

# NETWORK NEWS



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A PUBLICATION OF THE OHIO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE NETWORK

## **Anthem Prevention Funding is Making a World of Difference**

*By: Jo Ellen Simonsen*

In late February 2004, the Anthem Foundation of Ohio entered into a three year grant agreement with ODVN to fund the Family Violence Prevention Capacity Building Initiative. The objectives of the initiative were to develop and implement a comprehensive technical assistance program to four existing family violence prevention projects also receiving funding from the Anthem Foundation of Ohio; expand family violence prevention training, information and technical assistance offered by ODVN; and create a sustainable infrastructure for family violence prevention capacity building in Ohio. What a difference a year makes!

Almost immediately upon the notice of the award, ODVN began developing its own internal capacity with the addition of a Prevention Specialist and professional development opportunities for the entire ODVN staff on community-based prevention topics. In collaboration with fellow Anthem T.A. Provider Mary Murray of the Seattle-based MEMconsultants, ODVN developed a logic model to direct plans for prevention training, technical assistance and capacity building. The coalition renewed its commitment to prevention in a way that supports and is supported by ODVN's standard for excellence in victim and systems advocacy and public policy leadership. A vision statement crafted in

April 2004 depicts the impact ODVN believes its prevention efforts can make: "The Ohio Domestic Violence Network is a catalyst for creating Ohio communities, a state, a nation and the world in which every human being is honored, respected, cherished, and loved. ODVN's prevention efforts create peace, safety, justice, and equality in the world, a world that works for everyone, where no one is left out. There are no survivors. There is nothing to survive."

Toward that end, ODVN, the Anthem Foundation of Ohio and many partners in the initiative have been forwarding the work. Four local Anthem grantee projects have received site-specific technical assistance throughout the past year in the form of individual coaching, resource provision and site visits. Local Anthem grantees include the Allen County Partnership for Violence Free Families, the Hamilton County Family Violence Prevention Project, Warren County United to End Family Violence, and the Tri-County Coalition Family Violence Prevention Project in Columbiana, Mahoning and Trumbull counties. Project leadership and community members have also benefited from networking and training opportunities supported by Anthem funds. Training topics presented to local Anthem grantees in the past year have included Community Mobili-

**Anthem Prevention Funding is Making a World of Difference (continued from page 1)**

zation for Domestic and Family Violence Prevention, Evaluation Planning, Communications Planning, and Coalition Maintenance.

Currently cross-site evaluators, from the Center for Evaluation and Program Improvement (CEPI) at Vanderbilt University, are collecting data from the first year of the projects in order to measure the extent of

change the initiative may be bringing to various segments within these Ohio communities. Highlights from the first round of data will be presented to sites in the late spring, and a more formal report will be released to the Anthem Foundation in the fall. Debra J. Rog, Senior Research Associate and Director of CEPI's Washington, D.C. office, offers her initial impression saying, "We have been struck by the dedication and energy of the individuals working in the local projects. Their willingness to work with us as evaluators in the spirit of understanding how coalitions can work to prevent family violence has been gratifying."

Meanwhile, ODVN has continued its work to expand family violence prevention training, information and technical assistance throughout the state. Procurement of prevention resources for loan from the ODVN clearinghouse is ongoing. Current titles on a wide range of prevention topics and in a variety of formats are available. These resources can be requested online or by phoning ODVN.

The ODVN Training Institute has developed and twice presented a two-day training titled *Advocacy in Prevention: Peaceful Relationships for Teens*. This training is scheduled to be offered again in early December. Additional prevention-related training opportunities on *Communications Planning* and *Working with Men and Boys* are in development and more details will be forth-

coming in ODVN Training Institute brochures and on the Ohio Prevents Domestic Violence listserv. The ODVN Prevention Staff has also provided customized family violence prevention training and technical assistance to several communities and agencies around the state and will continue to offer these services as resources and demand permit.

"As ODVN continues to build its own organizational capacity for prevention, members can rest assured that their state coalition is playing a significant role in generating a new base of knowledge, skills and motivation for action in individuals, organizations and communities throughout the state."

