

Revolution

a journal for those working to stop sexual and domestic violence



Volume 5: 2011-2012

1981-2011: Celebrating 30 years of progress

30 years: Then and Now

M

arianne Williamson begins her book,
A Woman's Worth with this:

More women cry, loudly or silently, every fraction of every moment, in every town of every country, than anyone—man or woman—realizes. We cry for our children, our lovers, our parents, and ourselves. We cry in shame because we feel no right to cry, and we cry in peace because we feel it's time we did cry. We cry for the world. Yet we think we cry alone.



When women came together in the 1970's and 1980's across Virginia, and across the country, the tears that they were crying became a powerful force for change, leading to the opening of the first rape crisis centers and the first battered women's shelters—places where it was safe to cry, with dignity and without shame. It wasn't long before that dignity launched indignation which in turn launched a demand to be treated with dignity outside the confines of "women's space"—in the community and in society as a whole. Powerful vessels launched on a river of tears.

Here in Virginia those women began to work in coalition to raise public awareness, to change laws, and to bring about the changes that will bring an end to sexual and domestic violence. Two coalitions were formally organized, Virginians Aligned Against Sexual Assault in 1980 and Virginians Against Domestic Violence in 1981—and 30 years later the work continues as the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance.

From the beginning the coalitions were organized to respond to sexual and domestic violence in the lives of women and children—and over the years that work expanded to address sexual and domestic violence in the lives of men. From the beginning the organizers included women of different races and ethnicities—and over the years the work expanded to include organizing against racism, ethnocentrism, and anti-immigrant policies and practices. Virginia's coalitions included lesbians right from the start—and over the years outreach has expanded the coalition to include those who identify as gay, bisexual and queer as well as those who are transgender, and an analysis of violence that reaches beyond gender is emerging. We have far to go on our journey to ensure that all voices are heard and included—that no one cries alone—but we are on the way.

Together members of the coalition have built a network of services, support and safety that now includes more than 55 community-based agencies dedicated to responding to sexual and domestic violence. Coalition members have led the way on major changes to the laws—expanding protection, designing new remedies and guiding effective community responses. Recognizing that violence continues in far too many minutes of the day for far too many women, children, and men, the coalition has also been at the forefront of designing and implementing far-reaching prevention initiatives.

A new "river of changes" is now flowing into the "river of tears"—expanding its banks and creating a surging momentum. A generation is now being raised by women and men who grew up in a world where many survivors of sexual and domestic violence had support, help in the process of healing, and choices about seeking legal remedies and protection. This generation of young adults has an expectation that their communities will engage in effective responses to sexual violence and intimate partner violence—with children, with youth and with adults. They believe in the possibility of change and as a result they expect support for prevention initiatives that can ultimately reduce the levels of violence that have been epidemic for years. In their intimate relationships and their relationships with family, friends, and strangers in their communities they seek both respect...and joy. This edition of *Revolution* honors 30 amazing years of change.

A Woman's Worth ends with this:

The world will be different for our daughters and sons because of our tears, our bravery, our breakthroughs. One thing I know about all of us: We have tried so hard, and we are trying still. We are not without strength, and we are not without hope. We're trying our best to wear that crown. We have been imprisoned but we are now sprung free. We still cry at times, but we're laughing too.

As the team of Co-Directors who had the honor of leading the coalition(s) through many of the past 30 years, we were honored to come together to write this introduction.

*With strength and hope, tears and laughter,
Jeanine Beiber, Ruth Micklem and Kristi VanAudenhove*

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 800

Commending the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance on the occasion of its 30th anniversary

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 18, 2011; Agreed to by the Senate, February 24, 2011

WHEREAS, the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance is a coalition of people and agencies committed to ending sexual and domestic violence in the Commonwealth of Virginia; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance has been a recognized leader in Virginia's response to sexual and domestic violence, beginning with the formation of Virginians Aligned Against Sexual Assault in 1980 followed by Virginians Against Domestic Violence in 1981 that transformed into the work of the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance in 2006; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance has provided a statewide Virginia Family Violence and Sexual Assault hotline, responding to more than 50,000 calls a year to link thousands of survivors and professionals to services in their communities; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance has provided specialized training and technical assistance to ensure local communities have the resources they need to respond effectively to sexual and domestic violence; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance has educated individuals, professionals, communities, and legislators to advocate for policy and practice that promotes offender accountability and prioritizes the safety, needs, and autonomy of individuals who have experienced sexual and/or domestic violence; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance has worked for social justice and equality, recognizing that sexual and domestic violence are linked to other forms of oppression that disproportionately affect women, children, and other marginalized people; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance has engaged in primary prevention work to promote healthy relationships and determine why individuals initially perpetrate sexual and domestic violence and interrupt that process; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance has conducted its work knowing that it is essential that survivors, the interests of survivors, and those impacted by sexual assault and domestic violence are at the forefront of all decision making; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance envisions and works toward a future where all communities are free of domestic violence and sexual assault, where individual sexual behaviors are safe and respectful, where healthy relationships thrive, and where survivors are empowered in an environment of respect and mutual learning; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly commend the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance on the occasion of its 30th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance as an expression of the General Assembly's appreciation of the organization's ongoing leadership to end sexual and domestic violence in Virginia.



In the same courageous and caring spirit as the first Sisters of Bon Secours in Paris, we have been champions for those at risk since 1824.

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The Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance thanks Bon Secours Richmond Health System for its generous support of the publication of this special edition of Revolution, and for your ongoing support of sexual and domestic violence work both statewide and locally. Bon Secours truly lives up to its mission of building healthy communities through its outreach and services.



30 YEARS
OF MAKING
HISTORY

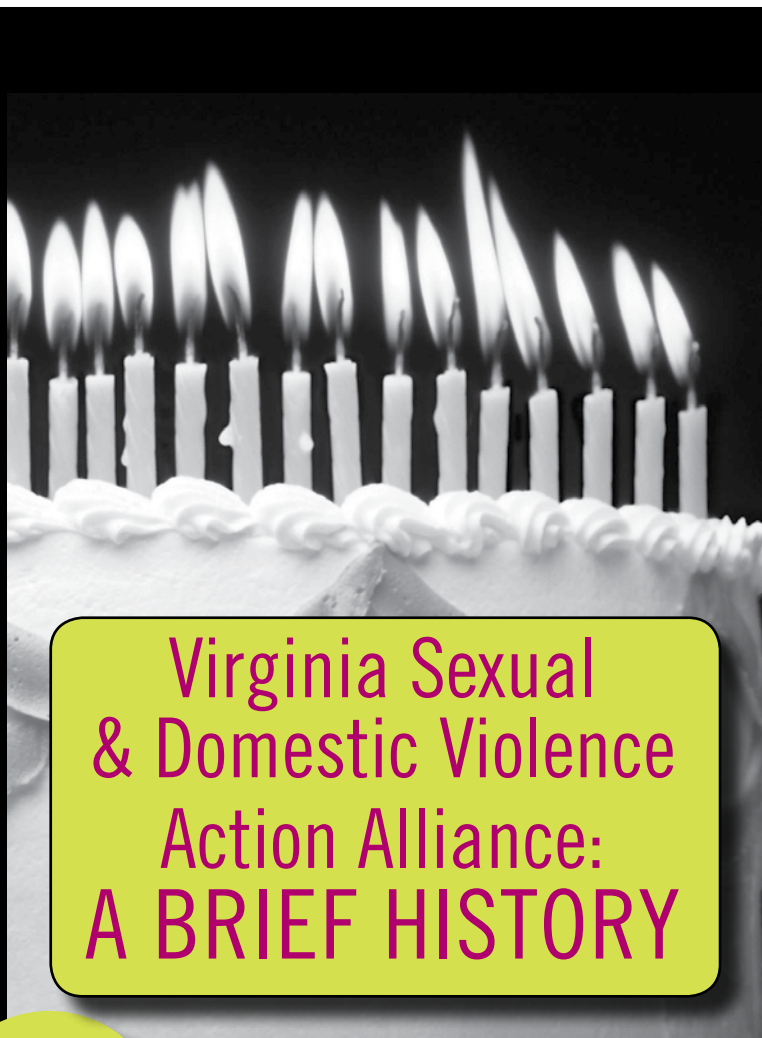
30
YEARS

30 YEARS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS



ACTION
ALLIANCE

Virginia's Accomplishments in the Sexual
& Domestic Violence Movement ▶▶▶▶



Virginia Sexual & Domestic Violence Action Alliance: A BRIEF HISTORY

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance, a strong vibrant coalition committed to ending sexual and domestic violence. We have evolved from two small groups of dedicated women fighting to make a difference in women's lives to the 560 member strong coalition working across the state to support, provide resources, train and advocate for those who have experienced sexual and domestic violence.

In the 1960's America began to experience social change and awakening, leading to a push for women's rights in the 70's. Gender inequalities became more evident as women fought for reproductive rights and fair wage laws; the conversation broadened as women began to speak out about rape and abuse in the home. Across the country, women's groups like the National Organization for Women (NOW) began advocating for the rights of women, breaking the silence about gender-based violence.

Collectively, there was a recognized need to bring domestic and sexual violence issues to the forefront of American society. The initial work was done separately, with sexual assault and domestic violence advocates fighting different battles and different sets of laws and stigmas.

