of the Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault



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