With the award of Anthem funding, the coalition has also deliberately broadened its prevention focus to address all forms of family violence, including violence against children, elders and persons living with disabilities in addition to its longstanding efforts on intimate partner violence. This is reflected in the language and design of ODVN training content, in the varied clearinghouse materials presently being

acquired through Anthem funds and in the provision of resources to grantees and other Ohio prevention practitioners.

As ODVN continues to build its own organizational capacity for prevention, members can rest assured that their state coalition is playing a significant role in generating a new base of knowledge, skills and motivation for action in individuals, organizations and communities throughout the state. The services being provided, assets being acquired and systems being developed through Anthem funding have seeded a growing network of prevention practitioners and community activists, setting into motion a visibly renewed interest in and appreciation for family violence prevention.

Those wishing to learn more about the Family Violence Prevention Capacity Building Initiative may contact a member of the Prevention Team at ODVN.

**Check It Out!**  
**NEW PREVENTION RESOURCES FROM ODVN'S**  
**RESOURCE CENTER**

With the award of funding from the Anthem Foundation in 2004, ODVN has begun adding several new prevention-related titles to its clearinghouse for loan. The goal of developing a “prevention bookshelf” is to support the building of statewide capacity by offering a diverse selection of resources on subjects from Community Mobilization and Social Change Theory to Early Violence Prevention and Promoting Peaceful Relationships for Teens. Below are descriptions of a few recently acquired titles.

***Mobilizing Communities to Prevent Domestic Violence (2003)*** is a unique and well-organized resource guide that offers an international perspective on the work of ending violence against women. It includes many program tools to assist community-based non-governmental organizations strengthen violence prevention programs, and it advocates for broader use of social change approaches. It was developed in collaboration with UNIFEM, the women’s fund at the United Nations, and Action Aid Uganda. Firmly rooted in a human rights framework, the strategies and activities in the Resource Guide were written for communities in East and Southern Africa although, with appropriate modifications, those in other regions of the world will certainly find it helpful as well.

Authors Lori Michau and Dipak Naker recognize that while women experience many types of gender-based violence, this work specifically focuses on domestic violence “because of its profound implications on women’s lives” and its negative effects on the quality of relationships between women and men, and the health and develop-

ment of children, families and communities. The guide encompasses a broad spectrum of abuse that women experience from their intimate partners explaining that it can include the level of fear in a relationship, the absence of mutuality, the low status of the woman, the presence of injustice and the level of disrespect. “Thus,” the preface notes, “domestic violence can be understood as a context of, rather than an event in, a woman’s life.”

Contents include Guiding Principles, Processes of Change (Social and Individual Behavior), Community Assessment, Raising Awareness, Building Networks, Integrating Action and Consolidating Efforts. Two supplementary resources, *Rethinking Domestic Violence: A Training Process for Community Activists* and *Preventing Gender Based-Violence in the Horn, East and Southern Africa: A Regional Dialogue*, are also available for loan from ODVN. Publisher: Raising Voices.



***The Teen Relationships Workbook (2001)*** written by Kerry Moles, CSW, and illustrated by Amy Leutenberg Brodsky, LISW, includes 68 worksheets for professionals helping teens to develop healthy relationships and to prevent domestic violence. While the workbook is primarily intended as a tool for engaging victims, perpetrators and those at risk of being either, it is certainly appropriate as a means of general education on

### Check It Out! (continued from page 3)

relationship issues for teens and young adults.

Worksheets explore lessons for teens on identifying the healthy and unhealthy characteristics of relationships; understanding the dynamics of emotional, physical and sexual abuse in intimate relationships; exploring and clarifying values, beliefs and attitudes about gender roles; and becoming empowered to make positive, healthy decisions about intimate relationships. Each worksheet is followed by a detailed facilitator's guide. The Teen Relationship Workbook also contains sections on working with teens, tips for parents and recommended readings and videos. Publisher: Wellness Reproductions and Publishing.

*The Tipping Point (2002)* is a widely acclaimed bestseller in which author Malcolm Gladwell explores and brilliantly illuminates the phenomenon or magic moment when an idea, trend or social behavior crosses a threshold, tips and spreads like wildfire. This work is commonly referred to in trainings and seminars by leading social change behaviorists, professional marketers and management executives. Gladwell identifies the invaluable roles of individual messengers he designates as Salesmen, Connectors, or Mavens (information brokers). Concepts such as The Law of the Few, the Stickiness Factor of messages and the Power of Context are explained through the use of familiar case studies. Of particular interest to ODVN clearinghouse borrowers may be discussions on social epidemics and "how little things can make a big difference" in dramatically reframing the way we think of the world. Publisher: Back Bay Books.