We have evolved from two small groups of dedicated women fighting to make a difference in women's lives to a 560-member strong coalition...

In 1973, the National Organization for Women's Task Force on Rape worked with local NOW Chapters to conduct research on the needs of rape victims around the U.S. The results illuminated the lack of support for individuals who had experienced rape and led to the emergence of local rape crisis centers. Virginia's first rape crisis centers were established in 1974, with Alexandria, Charlottesville, Fairfax, Norfolk and Williamsburg being some of the earliest. In 1975, the Virginia General Assembly was asked to authorize the State Crime Commission to study sexual assault in Virginia which was reportedly "laughed off the floor." Undaunted, the Fairfax Commission on the Status of Women began a statewide

continued on page 7

30 YEARS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In celebration of the 30th anniversary of statewide coalition work, the Action Alliance has created a list of 30 milestones in the work to enhance Virginia's response to sexual and domestic violence. These accomplishments are the result of hard work and dedication of a multitude of survivors, advocates, local sexual assault and domestic violence agencies, community partners, and policy leaders all working with a shared vision of a world where relationships between people are respectful, healthy and safe. [Please join us in celebrating these milestones!](#) ▶▶▶▶▶

30 YEARS OF REFLECTIONS

We asked people working in the fields of sexual and domestic violence to share some of their impressions of the Action Alliance and memories of Virginia's statewide work to end sexual and domestic violence over the past 30 years. What follows is a few of their reflections...

30 YEARS OF REFLECTIONS

The beginnings of VAASA and a tribute to Pat Groot

In 1985 I became the first full-time Director of what was then the Charlottesville Rape Crisis Group (CRCG). We had a small office in a building owned by the Presbyterian Church, which we shared with UVA's Lesbian and Gay Student Union (LGSU), and what I later came to learn was the state sexual assault coalition, Virginians Aligned Against Sexual Assault (VAASA). I knew absolutely nothing about CRCG, other than it needed a Director, it was a non-profit, and its mission was to provide services to victims of sexual violence. My charge, as voiced by the 5-member Board who interviewed and hired me, was to expand the Agency: "take it as far as it can go."

My first day at work was Oct. 15th. The previous day the CRCG Board President had shown me where the office building was located, told me the office door would be marked – CRCG - and wished me "good luck." So, I arrived at the building, climbed the stairs, found the CRCG sign and proceeded to open the door. I was locked out and had never thought to ask the Board President how to reach her or any of the Board members.

I drove home, got my phone book, found the Board President's name and called her. She did not have a key but said she would contact other Board members and get one for me by the next day – which she did.

When I entered my new office I was more than a bit stunned. Coming from the Corporate world I was accustomed to more regal surroundings. What I found was a tiny office with three desks (two pushed together facing one another), an Apple computer in a tiny little closet, and a bookshelf loaded with books and a telephone. There was barely space to walk.

I went to what I assumed was my desk and found a note from the former Director stating that a proposal to the City of Charlottesville was due on October 21st. The first thought that entered my mind was that I had bitten off way more than I could chew. I had never written a proposal in my life. So I spent the next several days, all by myself,

30 YEARS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1974

First Rape Crisis Center, Tidewater Rape Information Services (TRIS), Opens in Norfolk, Virginia

Recognizing a strong need for services for rape victims, the local NOW chapter assisted in opening the first sexual assault center in Virginia. In 1984 the organization changed its name to Response Inc, and operates as part of the YWCA of Greater Hampton Roads.

reading through files, looking over the books on the shelf behind me, and staring at the computer in the closet. I'd never used a computer before, so I had no idea how to even turn it on.

Enter Pat Groot. Towards the end of October I arrived at the office one day to find a woman sitting at the desk that faced mine. She was on the telephone, so I waited patiently while she finished her conversation, listening carefully in the hopes that I might pick up some useful information from her exchange. It didn't happen. In fact, I wasn't even sure she was speaking English.

When she hung up the phone, she introduced herself and told me she was the Executive Director of VAASA. I had no idea what VAASA was, what it did, or why this woman was talking to me as though I were a colleague. After a few minutes of pretending to understand what she was saying to me, I decided I'd better come clean and tell her the truth; I had no idea what she was talking about, I knew nothing about anything, and felt that I had made a horrible mistake taking this job.

From that day, and for many months thereafter, Pat kindly and patiently taught me everything I needed to know about VAASA, sexual violence, CRCG, how to operate a computer, how to write a proposal, how to work with a Board of Directors, and much much more. To say that she "mentored" me would be the understatement of the decade. "mentoring" assumes that a junior colleague has at least a basic understanding of the tasks at hand, which I did not. In truth, Pat led me step by step through every aspect of CRCG's function as a sexual assault crisis center, and the role VAASA played in the state.

Eventually, and with Pat's urging, I joined the VAASA Board of Directors, sat on several different committees, and was proud to be part of the team that made the decision to merge sexual assault with domestic violence and create the Action Alliance. I left CRCG (now called SARA) in 2000 so had limited experience in working with the Alliance that so many of us worked so diligently to create.

However, my years with VAASA allowed me the opportunity to see first-hand what a small group of concerned women could accomplish on both a state and national level. The impact VAASA had on CRCG was enormous. The efforts to increase funding to allow Centers to expand their programs, increase staff and office space, and upgrade equipment, allowed CRCG to provide services that were previously unheard of; education programs for kindergarten through high school, support groups, crisis intervention for survivors who chose to seek medical services, training for nurses, doctors, school teachers, and law enforcement personnel, self-defense training, and crisis intervention services to the outlying counties that comprise Region Ten. By the mid-nineties, CRCG had evolved to become The Sexual Assault Resource Agency (SARA), an organization with 11 full-time staff who provided much needed services to all the counties in our service area.

Annette Grimm
Former SARA Executive Director



30 YEARS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**1976-
1981**

Virginia Crime Commission State Task Force on Criminal Sexual Assault

The task force overhauled the entire criminal code for sexual assault, planting the seeds for future legislation.

30 YEARS OF MAKING HISTORY

petition and the Committee on Sexual Assault Reform (COSAR) was formed. This early work led to the eventual establishment of the Task Force to Study Criminal Sexual Assault. This task force was charged with assessing all aspects of sexual assault and created subcommittees on medical treatment, public education, law enforcement, the court system, and the law.

State-wide hearings were held in 1977 and 1978 where victims, police, prosecutors, counselors, nurses and representatives of rape crisis centers testified about victims' needs and offered possible solutions. Victims' experiences in the courtroom were focused on specifically the requirements that a victim prove she had "fought off" her assailant and the often used practice of presenting evidence of the victim's prior sexual history during the trial. Several actions were taken based on these hearings with COSAR proposing a revision of the Virginia statutes, which eventually passed, in a modified version, in 1981.

As rape advocates and victims of rape sought changes in the law and greater community support, a parallel process was happening among the women struggling to bring recognition to the plight of battered women. Realizing that collective efforts to create public policy and community awareness would have a greater impact than individual efforts, in 1979 a small group of women came together to form Virginians Against Domestic Violence (VADV).

For the first few years, VADV was operated solely by volunteers who offered training, organized Virginia's first Domestic Violence Awareness Week, published the coalition's first newsletter, and strongly pursued a legislative agenda. In 1980, VADV efforts prompted the General Assembly to take a stand against Spouse Abuse, declaring the Commonwealth's support for programs providing services to battered women. This important breakthrough gave rise to many more accomplishments throughout the state.

In the 1980's the number of agencies working to address sexual assault and domestic violence at the local level grew significantly, from the 10-12 that founded the coalitions, to more than 30 across the state. During these years, the state coalitions moved from using volunteers to hiring paid staff. They achieved noteworthy public policy successes including the passage of new laws that significantly changed the public response to sexual and domestic violence and brought new sources of public funding for sexual and domestic violence services to Virginia. The coalitions became

continued on next page

“It was a clear picture of just how profound an impact one person can have on a social justice movement.”

30 YEARS OF REFLECTIONS

Kristi VanAudenhove's impact on the Virginia movement

If the Action Alliance was a large web of interconnected people and ideas, then Kristi Van Audenhove would be at the center of that web for many of us. I have a great memory that illustrates this. I was conducting a timeline exercise at a Training for Trainers event. We were placing important historical moments on the timeline along with the year each of us had entered the work. I've been around awhile, so my year hit near the beginning. Totally off the cuff, I mentioned that I entered the work in 1987, and that one of the first people I interacted with was Kristi. She was my advocate, my volunteer trainer, my boss, and my friend. One by one, every other person described how they came into the work and their connections to Kristi. We started to proclaim with each new story: "It all goes back to Kristi!" It was a clear picture of just how profound an impact one person can have on a social justice movement.

Kathleen Demro
Executive Director, Safe Harbor

30 YEARS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1977

First Domestic Violence Shelter, the Women's Resource Center of the New River Valley, Opens in Radford, Virginia

The staff of the local Community Action agency opened the first domestic violence shelter and hotline to assist battered women throughout the New River Valley region.

30 YEARS OF MAKING HISTORY

a hub for public awareness activities, training for advocates in sexual and domestic violence agencies (SDVAs), and forming new statewide partnerships.