The comprehensive resource on domestic violence

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**Visit our website at**

**[www.odvn.org](http://www.odvn.org)**

*We welcome submissions to Network News; however, all articles submitted will be subject to editorial approval. For permission to reprint articles from Network News please contact Becky Mason.*

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Department of Health & Human Services.**

## **ODVN ANNOUNCES NEW PROJECT – BUILDING COMPREHENSIVE SOLUTIONS**

*By Tonia Moultry*

This year ODVN received funding for a new project called “Building Comprehensive Solutions.” The project involves advocates collaborating effectively, and creating visions, policies and practices that respond to the current realities facing battered women and their families, especially those living in poverty. The process of building comprehensive solutions calls for a “woman-defined” approach to advocacy and the development of options that improve the lives of battered women and their families. In practice, women from different cultures, women with financial needs, women with children affected by domestic violence, women with parenting issues, and women experiencing chemical dependency or mental health issues, will all find respectful and relevant advocacy and resources.

ODVN has partnered with the Ohio Coalition on Sexual Assault (OCOSA) to work with six dual (domestic violence and sexual assault) agencies on implementing this initiative over a period of eight months. Each agency will assign a team of two to three people, at least one of whom must be the sexual assault advocate. Each team will then be responsible for taking the lead in learning about and implementing anti-oppression work into the organizational structure. ODVN and OCOSA will support the agencies in doing this work by providing a series of monthly activities which will be done on site at the agency, technical support and trainings.

The six agencies that will be participating in this initiative are New Directions (Mt. Vernon), Project Woman (Springfield), BRAVO (Columbus), Abuse and Rape Crisis Center of Warren County (Lebanon), Women

and Family Services (Defiance) and Rape Crisis and Abuse Center of Hamilton County (Cincinnati). Each agency completed a survey which detailed their commitment to anti-oppression work on all levels including staff, administration and board.

## **OHIO ELDER ABUSE TASK FORCE RELEASES RECOMMENDATIONS**

*By Sandy Huntzinger*

On January 19, 2005, the Ohio Attorney General’s office released the final recommendations submitted by the Ohio Elder Abuse Task Force (EATF). The EATF, made up of elder abuse experts in Ohio, including practitioners, advocates, law enforcement, and medical professionals, was a year-long project hosted by the Department of Aging and the Ohio Attorney General’s office to identify new ways to protect older citizens from abuse.

Nearly two million Ohioans—17 percent of the state’s population—are age 60 or older. What this means to advocates working in the field of domestic violence is a possible increase in calls of abuse by a partner, spouse or a family caregiver. ODVN felt it was important to participate and bring the issue of domestic violence to the table and continue to speak on behalf of older victims of abuse and the advocates who support them.

The task force was comprised of the Policy, Visibility and Coordination committees. Each group was given the charge of creating recommendations to improve support services and recognition of elder abuse and neglect.

To help raise the public’s awareness about elder abuse, the EATF’s recommendations include the implementation of a two-year visibility campaign, to be accomplished with the help of corporate partnerships. Additionally, the task force recommended the creation of a toll-free hotline to allow anyone

## Ohio Elder Abuse Task Force Recommendations (continued from page 5)

to report a case of abuse anywhere in the state. The calls will be routed to a local adult protective services agency or ombudsman.

The task force also called for more coordinated efforts at the local level in response to reports of abuse. Under the plan, each county job and family services and regional area agencies on aging will adopt a memorandum of understanding regarding standard procedures to be employed in the investigation of adult abuse and neglect cases. *The Ohio Elder Abuse Interdisciplinary Team (I-Team) Manual* was one tool developed for community agencies to help build the partnerships to improve support for older survivors of abuse. This comprehensive manual lays out the benefits of community collaboration and how to begin the process. Some of the areas covered are composi-

tion of the team, recruiting new members and the intervention principles in elder abuse.