In the 1990's, the number of local agencies grew to more than 40. Community-wide efforts to address sexual and domestic violence expanded, with new Coordinated Community Response teams,

[In the 1990's] VADV and VAASA combined resources to partner on the operation of a statewide 24-hour Hotline to ensure services across the state, and on the development of VAdat.

specialized law enforcement and prosecution units, and specialized services in social service, mental health and other agencies. Passage of the federal Violence Against Women Act provided national guidance on the direction of public policy as well as a large increase in the resources available to address sexual and domestic violence. VADV and VAASA combined resources to partner on the operation of a statewide 24-hour Hotline to ensure services to all victims across the state, and on the development of VAdat, a new data collection system, to capture a more accurate picture of the services being provided by local Sexual Assault Crisis Centers and Domestic Violence Programs. VADV launched the Training Institute to expand training to a wider range of allied professionals. VAASA added a prevention component to the work of the coalition.

In November of 2000, VAASA and VADV Executive Committees

continued on page 10

30 YEARS OF REFLECTIONS

The work of Women of Color in this movement

Culturally our struggle has been the same because it is "skin deep" and all Women of Color (WOC) contributed to our desire to overcome adversity, whether they are with us now or not. It's because of the focus and struggle that we have as WOC that we walk in step and every one of us made a contribution to that, whether it was while we were in chains or whether it was through blood or tears our experiences are uniquely different from that of the majority culture. It is this experience that makes us one!

Patricia Jones-Turner
Chesterfield Co. Sexual & Domestic Violence Coordinator

“...as Women of Color... every one of us made a contribution...whether it was while we were in chains or whether it was through blood or tears...”

30 YEARS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1980

Virginians Aligned Against Sexual Assault (VAASA) is Founded

VAASA was formed to support the sexual assault centers around the state by training staff of local centers, providing technical assistance, and taking an active role in addressing federal and state policy and legislative issues.

Reflections on Virginia's Statewide Coalition Work

I began anti-violence work in the late 1970s as a graduate student in sociology and women's studies at Michigan State. When a gang-rape occurred and catalyzed the campus, women in the Lansing/East Lansing community came together to form the Anti-Violence Coalition. For the next 5-6 years, we organized Take Back the Night Marches, court watches, reading groups, dramatic readings, speak-outs, and anything else we could think of to educate about violence against women. The framework for our efforts was always the feminist movement, and particularly the theory of patriarchy illuminated by radical feminist thinkers of the time such as Kate Millett, Shulamith Firestone, Adrienne Rich, Michelle Wallace, Susan Brownmiller, bell hooks, and Andrea Dworkin. Blaming the victims of violence was utterly hegemonic at the time ... played out in workplaces, courtrooms, the media, and popular culture. I depended on these women and radical feminism to remind me of that larger patriarchal structure and to guide my thinking and actions.

Fast forward thirty five years. As I sit in my state government/medical examiner office, much more directly linked to the daily drum of domestic violence homicide than I have ever been in my life, I realize that I now depend on the Action Alliance much like I depended on radical feminism earlier in my life. While we don't talk about patriarchy nearly as much (a real shame in my opinion), the statewide coalition continues to move the issues forward, reminding us always of the experiences of survivors and leading the anti-violence movement as new issues emerge: children exposed, LGBTQ, rural domestic violence, primary prevention planning, and many others.

Congratulations on thirty years of activism, education, advocacy. You are a beacon and truly lead the way.

Ginny Powell
Lifetime Member of the Action Alliance

“the statewide coalition continues to move the issues forward, reminding us always of the experiences of survivors and leading the anti-violence movement as new issues emerge...”

1981

Virginians Against Domestic Violence (VADV) is Founded

A small group of women, with a shared concern about the alarming amount of violence in the home, came together to form VADV. The organization began its work sharing information and resources among programs in addition to collectively working to shape public policy and community awareness about domestic violence.

30 YEARS OF MAKING HISTORY

came together to explore the possibility of a merger. After several years of intensive deliberations, a recommendation was brought forward to establish a new coalition addressing both sexual and domestic violence, and in 2004 The Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance (Action Alliance) was officially launched.

The newly formed Action Alliance accomplished several amazing initiatives in its first five years. The Art of Surviving, a display of art created by sexual violence survivors, was designed to raise awareness of the impact of sexual violence. The Red Flag Campaign was developed with students, faculty and staff at Virginia's colleges and universities to promote bystander intervention in dating violence and promote healthy relationships. Basic

The newly formed Action Alliance launched several projects in its first five years--The Art of Surviving, The Red Flag Campaign, and Basic Advocacy Trainings--as well as successfully navigating a host of public policy initiatives.

Advocacy Training was developed including six one-day offerings, to introduce new advocates to the fundamentals of sexual and domestic violence work. Simultaneously, the public policy committee worked with membership to: oppose the so-called marriage amendment; support passage of an Address Confidentiality

continued on page 11

“The work and the people of the Action Alliance inspire me.”

30 YEARS OF REFLECTIONS

Reflections on joining statewide coalition work

On March 12, 2005 I began working for Safe Harbor and was immediately introduced to the Action Alliance. I was very “green” and I came with some preconceived ideas. It didn’t take long for me to realize I needed to throw all of that out the window. The work and the people of the Action Alliance inspire me. This year I had the great pleasure to be elected to the governing body of the Action Alliance.

I look forward to this new chapter in my life and relationship with the Alliance. Congrats on 30 years and I pray the next 30 years will be as rewarding.

Angela Bridgeforth
Business Manager, Safe Harbor
Action Alliance Governing Body Member

30 YEARS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1982

Marriage License Tax Bill Passed

The Virginia General Assembly established the Virginia Family Violence Prevention Fund, through an increase in the marriage license fee, to support domestic violence shelters and child abuse prevention and treatment programs.

30 YEARS OF MAKING HISTORY

Program for survivors; provide confidentiality of services provided by SDVAs; add dating violence to the Family Violence Education requirements; and establish a Governor's Commission on Sexual Violence which obtained small increases in funding in addition to critical changes to Virginia's PERK policies.

A renewed commitment to anti-racism work began with the Action Alliance offering two series of anti-racism trainings for the membership, anti-racism work with staff and local programs, and annual leadership training for women of color. The Women of Color Caucus and Social Justice Task Force conducted a cultural competency survey of the SDVAs, a strategic plan to build competencies was developed, as was a white allies statement of commitment to guide members in their efforts to develop an anti-racist approach to their work.

A renewed commitment to anti-racism work began with the Action Alliance offering anti-racism trainings, staff discussion groups, leadership trainings for women of color, and working with the Women of Color Caucus to conduct a cultural competency survey...

On the prevention side, the Action Alliance participated in a national pilot addressing the impact of domestic violence on children and youth. We also led the development of statewide prevention plans to guide the work of the coalition, the Virginia Department of Health, and SDVAs over the next 5-10 years.

continued on page 26

30 YEARS OF REFLECTIONS

The impact of statewide coalition work on law enforcement and survivors

The Action Alliance has provided a unified statewide voice for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. The Alliance is a strong advocate for victim rights and has made a significant impact on legislation to improve victim rights and services. Speaking as a law enforcement officer of 39 years, I remember the days when there was little or no support for victims. There were often no arrests made in family abuse situations and victims were left unassisted in their abusive situations.

Even when law enforcement did make an arrest or removed the victim from the situation, there was no place to take them (except for family) and no support organizations to help victims navigate the legal system. The Action Alliance's support for local programs is vital for the continual growth and improvement in services for victims of domestic abuse and sexual assault.

Stephen G. Reed
V-STOP Deputy, Washington County Sheriff's Office

“The Action Alliance's support for local programs is vital for the continual growth and improvement in services for victims...”

30 YEARS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1986

Marital Rape Legislation Passed

For the first time in Virginia history this legislation made marital sexual assault a crime. The legislation, bound by strict criteria for defining sexual assault, was a beginning point in the establishment of domestic rights for married women.

30 YEARS OF REFLECTIONS

From early coalition roots to transforming into one coalition

I've worked in the domestic violence field since 1986. I remember my first day of volunteer training and, shortly thereafter, my first hotline call. I was nervous about doing both, but the excitement of joining this meaningful work kept me from ever looking back. It felt as if the walls surrounding me in my program had been taken down and I was able to begin seeing this as a statewide issue, rather than a local one. I valued the insight, experience and camaraderie of other program directors. I still do!

I was on the Executive Committee for many years and cherished the opportunity to work among such talented, formidable women. They became my mentors, whether they knew it or not, and my friends.

One of my favorite memories was hosting some of the VADV staff when they came to Fredericksburg to train the RCDV staff to answer the statewide hotline. There were people sleeping on all of the beds and sofas in my house. The training was great, as I knew it would be, but the opportunity to have fun with them was unexpected. We all went out on the town after the training and laughed until we had tears rolling down our cheeks. If laughter is good for you, then Cathy, Chase and Joy added a few years to my life!

When VADV and VAASA finally completed the transformation process, a sigh of relief, or exhaustion, could be heard across the state. On the eve of the first official day of the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance, I drove to the three offices (Williamsburg, Charlottesville, and Richmond) to deliver celebration packages complete with noisemakers and bottles of champagne. This was after hours, so the staff found it when they arrived on the first morning!

Nancy Fowler
Office of Family Violence, Virginia Department of Social Services



“I...cherished the opportunity to work among such talented, formidable women. They became my mentors, whether they knew it or not, and my friends.”

30 YEARS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1986

Protective Order Legislation is Created in Virginia

VADV lobbied heavily, amidst great controversy, to get protective order legislation passed in the Virginia General Assembly.



healing and transformation:
survivors of sexual and domestic violence
share their stories

Barbara's story...

For virtually all sexual assault survivors, the event is life-altering. For some, it's life-defining. I see all of my past life as "before the rape" or "since the rape." It seems that "I was raped" is the only piece of my personal history that pops to the front of my mind every day.

When a stranger raped me in 1986, by the side of a midnight-dark road and just before Christmas, he spun my life into a maelstrom. My trauma was one that could not be reversed or even roughly patched up in a matter of days or weeks or months. I lost my security — both perceived and actual, my income, my home, my insurance, several friends, and the already-tenuous relationships I had with my grown children. Even the man I had planned to marry was unable to stand by me.

During most of that terrible time, I thought I was losing my mind. PTSD turned normal daytime activities into nightmares. I lost all hope of ever feeling safe again, working again, loving again. Many nights I prayed that I'd not have to wake the next day.

It took nearly 3-1/2 years' work with an outstanding therapist to find my way back up to sunlight from the depths that capture and grimly hold on to rape victims. As I worked with my therapist each week, struggling to cope with insomnia, panic attacks, aural hallucinations, smothering fear, and a host of physical complaints, I found it nearly impossible to see any reason to continue the struggle.

Then, one day, I began to see a worthy goal, something more important than my own fears and other feelings: I wanted to become one of the volunteers who go to hospitals and police stations to help sexual assault victims through the early hours of their crisis. It was not a purely selfish wish. Helping others would be a sign to myself that I was going to be all right.

Nearly 4 years after my own rape, I was trained and began making outreach calls to sexual assault victims in the Maryland county where I lived. When I moved to Virginia's Northern Neck 12 years later, I began working with The Haven Shelter and Services in Warsaw. Then, through my work with the Haven, I learned about the Action Alliance and the Survivor Caucus.

I strive to help the Action Alliance achieve a world of safety for all, and I help the Survivor Caucus to ensure that the voices of survivors are heard. Now I see that this is why I lived when I prayed to die; this is why I struggled — and continue working — to heal from sexual assault.





Response Sexual Assault Support Services of the YWCA South Hampton Roads:

a brief history of Virginia's first rape crisis center

In 1974, five women and one man organized a joint task force from the Norfolk and Virginia Beach chapters of the National Organization for Women (NOW) to address the issues of women's health. Rape was identified as a specific issue of concern, and in 1974, Tidewater Rape Information Services (TRIS) was organized. TRIS was one of the first three rape crisis centers in Virginia.

Work began with a staff of four and donated office space at Family Services. After the first year, TRIS moved to a storefront office on Bute Street where, with the help of CETA funds, the staff grew to ten persons.

TRIS became a United Way agency in 1977. In 1984, the Board of Directors voted to change the name of the organization to Response Sexual Assault Support Services.

In the summer of 2000, the Board of Directors of Response voted to merge with the YWCA of South Hampton Roads to become Response Sexual Assault Support Services of the YWCA of South Hampton Roads.

30 YEARS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1987

First Domestic Violence Awareness Month is Celebrated

The first Domestic Violence Awareness Month provided local programs in Virginia and the country with a unified platform for recognizing the issue of domestic violence through a variety of activities and programs.

Where We Are Today

Response Sexual Assault Support Services of the YWCA is the sexual assault crisis center that serves South Hampton Roads, including the cities of Chesapeake, Franklin, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk and Virginia Beach as well as the counties of Isle of Wight, Southampton, and Northampton, Virginia.

Response provides comprehensive services to women, men, and children, and their loved ones affected by sexual violence. Services include a 24-hour hotline, accompaniment services (legal, medical, and forensic), advocacy, counseling (group, individual, and family), as well as community education.

Additionally, Response coordinates Sexual Assault Response Teams (SARTs) in each of our localities as well as a military and intercollegiate SART. SARTs work to ensure a coordinated and victim friendly response to sexual violence victims and typically include law enforcement, forensic examiner, sexual assault advocate, and Commonwealth Attorney.

Response currently employs nine full time employees, 8 part-time employees, and has a corps of approximately 25 volunteers.

Response is working towards...
a community where sexual
violence does not exist and our
services are no longer necessary.

--Kristen Pine, Executive Director

Response
SEXUAL ASSAULT SUPPORT SERVICES

Our Mission

provide support, treatment, and advocacy
to victims of sexual violence and
the community in a partnership toward
elimination of sexual violence.



Where We Are Going

Response is striving to ensure that all sexual violence victims are treated with a systems approach to minimize retraumatization during the reporting and legal process. We are working with our SARTs to revise policy and protocols to ensure these changes. We are working to expand our legal advocacy program to ensure that all victims are provided a legal advocate to help them navigate the legal system from protective order to sentencing.

Response is also working to expand our counseling services to provide long term therapy to those victims who have suffered multiple assaults throughout their life or for those victims who have other issues such as mental illness as well as sexual violence in their past.

Finally, Response is working towards providing sexual violence prevention programs throughout our communities to work towards a community where sexual violence does not exist and our services are no longer necessary.



30 YEARS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**1990
-1992**

Attorney General Mary Sue Terry's Task Force on Domestic Violence is Created

This task force introduced legislation that created the crime of Assault & Battery Against a Family or Household Member and expanded the definition of a family and household member. The group also recommended the legislation for the Emergency Protective Order, which could be issued without a court hearing.

Janice's story . . .

Between the ages of 4 and 8, I lived with my family in a quiet, little town in northern Louisiana — the perfect place to be a child. We lived in the country, surrounded by cow pastures. My brother and I would sit for hours and watch the cowboys who came to herd and tend the cattle. We'd spend all day out in the fields having grand adventures and then get hosed down before our mother would let us in the house.

My family made friends with the family of one of my dad's co-workers. We had cookouts and shared holidays together. One day, while my brother and I played outside, the co-worker's oldest son paid a visit. He said he had something in his car to show me. I was so pleased that he picked me over my older brother.

That was the first, but not the last, time the young man sexually abused me. I was too young to remember how many times it happened, but the images of what he did to me are locked in my brain forever. The abuse stopped only when we moved away.

What that man did to me has caused me to question every role I play in life... woman, lover, teacher, daughter, sister. When I am in certain situations, I wonder if the caution I feel is warranted or just paranoia. When I am with a lover, I wonder if he simply wants to use me for my body, and I doubt my ability to choose men wisely. When I am with my family, I wonder why no one helped that little girl. Not a day goes by that I don't feel the impact of what he did to me.

Fortunately, for the past seven years, I have had an amazing counselor. She has helped me face what happened to me and worked with me as I gained strength to stand up and fight for myself. It hasn't been easy. The people in my life tend to fight changes, and it's difficult for them to deal with the new person I'm becoming. I try to explain that this "new" person has been here all the time, but hidden. They will have to get used to it because this new person is here to stay.

In 2009 I went back to Louisiana and filed a complaint against the man who abused me. The case was investigated and all parties, including the abuser's lawyer, seemed to agree that something *did* happen. Unfortunately, without a confession, the case will never make it to the criminal justice system.

There is nothing more that I can do. I've had to accept that and turn toward the future.

I've joined the Action Alliance, the Survivor Caucus, and the Speakers' Bureau. I now speak to groups about my experience in an effort to help others and myself in the ongoing journey of healing.



Cindy's story . . .

The Survivor Caucus... aids in our healing process

My earliest memories include sexual abuse by my father. The abuse continued until I was about 18. In 1995 I came forward with my accusation, and my father and I have had no relationship since. My mother had been verbally abused and controlled by my father. She divorced him shortly after I disclosed what he had done to me.

Later I learned there had been incidents in which my father hurt his own sister when they were children; and within the past five years, two of my aunt's friends (now in their late fifties or sixties) reported he had sexually abused them, as well.

I did not make a crime report when I originally told about my father's abusing me. In my late twenties, though, I decided to go back and try to prosecute. The cases were so old that we met a dead end. All of us survivors wrote letters to the local priest, and the church took action: My father was stopped from practicing with the church music group, where children are present.

So many of the harmful effects on our families' lives could have been prevented. I want my voice to be heard now to possibly help other children who are afraid and don't feel safe or who don't know what to do when they are abused.

I have been in individual counseling for the past 15 years, but not group counseling with other survivors. The Survivor Caucus, while it's not a support group, offers a chance for many of us to share our experiences and learn from one another to aid our healing process.

Kathleen's story . . .

I'm a survivor of sexual violence that occurred more than 20 years ago, and I have built a career in the violence-against-women field. Sometimes people ask how I got started in this work. Depending on our relationship, I tell the truth or I dodge the question a little and say that a long-ago volunteer gig just grew into a job.