Additionally, the task force made twenty recommendations to state policy makers on ways to improve upon current elder services. Some of those suggestions are to expand the list of mandatory elder abuse reporters, mandate training for adult protective services workers to identify, prevent and treat cases of elder abuse and offer further protections in state law to elderly victims of crime.

To view a copy of the task force's recommendations in full, access the Attorney General's office web site at [www.ag.state.oh.us](http://www.ag.state.oh.us). Copies of the *I-Team Manual* are available for download from the ODVN web site at [www.odvn.org](http://www.odvn.org).

### ODVN WELCOMES NEW STAFF

**David McKay** is the new Training Coordinator and works in conjunction with the ODVN Training Team to develop and facilitate all workshops of the ODVN Training Institute. Before coming to ODVN, David was the coordinator of the Shelby County Domestic Violence Coalition and was active in helping organizations and communities to coordinate their efforts to end domestic violence. During that time, David helped to develop a county-wide protocol for assisting survivors of domestic violence as well as delivered domestic violence presentations to a variety of groups, ranging from social service professionals to preschoolers. Before coming into the domestic violence movement, David was a public school administrator for many years.

**Tonia Moultry**, ODVN's new Outreach Coordinator, graduated from Capital University with degrees in psychology and criminology. During her fourteen year career she has worked with victims of domestic violence, homeless families, children in residential treatment, men and women in a community based correctional facility and in the field of alcohol and drug. Immediately prior to coming to ODVN, she worked at a private non-profit agency that worked with children and families involved with children's services. Tonia will be working with the Women of Color Caucus, the Domestic Violence and Disability Task Force, and will serve as the staff liaison on the Domestic Violence and Interpretation Committee. She will also be implementing the Building Comprehensive Solutions initiative, creating a database to be used as a resource for underserved populations, and providing technical assistance to shelters as it relates to underserved populations.

## PUBLIC POLICY UPDATE

By Nancy Neylon

### **OHIO NEWS**

#### **Issue One Update—Ohio Constitutional Amendment, Article XV , Section 11**

*The Ohio Domestic Violence Network is concerned that safety and justice for victims of domestic violence in Ohio is in jeopardy.*

Issue One passed by Ohio voters in November stated that “this state and its political subdivisions shall not create or recognize a legal status for relationships of unmarried individuals that intends to approximate the design, qualities, significance or effect of marriage.” Subsequent to the passage of Issue One, public defenders across the state began to file motions to dismiss criminal domestic violence charges against alleged offenders in cases where the victim and alleged offender were unmarried. At this time, Motions to Dismiss criminal cases have been filed in Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court and Cleveland Municipal Court, as well as in Franklin, Hamilton and Montgomery counties, and in several smaller jurisdictions as well.

In the first judicial decisions, the Motion to Dismiss was denied on procedural grounds, as the domestic violence incident took place before the amendment was passed, and amendments operate prospectively. This procedural issue also appears to be the circumstances in several of the pending felony cases. A Motion to Dismiss a civil protection order was filed in Hancock County with no decision as yet. A motion to dismiss a joint custody order between two lesbian mothers based on the amendment has also been filed.

Judge Ronald B. Adrine issued the first judicial decision on a Motion to Dismiss a domestic violence charge citing constitutional infirmities with the statute arising from

the adoption of the recent amendment to the Ohio Constitution. The decision was issued on March 10, 2005 from Cleveland Municipal Court in the case of *City of Cleveland v. Knipp*.

Judge Adrine stated that the task before the court was two fold; first to determine if the intent of the electorate who adopted the Amendment could be ascertained, and then to compare that intent with that of the Ohio Legislature when it adopted the definitional language regarding the coverage of unmarried partners contained in Ohio’s domestic violence laws.

Judge Adrine concluded that it was difficult to draw any conclusions about the intent of the electorate regarding the Amendment. “The stated views of many... if not the majority, lacked an understanding of the Amendment’s full content and import when casting their ballots.”