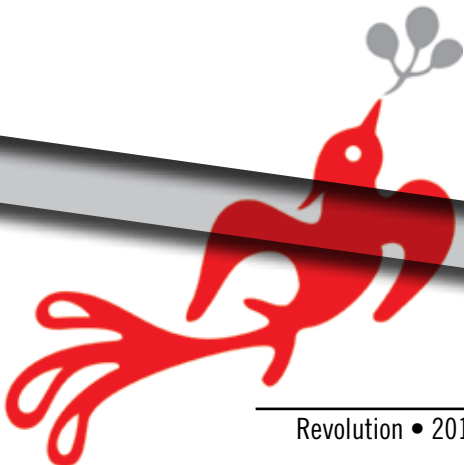
When I was a "baby" advocate, I told everyone about my experience with sexual violence. It seemed important that I break the silence. But as my career took off, I noticed that my credibility with peers declined if I talked about being a survivor. I know that easily half the people in my field are survivors, too. But what will other advocates, cops, prosecutors, or funders think if they know the truth? "She's just a radical," or "She never got over what happened to her." Slowly I learned to keep my personal experience in the background and push my professional experience out front.

Through my involvement with Virginia's Survivor Caucus, I started to challenge my internal monologue on the drawbacks of disclosing. I decided the only way to address my concerns about losing credibility was to face my fears.

I was fortunate to be a part of a team providing cutting-edge training on sexual violence to prosecutors and investigators. On the first day I facilitated a piece of training, and at the end of the workshop, I shared how important the training was to me because I had survived sexual violence and felt my recovery was advanced by the generally supportive attitudes of the first responders.

My heart pounded. The room was quiet, as though the participants were stunned by my speaking out. But in the minutes and hours that followed, person after person approached me and thanked me for disclosing. Many of them, like me, had never disclosed because they were afraid of losing their professional veneer. Maybe they too will start to rethink their silence.

I still don't shout from the rooftops that I'm a survivor. But my experience at the training confirmed for me that it's important for folks, both inside and outside of "the work," to speak up as much as we're able. We need to speak for ourselves, and we need to speak for those who are still trying to find their voices.





Women's Resource Center of the New River Valley

a brief history of Virginia's first domestic violence program

It was a time of social unrest and a time of awakening all over the United States. It was the 1960s and 1970s and what a time it was! In the context of anti-poverty and renewed anti-racism movements, the women's rights movement began another chapter. The Women's Resource Center of the New River Valley was created by community service workers at the local anti-poverty agency, New River Community Action. These workers were working with women who were fighting poverty AND who also had a new voice empowered by the women's movement to speak of their husband's abuse of them and their children.

An office was established in Christiansburg, Virginia and the Women's Resource Center was opened in June of 1977. The programs and operations were administered through New River Community Action. The Director and other support personnel were hired through New River Community Action. Personnel funding came predominantly through CETA and VISTA funding. The building had room for three families and the staff and volunteers provided services for battered women who called and then began to shelter families.

In 1978 an advisory group consisting of community representatives was formed to develop guidelines and future

directions for the Women's Resource Center. In 1979, the Women's Resource Center incorporated and elected a Board of Directors comprised of representatives of the Fourth Planning District which included the Counties of Floyd, Giles, Montgomery and Pulaski and the City of Radford to function as its Executive Body. The purpose of the organization was to establish a center for women's programs with a broad base of community support and involvement and a special emphasis on the needs of families in crisis.

The Women's Resource Center broadened its services to include a Volunteer program and a physical abuse and sexual assault hotline in 1980. It also relocated the shelter to Radford in 1980. As a non-profit corporation, the Women's Resource Center began to build a broad base of community support and financial backing. Programs and services with support staff have grown in order to meet the needs of women in crisis in the New River Valley. The Sexual Assault program added specialized services in 1983 along with a commitment to community awareness and education that relates to the issues of family violence. In 1985 a Victim/Witness Program was begun in order to provide court information and advocacy to victims of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. In 1987, a Children's

30 YEARS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1992
-1993

Virginia Commission on Sexual Assault is Formed

Created by Lieutenant Governor Don Beyer, the commission brought about major changes to Virginia's child sexual abuse laws, extending the statute of limitations for reporting abuse, expanding definitions of sexual predators, and began the discussion of how to better serve victims.

Program was begun to provide services and crisis-intervention to children who come to the Women's Resource Center shelter with their mothers. In 1989, a Child Sexual Abuse Program was added to the Women's Resource Center in order to address the increasing demand for services for sexually abused children.



“The Women's Resource Center... was created by community service workers at the local anti-poverty agency... [They] were working with women who were fighting poverty AND who also had a new voice empowered by the women's movement...”

--Pat Brown, Executive Director

In 1990, Radford City Council transferred the title of the shelter facility to the Women's Resource Center of the New River Valley, Inc. In 1991, the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development awarded \$365,000.00 of Community Development Block Grant Funds to the City of Radford for the purpose of acquiring a new larger shelter for the Women's Resource Center. It was the first time Department of Housing and Development used Community Development Block Grant funds to build a shelter for battered women and their children. The Women's Resource Center moved its shelter operation to the new 26 bed facility in June 1993.

Department of Housing & Community Development Block Grant to build a Transitional Housing Facility to house victims of domestic violence for a two year period. The eight apartment facility and program, Cornerstone, opened in August of 2001.

In 1997, the Women's Resource Center expanded its community development by creating Coordinating Councils on domestic violence and sexual assault in each of its five localities. Conferences and trainings on issues related to domestic violence and sexual assault are available to the community. Peaceline, the Women's Resource Center original curriculum on dating violence and sexual assault prevention program was added for area middle and high school aged children.

Today, the Women's Resource Center of the New River Valley serves over 4500 adult and child victims of domestic and sexual violence a year and provides education and prevention programs to over 17,000 people. It is our hope to continue our current work and add services for older adults who are experiencing domestic or sexual violence.



In 2000, the Women's Resource Center in collaboration with the City of Radford, received a second Virginia

30 YEARS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1994

The Virginia Family Violence & Sexual Assault Hotline is Established

This hotline provides a toll-free, confidential, 24-hour service offering crisis intervention, support, information and referrals to family violence and sexual assault survivors, their friends and families, professionals, and the general public. To date, over a half million individuals have called the hotline.

Sharon B's story . . .

My father started sexually abusing me when I was around 8. One day my younger sister walked into our parents' bedroom and saw me under the covers with our father. When my mom came home from work, my sister asked her why I was in bed with daddy. My mom and dad argued, I was taken to a doctor's office to be examined, and my father soon left our apartment.

Daddy was granted visitation rights with his three daughters, and the abuse continued for years. In the early 1980s no phone numbers flashed on the television, saying "Call this number for help." I felt I was all alone and had no one to help me. My father's abusing me was never talked about, even though it continued.

I almost didn't survive. I became addicted to drugs and alcohol. I married a man who was not good for me, and after having two sons, I left my husband. After getting into another relationship and having a daughter, the abuse still had a hold on my spirit.



At age 31, I tried to commit suicide with pills. My boyfriend broke into the bathroom, and I was rushed to the hospital and the drugs pumped from my system.

A nurse who talked to me about suicide suggested I see a therapist. I took her advice and made an appointment. The therapist listened to part of my story of childhood abuse and told me that she didn't understand what I was going through, but she had read a few books.

I never went back to another therapist, and the pain of my victim experiences continued to keep me in bondage.

I had no one to talk to until I started attending New Life Anointed Ministries in Woodbridge and learned about Exodus, a healing ministry that helped people who had gone through incest, rape, and abuse. For the first time I was able to relate to other people who understood my pain, anger, loneliness, hatred, and every other emotion that boils up from sexual abuse.

After attending the Exodus meetings I was able to start dealing with what I had suffered and feeling better about myself and life. I was able to let my daddy know how he almost destroyed my life. I was able to ask my mother why she didn't save me from the abuse.

What helps me to thrive as a survivor is forgiveness. I will never forget the day my dad fell down on his knees and begged me for forgiveness. When my dad passed away in 2007 we were best friends. My mom and I have a wonderful relationship and we can talk about anything. Forgiveness was the hardest challenge for me in this whole ordeal, but it happened. I am a survivor.





Tom's story...

As you read my story, don't feel sorry and don't shed a tear. I am who I am because of the horrors, not in spite of them. My story is your story.

My father abandoned the family when I was 8; he left and never looked back. At the same time, my mother abandoned me emotionally when she turned to alcohol to treat her own pain. That's when I began a solitary fight for survival through eight years of sexual, physical, and emotional abuse. My struggle to survive led to teenage drug abuse, failed suicide attempts, and teenage crime as I reached out to strike back at society for allowing these horrors to happen.

When I was 12, my mother turned to Big Brothers of America to provide a male influence in my life. Mike, the Big Brother assigned to me, was 10 years older than I. Within months, he started abusing me sexually. Emotional and physical abuse were inevitable companions. After a year or so, my mother, oblivious of Mike's true nature, allowed him to move in with us and to share a basement room with me.

Mike abused me until I attempted suicide at age 15. During these 3 years my mother stayed drunk, physically and emotionally abusive. My father, meanwhile, stayed away from all of us, so I was left to deal with the monster by myself.

For 3 years I fought for my own sanity. I had no one to confide in. I was isolated from the outside world, exactly as Mike had planned it, and that isolation allowed him to get away with his crimes against me.

Before I tried to end my life at 15, I sought pain relief in every street drug I could get, and there were plenty. I vented my blinding rage by punching a block wall. I would punch that wall until my hands looked broken, knuckles bleeding and swollen, and then I would punch it some more.

Mike saw what was going on: He saw the pure hatred in my eyes, he saw the bruises and blood on my hands, he knew of the drug abuse, he heard about the fights I was getting into at school. But nothing changed until I attempted suicide the first time.

When I tried to kill myself at age 15, on New Year's Eve, Mike left and never came back. I have no doubt that Mike thought if I was crazy enough to try suicide, he could never be comfortable again about his safety or what I might do to him. I attempted suicide two more times before I turned 17.

There are still days I cry for that 12-year-old boy that was me. I have a beautiful wife, and we've raised two wonderful children. I also have this dark secret that occasionally comes back to haunt me when certain songs or stories trigger a reaction, but it's my life and I love how most of it has turned out.

While Mike has gone, the effects of the abuse will live on forever. To this day I have not forgiven him. Therapists say forgiveness is necessary for me to move on. I say now that forgiveness will never happen.

Parents, protect your children!

Olive's story . . .

It is hard to describe how it feels to be afraid to go to sleep at night, as a child or as an adult, in your own home. Home, where you should feel safest, can instead be a place of fear and anxiety. I spent 37 of my 55 years in uncertainty of what pain I would have to endure next.

From my earliest memories, I lived under my mother's physical and mental abuse. As I grew in that environment, creativity, self-worth, and a sense of security were lost to me. As a minor, with no intervention to help me, I had no recourse but to endure.

I grew into an insecure adult, with a history of childhood abuse that paved the way for transition to the same type of relationship in marriage. Hope lived in me for only a flicker.



What I perceived in the beginning to be a harmonious relationship with my first husband quickly became an abusive trap. I understood and tolerated that way of life until I matured and came to recognize healthy relationships around me, finally realizing that the way I had been living was terribly wrong.

I also realized that both my mother and my husband were irrational thinkers. Sometimes the smallest thing could send either of them into a rage. I was forced to always be perfect in an effort to avert their violent eruptions.

The only person I turned to for help during the marriage was very passive about my situation, so I internalized the harsh reality more deeply. Still I was surviving with three children by my side, however fraudulent the relationship was. Later in the marriage, I was both desperate and

fearful enough to call the social services department for emergency assistance, but was turned down for a lack of funding. I lost all hope for help and once again retreated within myself and continued to endure.

After 18 years of my desperation and visible exhaustion, my spouse found another love interest and left me and our children. His leaving opened a door that allowed me to get away and start my life over.

I am a former victim who is now empowered. I live in a nurturing and supportive marriage, without any fears or regrets. Still, the nightmares persist and the many scars on my heart will always remain. To totally enjoy the peace I have finally found, I feel compelled to help save others from such a miserable and sometimes dangerous life.

The scars that I carry in my memories are tools I use to help others instead of allowing them to haunt me. I wish for all victims of domestic violence a peaceful outcome like mine, but it will never happen without intervention. When an abuse victim's well-kept secret does finally surface, I offer support in any way I can. Everyone deserves a decent level of peace and respect in their lives.

*the scars that i carry in my memories
are tools i use to help others*



Jess's story . . .

My father raped me from the time I was 11 until I turned 16. He claimed he did it to keep me “straight”; in his eyes, I was turning “homo” because I dressed in athletic clothes and hung out with girlfriends.

At 16 I moved in with a friend and her parents and was legally emancipated. Those first feelings of success and relief were tremendous. Soon, however, my slightly older friend said maybe I was a lesbian, and she started a second cycle of sexual abuse. The family I’d turned to for protection became a family to escape, so I stood up for myself again and moved to an apartment by myself.

During those tumultuous times, I relied on my soccer skills to take me places and keep me happy. A soccer practice or a game provided me with 2 hours every day when I did not have to think; I could just play. It was time when I could excel and be worry free.

When I was recruited to play for Virginia Commonwealth University, I knew that moving from my Midwestern hometown to Richmond would allow me to put all the pain behind me. In my new Virginia home, I never told people about my family or the abuse I’d been through. I continued to use soccer as my therapy.

When my college soccer career ended, I found a therapist to whom I could disclose details of my past that I’d never told anyone before. It was the first trusting relationship I’d had in many years.

While I continue to struggle with relationships and intimacy, I am happy with the person I am today. I give to the community through my work with foster children, many of whom have been sexually abused. I hope to provide those kids a trusting relationship that can start their healing at an earlier age than my own.

Through the Survivor Caucus of the Action Alliance, I have been able to be myself with others who know I’m a survivor. The group affirms for me that I am normal and I am not alone. Camp Mabon was a powerful experience that helped me reconnect with myself.

Awareness and acceptance of my feelings help me to thrive. I have been able to embrace my experience as part of who I am. *I am a survivor.*



*i have been able to embrace my experience
as part of who i am...a survivor*

Betty's story . . .

I am a true believer that whatever does not kill you makes you stronger. My life has had so much turmoil that some days I thought I would not make it through. Thank God, I held onto my faith and believed enough in myself to know that no matter what anyone said, thought, or did to me, my joy remains within me always.

My birth mother abandoned me and my six siblings when I was a baby. I was lucky, though, because I was placed in a loving home with a foster mother who raised me as one of her own. She and my foster siblings surrounded me with love and compassion. They taught me how to live.

With unconditional love, I grew as most any child would. In my late teens, though, I went through major turning points. I graduated from high school and learned I was pregnant. Then, shortly after the birth of my beautiful daughter, my foster mother passed away. Who would I turn to help me with the responsibility for a new baby? My mother had had all the answers, and now I could not ask her the questions.

My daughter was still small when I met and, soon after, married my husband. It was not long before I gave birth to two hand-some sons.

My husband put me through physical, mental, and emotional abuse, and I began a slide into hopelessness. I'd often ask myself, 'How could a man who claimed to love me turn around and beat me as if I was nothing more than a tin can for kicking around?' I tried to escape, running from state to state with my three babies and trying to stay one step ahead of my abuser.

He always found us. I asked myself a million times, 'Why? Why me?' That question would remain unanswered until I stopped running. People tend to leave you alone when you fight back. So I stopped being a victim: I stopped being scared; I stopped running; I nurtured my heart's belief that I was somebody. That's right — *I am Somebody*. No matter what anyone else thinks, I know it as well as I can see the stars in the sky.

Each day, my journey begins again. In my past was a life I wouldn't wish on anyone. But I lived it, I survived it, and my present is what I choose for myself. I want to be here. I am here because I want to live. I am no longer scared, I am no longer willing to hide or run or just swallow myself up and die. I am proud that the future looks even better for my children and, most of all, for a me that wants something good for me.



i nurtured my heart's belief that i was
somebody...that i am somebody



30 YEARS OF MAKING HISTORY

We hosted regional and national prevention trainings; and developed nationally renowned guidelines to promote the development of primary prevention initiatives at the local level.

In keeping with our roots, the Action Alliance has supported our local SDVA's with the statewide Hotline, answering more than 5,000 calls each month on behalf of local SDVAs. VAdata has continuously improved and recently added an outcome component allowing those receiving services to provide feedback. A new line of brochures, reports, newsletters and resources has been designed—with new materials added each year and 100,000 resources distributed each year to SDVAs. A new accreditation process has been developed, with a uniform set of minimum standards for services for SDVAs, and a process designed to provide peer support and technical assistance during the Accreditation review.

As we move into 2012, the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance is no longer an organization in transformation. The Action Alliance has become a well-established coalition, a voice not only for Virginians but the country as well, and a leader in prevention efforts for sexual and domestic violence. We continue our commitment to use our diverse and collective voice to create a Virginia free from sexual and domestic violence—inspiring others to join and support values of equality, respect and shared power.



30 YEARS OF REFLECTIONS

Reflections on joining statewide coalition work

What has moved and inspired me about this work has always been the people—first the survivors I spoke to on the hotline or the emergency room or in the shelter... then I began to get involved with the statewide coalition... As a young, green Executive Director I was mentored and inspired by people like Deb Downing, Gay Cutchin, Ruth Micklem, Sherrie Goggans, and Linda Winston. They listened, reflected, encouraged, inspired and taught me so much (in addition to being very patient). I am happy to say I am still learning and inspired by each of these amazing women today.

Shannon Heady

Former Executive Director of Safe Harbor
Lifetime advocate for the violence against women movement

“

I am happy to say I am still learning and inspired by each of these amazing women today.

”



30 YEARS OF REFLECTIONS

Reflections on personal growth in the work based on coalition experience

I came into this field through my work as a therapist. I had begun to work more and more with survivors of sexually violent and physically abusive crimes and begun to see the intricacies of the experience of violence and the impact on the individual, the family, and the community. After getting involved in the coalition, I was able to integrate my orientation as a therapist to incorporate a new identity as an advocate for human rights. I see myself now as an advocate for human rights who works therapeutically with survivors to facilitate their growth from victim to survivor to empowered individuals who thrive.

Carol Ann Olson
Executive Director, Rappahannock Council Against Sexual Assault

30 YEARS OF REFLECTIONS

Keep up the good work

It has been such a pleasure to work with such powerful, amazing and inspiring individuals! Keep up the good work! Congratulations!

Latoria White
Shelter for Help In Emergency

30 YEARS OF REFLECTIONS

On joining statewide coalition work

On July 1, 1996 I started working with VADV. How naïve I was, but ... what a great group of women to teach, mentor and show me how to navigate the "real world"- Thanks to all of you.