Judge Adrine further found that the language of Ohio’s domestic violence laws reflects a clear intent of the Ohio Legislature to include unmarried partners in the class of people to be afforded protection and to be subject to sanction under Ohio’s domestic violence laws. The definitions governing unmarried partners in Ohio’s domestic violence laws “are descriptions designed to assist fact finders in discovering whether the unique circumstances surrounding individual relationships can be categorized in such a way as to establish the existence of domestic violence.” Based on previous decisions, the courts in Ohio are of accord “that there need not be an actual assertion of marriage ... cohabitation can be based entirely on acts of living together without sexual relations.” Therefore the Ohio legislature did not intend to create a relationship akin to marriage when enacting the Ohio domestic violence laws.

## PUBLIC POLICY UPDATE (continued from page 7)

Judge Adrine concludes:

“...this court finds that the Legislature’s primary intent ... was to provide protection to *all* persons who cohabit, regardless of their marital status. After thorough review, the court finds no evidence that there was any intent on the part of the Legislature, ... to bestow upon unmarried individuals, or to recognize in them, a legal status that approximates the design, qualities, significance or effect of marriage. *State v. Hadinger, supra*. Instead, the Legislature merely acknowledged the reality that, with or without official approval, human beings in Ohio, as elsewhere, will come together in a variety of loving relationships that will sometimes turn violent. Ohio’s domestic violence laws assure that all of its citizens who require the special protections that the circumstances of domestic violence create will have access to the resources of their government to enhance their safety. This assurance can be and has been made even to unmarried couples, without the extension of the status or benefits of marriage.”

This decision is only binding in Judge Adrine’s courtroom. The public defender that brought the Motion to Dismiss on behalf of the defendant may now appeal the case. Each judge who has a similar case brought before them may now also draw their own conclusions until there is a decision from the Appellate Court that governs them, or ultimately a decision from the Supreme Court of Ohio.

As various jurisdictions interpret the constitutionality of the Ohio domestic violence statutes differently, ODVN is concerned that victims will have unequal opportunities for protection. Moreover, it may have a chilling effect on victims seeking access to legal remedies. The civil protection order statute provides additional remedies for victims including lengthier protection orders, temporary custody and support, and counseling for perpetrators, not available in criminal

proceedings. The many challenges to the constitutionality of the Ohio domestic violence statute will also increase costs to the justice system. ODVN will continue to closely monitor events as they unfold across the state and participate in any appropriate legal challenges to Ohio’s domestic violence laws.

### **Proposed Constitutional Amendment: Taxpayer’s Bill of Rights (TABOR) or Tax and Expenditure Limit (TEL)**

This initiative is being planned to be placed on the ballot in November. The proposed amendment is alarming for two reasons: 1) it would require any increase in state spending higher than the inflation rate plus the population increase at least a 2/3 majority vote of the Ohio General Assembly and/or any governmental body (County Commissioners, city council) AND then a majority vote of Ohio voters to approve spending increases; and, 2) it would effectively freeze state and local spending at a predetermined level, making it impossible for state and local government to honor existing spending commitments.

The Resolution (JR 4) to place the amendment on the ballot is being introduced in both the House and Senate and proponents are beginning to circulate petitions to ensure its placement on the November ballot. According to a study by the Ohio House of Representatives Budget office TEL/TABOR, if PASSED, would have a devastating impact with massive cuts on basic public services such as highways, emergency services, libraries, parks, Passport and other vital services and the dismantling of state funding for education.

In Colorado, a similar amendment has created disinvestment in every single publicly funded program. For example, the Homestead Exemption for senior citizens was eliminated and they are considering charging

## PUBLIC POLICY UPDATE (continued from page 8)

for kindergarten and eliminating 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Also as a result of the amendment, unemployment has doubled and personal income growth rates have fallen. The Center for Community Solutions in Cleveland [www.communitysolutions.com](http://www.communitysolutions.com) and the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities in Washington DC have additional information on their web sites. There is a coalition forming in Ohio to oppose the proposed amendment. For more information contact Sara Schmid at the Ohio SEIU, at [sschmid@seiul199.org](mailto:sschmid@seiul199.org) or Cathy Johnson at the Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio at [cohho@cohho.org](mailto:cohho@cohho.org).

### GOVERNOR'S BUDGET OCJS Moves to Public Safety

The Governor's budget moves the Office of Criminal Justice Services to the Ohio Department of Public Safety. It will be a separate department under Public Safety and Director Huey is planning to continue with the merged agency. There should be no disruption in grant services.