Debbie Haynes
Action Alliance

“...what a great group of women to teach, mentor, and show me how to navigate the “real world” -- Thanks to all of you. ”

30 YEARS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1994

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) is Passed

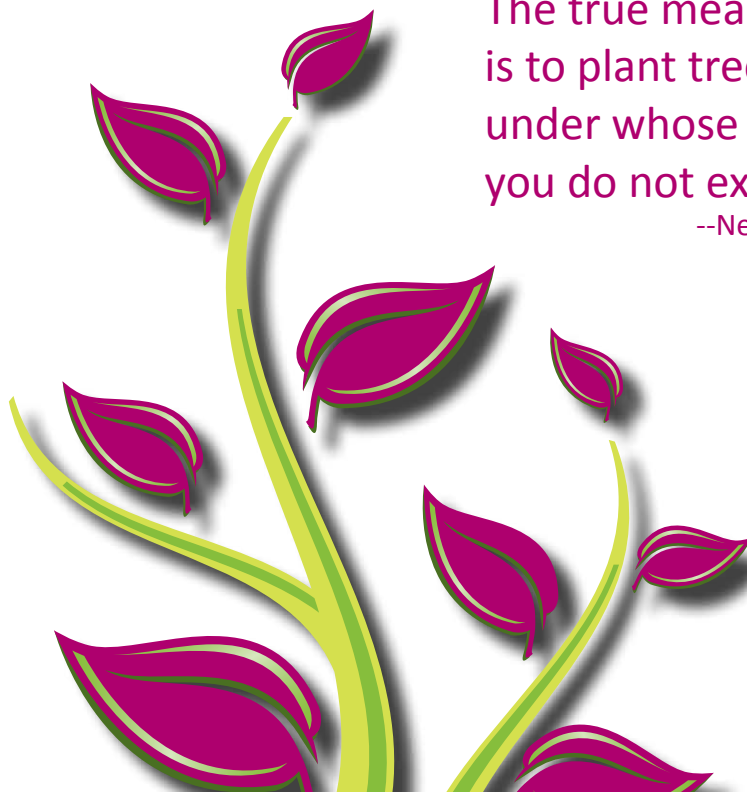
Advocates from VAASA & VADV worked with Virginia's congressional delegation to assure the passage of this groundbreaking piece of legislation. \$1.6 billion was provided to states to address domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking. Virginia receives approximately \$3,000,000 a year in STOP funds which support initiatives in law enforcement agencies, prosecution offices, the courts and victim advocacy programs.

Thank you to the following

Action Alliance Lifetime Members

The Action Alliance created a “Lifetime Membership” as a way for members to deepen their commitment to engage in prevention and anti-violence work, as well as to solidify and strengthen the work of the Action Alliance. Please help us in honoring and thanking our Lifetime Members!

Judy Castele
Deb Downing
Debbie Haynes
Shannon Heady
Cartie Lominack
Ruth Micklem
Carol Olson
Grace Orsini
Kristen Pine
Ginny Powell
Peggy Sullivan
Dawn Traver
Alice Twining
Susheela Varky
Linda Winston



The true meaning of life
is to plant trees,
under whose shade
you do not expect to sit.

--Nelson Henderson

30 YEARS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

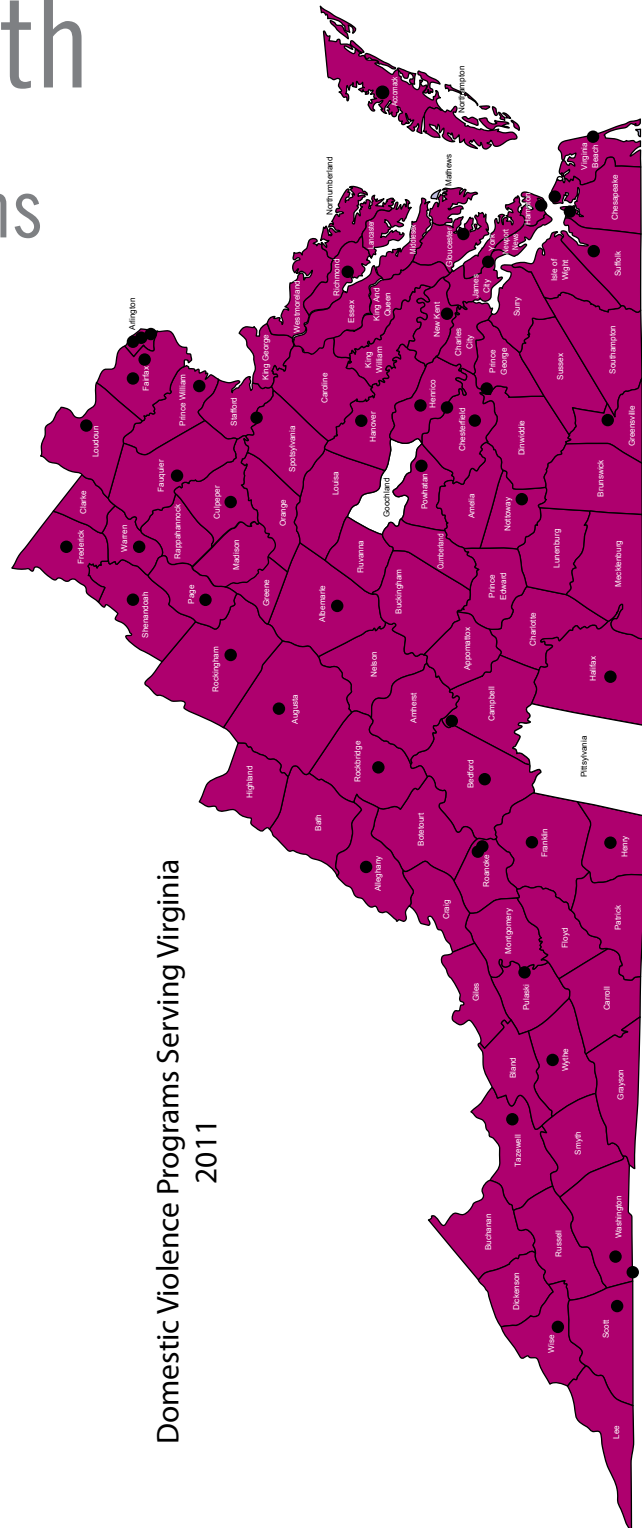
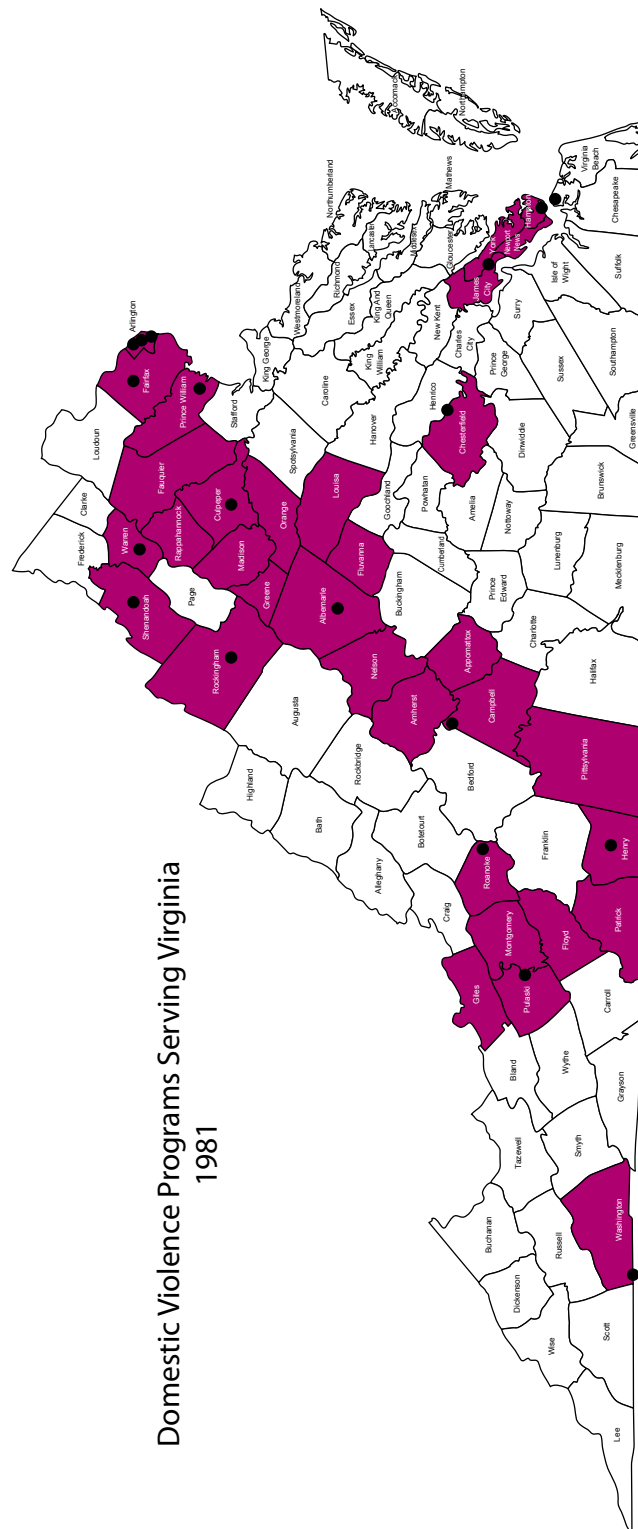
1994

Rape Prevention Education Funding (RPE) is Created

Part of VAWA, this was the first funding ever dedicated to prevention. Sexual assault crisis centers in Virginia took the lead in exploring how to best use the funding in their communities.