### Cuts to Baseline Funding

The baseline funding for domestic violence shelters is not part of the General Revenue line item. It is in the budget under Public Safety, but appears to be some type of reimbursement. It has been cut to \$500,000 for 2006 and then \$650,000 for 2007. This reimbursement means that the funds would have to be collected prior to disbursement, resulting in a delay of funding to local shelters.

### Amy's Law

HB 29 (Raussen) and SB 54 (Cates)  
Companion Bills

This reintroduction of the legislation proposed last year would require the courts to consider certain factors before setting bail if the person is charged with an offense of vio-

lence involving a victim who is a family or household member. The legislation is being called "Amy's Law" after the survivor whose life threatening attacks from her abuser after he was released on bond was the catalyst for the legislation.

### Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction and Enforcement Act (UCCJEA)

The 125th Ohio General Assembly passed the UCCJEA in December 2004, the Governor signed it on January 11, and the law will go into effect on April 10, 2005. The bill largely enacts the National Conference on Commissioners' UCCJEA to address jurisdictional and enforcement problems in child custody proceedings and determinations. The bill replaces Ohio's UCCJA and makes a number of important changes to Ohio's law including the following:

- "Home State" jurisdiction is given priority over significant connection/substantial evidence/jurisdiction when two or more states have jurisdiction to hear a child custody dispute.
- Makes Ohio law consistent with the Parental Kidnapping Prevention Act (PKPA), 18 USC 1738 A.
- Clarifies contact between jurisdictions; a record must be kept of the judges' discussions, and a record must be made available to the parties or their attorneys. At the discretion of the judge, a party or their attorney may participate in the discussions.
- Grants an Ohio court "temporary emergency jurisdiction" if a child is in Ohio and it is necessary to protect the child if the child, a sibling **or a parent of the child** is subjected to or threatened with abuse.
- If there is no previous child custody determination and no child custody proceeding has commenced in a court of a state having jurisdiction, the emergency order remains in effect until the state of home jurisdiction issues an order. If this does not occur then the

## PUBLIC POLICY UPDATE (continued from page 9)

emergency order becomes final if the order so provides and Ohio becomes the home state.

- If there is a previous custody order, the emergency order must specify an adequate time period to allow the person seeking the order to obtain an order from the non-emergency state.
- States issuing an emergency order or being informed that an emergency order is being commenced in another state must immediately communicate with the court of that state to resolve the emergency, protect the parties and the child, and determine a period for the duration of the emergency order.
- Gives the court authority to seal the victims address or other identifying information in the court file.
- Requires both courts in an interstate custody case to consider domestic violence as a factor in determining whether one of the courts is an inconvenient forum despite meeting jurisdictional requirements.
- Requires a petition for enforcement to be verified including whether any court proceedings have started which could affect the current proceedings including proceedings related to domestic violence or protection orders.
- Permits a prosecutor to take any lawful action to locate, obtain or return a child or enforce a parenting determination in a case arising under the UCCJEA and authorizes a law enforcement office to take any lawful action reasonably necessary to locate a child or assist the prosecutor at their request.

### **NATIONAL NEWS**

The two-fold strategy this year is to ensure the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) is in the federal budget at acceptable levels and the Victims of Crime Assistance (VOCA) funds remain untouched, while also trying to reauthorize VAWA.

### **Federal Budget for Fiscal Year 2006 (commencing October 1, 2005)**

#### **VOCA**

The VOCA fund provides direct assistance to all crime victims with over 4 million victims served each year through 4,400 programs in every state. VOCA also supplements the state funds that provide financial compensation assistance to victims of violent crime. VOCA DOES NOT RELY ON TAXPAYER GENERATED REVENUE. THE FUNDS COME FROM COLLECTON OF Federal criminal fines, forfeitures and assessments. The VOCA enabling statute states and the Congress has reiterated that all amounts collected would remain available for victim services to ensure a stable level of funding. The President's budget proposes RESCINDING ALL VOCA funds, including those collected in 2006, thus creating a zero balance for 2007. This zeroing out of VOCA funds will create a disastrous situation for crime victims across the country, virtually guaranteeing that they will face the criminal justice system alone.