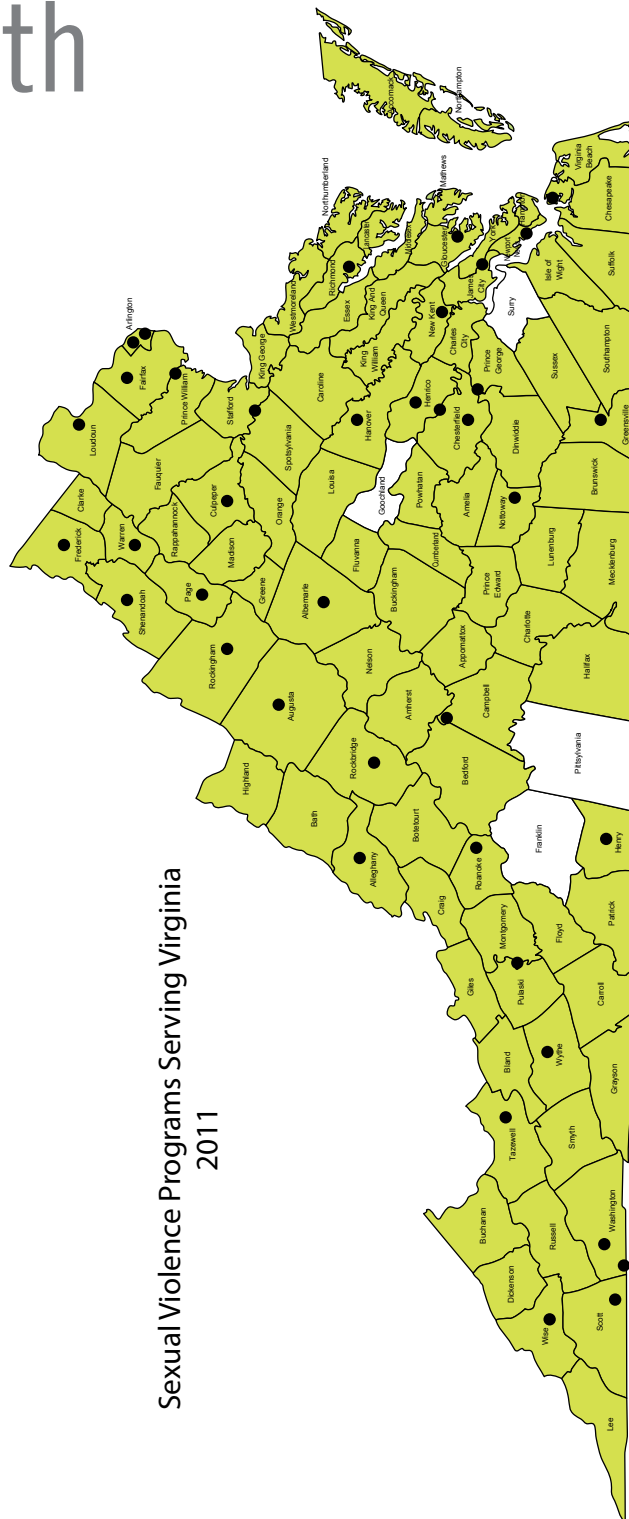
30 Years of Growth

Domestic Violence Programs 1981-2011



● Represents a Local Program

Sexual Violence Programs 1981-2011



Sexual Violence Programs Serving Virginia 2011

- Represents a Local Program

Domestic and Sexual Violence Agencies Serving the Commonwealth of Virginia 2011

Abuse Alternatives: Bristol (VA, TN); Sullivan (TN) and Washington (VA) Counties

ACTS/Turning Points: Manassas and Manassas Park; Prince William County

Alexandria Office on Women: Alexandria

Arlington Violence Intervention Project: Arlington

Avalon: A Center for Women & Children: Williamsburg and Poquoson; York and James City Counties

Bedford Domestic Violence Services: Bedford and Bedford County

The Center for Sexual Assault Survivors: Hampton, Newport News, Poquoson, and Smithfield; York and Isle of Wight Counties

Chesterfield County Domestic and Sexual Violence Resource Center: Chesterfield County

Choices: Council on Domestic Violence for Page County: Page County

Citizens Against Family Violence: Martinsville; Henry and Patrick Counties

Clinch Valley Community Action, Inc. : Tazewell and Russell (SA only) Counties

Collins Center: Harrisonburg; Rockingham County

Crisis Center: Bristol (VA); Bristol and Sullivan Counties (TN); and Lee, Scott, Washington & Wise Counties (VA)

Crisis Line of Central Virginia: Sexual Assault Response Program: Bedford and Lynchburg; Amherst, Appomattox, Bedford and Campbell Counties

Fauquier Domestic Violence Services: Fauquier County

Doorways for Women and Families: Arlington County

Eastern Shore Coalition Against Domestic Violence: Northampton and Accomack Counties

Fairfax County Office for Women & Domestic & Sexual Violence Services: Falls Church, Fairfax, Herndon, and Vienna; Fairfax County

Family Crisis Support Services: Norton; Buchanan, Dickenson, Lee, Russell, Scott, and Wise Counties

Family Resource Center, Inc.: Galax; Bland, Carroll, Grayson, Smyth and Wythe Counties

Family Violence and Sexual Assault Unit/Emporia: Emporia; Brunswick, Greenville and Sussex Counties

First Step: A Response to Domestic Violence: Harrisonburg; Rockingham County

Franklin County Family Resource Center: Rocky Mount; Franklin County

Genieve Shelter: Franklin, Smithfield, Suffolk; Isle of Wight, Southampton and Surry Counties

Hanover Safe Place: Hanover County

Harmony Place: Front Royal; Warren County

The Haven Shelter & Services, Inc.: Essex, Lancaster, Northumberland, Richmond, and Westmoreland Counties

Help and Emergency Response: Portsmouth and Chesapeake

Hope House of Scott County: Scott County

James House Intervention/Prevention Services: Colonial Heights, Hopewell, Petersburg; Southern Chesterfield, Dinwiddie and Prince George Counties

Korean Community Services: Annandale

Domestic and Sexual Violence Agencies Serving the Commonwealth of Virginia

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Laurel Center Intervention for Domestic & Sexual Violence: Winchester; Clarke and Frederick Counties
Laurel Shelter Inc.: (DV) Gloucester, King and Queen, King William, Matthews, and Middlesex Counties;
(SV) Gloucester, Matthews and Middlesex Counties

Loudoun Citizens for Social Justice/LAWS: Loudoun County

New Directions Center, Inc.: Staunton and Waynesboro; Augusta County

People, Inc. of Virginia: Buchanan and Russell Counties

Project Hope at Quin Rivers: West Point; Charles City, King and Queen, King William, and New Kent Counties

Powhatan County Department of Social Services: Powhatan County

Project Horizon: Buena Vista and Lexington; Rockbridge County

Rappahannock Council Against Sexual Assault: Fredericksburg; Caroline, King George, Spotsylvania,
and Stafford Counties

Rappahannock Council on Domestic Violence: Fredericksburg; Caroline, King George, Spotsylvania,
and Stafford Counties

Response Inc.: Edinburg, Mt. Jackson, New Market Strasburg, Woodstock; Shenandoah County

Response Sexual Assault Support Services of YWCA: Chesapeake, Franklin, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk,
Virginia Beach; Accomack, Isle of Wight, and Northampton Counties

Safe Harbor: Henrico County

Safeshome Systems: Allegany, Bath, and Highland Counties

Salvation Army Turning Point: Roanoke

Samaritan House: Virginia Beach

Services to Abused Families (SAFE): Culpeper, Fauquier, Madison, Orange, and Rappahannock Counties

Sexual Assault Resource Agency: Charlottesville; Albemarle, Fluvanna, Green, Louisa and Nelson Counties

Sexual Assault Response and Awareness: Roanoke and Salem; Botetourt, Craig, and Roanoke Counties

Sexual Assault Victims Advocacy Service (SAVAS): Woodbridge; Prince William County

Shelter for Help in Emergency: Charlottesville; Albemarle, Fluvanna, Green, Louisa and Nelson Counties

Southside Center for Violence Prevention/ Madeline's House: Amelia, Brunswick, Buckingham, Charlotte,
Cumberland, Dinwiddie, Halifax, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Nottoway, Powhatan, and Prince Edward Counties

Total Action Against Poverty-Women's Resource Center: Roanoke, Salem and Vinton; Botetourt,
Craig and Roanoke Counties

Transitions Family Violence Services: Hampton, Newport News and Poquoson; York County

Tri-County Community Action Agency: Charlotte and Halifax Counties

Women's Resource Center of the New River Valley: Radford; Floyd, Giles, Montgomery and Pulaski Counties

Women in Crisis: Norfolk

YWCA Domestic Violence Prevention Center: Lynchburg; Amherst, Appomattox and Campbell Counties

YWCA Women's Advocacy Program: Richmond; Chesterfield County