**VOCA ACTION NEEDED: CALL, E-MAIL OR FAX YOUR CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVE AND SENATORS AND URGE THEM TO SAVE THE VOCA FUND BY OPPOSING THE ADMINISTRATION'S PROPOSAL TO RESCIND THE CRIME VICTIM FUND. Congress is considering the FY 2006 budget now so immediate action is needed.**

#### **VAWA APPROPRIATIONS**

Full funding for VAWA is a crucial investment in our communities and must be a high priority in the Federal Budget for FY 2006. VAWA has been an effective response to the epidemic of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking in our country.

## Public Policy Update (continued from page 10)

VAWA has saved taxpayers at least 14.8 billion dollars since its enactment in 1994, while improving the response of the criminal justice system, expanding supportive services and saving lives.

**VAWA ACTION NEEDED: CALL, E-MAIL OR FAX YOUR CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVE AND SENATORS AND URGE THEM TO SUPPORT FULL FUNDING FOR VAWA IN THE FY 2006 CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET.**

The Department of Health and Human Services funding provides critical shelter and rape crisis services to victims as well as specific services for children. Congress should fully fund these programs at the \$175 million authorization level. The Department of Justice, Grants to Combat Violence Against Women funds law enforcement, prosecutors, courts and victims services. They are the single largest source of funding for states to provide funds on the local level. The appropriations for these funds should be at the authorized level of \$185 million, without earmarks.

### **VAWA REAUTHORIZATION**

VAWA is a landmark piece of federal legislation born from a vision to improve and expand the community-based and criminal justice responses to domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking. The passage of VAWA in 1994 and its reauthorization in 2000, created positive new system responses by establishing new federal crimes, focusing on the needs of underserved communities such as immigrant and indigenous women, and creating a federal leadership role that has enabled tribes, states, local governments and community based programs to collaborate for improved responses to victims and perpetrators.

The VAWA 2005 reauthorization will take a more holistic approach to ending domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and dating violence by addressing the needs of children, addressing the economic consequences of violence on victims, increasing screening and health care services, focusing on prevention and educating the next generation of young people.

VAWA's effectiveness is evident in the progress that has been made in addressing domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking. Ohio has passed laws creating a preferred arrest policy, improved civil options for victims, standardized protection orders across the state, enhanced penalties for offenders and created remarkable collaborations in local communities thus enhancing services to victims. Nationally we know more victims are reporting crimes, 22% fewer women have been killed by their intimate partner, over one million women have received protection orders, and over one million have called the life-saving National Domestic Violence Hotline.

The VAWA 2005 reauthorization bills are expected to be introduced in both the House of Representatives and Senate very soon. It will be a challenge securing reauthorization before the end of this federal fiscal year and we will need the active support of many groups and individuals. We ask that you join us in continuing the ten years of incredible progress this legislation has created and in recognizing that support and services are still needed by those who suffer from the devastation of this violence. If you are interested in joining our public policy list serve to receive public policy updates and action alerts, please contact Becky Mason at [rebeccam@odvn.org](mailto:rebeccam@odvn.org) or at 614-781-9651, Ext. 221.



## Financial Tip from our Financial Manager

*Rita Doyle Smith*

### Free Credit Reports Now Available

In these days of identity theft and privacy intrusion, it is a good idea to check your credit report. In the past, there has been a charge to get this information. Effective March 1 for individuals in the Midwest (it is being phased in across the country on different dates), you can get your credit report at no cost.

A recent amendment to the federal Fair Credit Reporting Act requires each of the nationwide consumer reporting companies to provide you with a free copy of your report once a year. These three companies are Experian, Equifax, and TransUnion. You can access this information at [www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com) or by calling 1-877-322-8228.

It is important to review the information contained in your report. It may contain incorrect information, which you should correct with the credit reporting company. This information is used to determine whether you can get credit, insurance, and loans. It can also affect the interest rate you pay on credit cards and loans.

You can get more information on this topic by going to the Federal Trade Commission website at [www.ftc.gov](http://www.ftc.gov) and click on the icon for "Information on Free Credit Reports" under Hot Topics on the left side of the screen. The FTC also has prepared a brochure, [Your Access to Free Credit Reports](#) which is also available on that webpage.

## OHIO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE NETWORK

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