

# { 30 voices for 30 years }

## People who have influenced our work

In celebration of our 30th anniversary, the Action Alliance selected 30 honorees whose service to the development of the statewide coalition has been utterly indelible: far-reaching and fundamental to moving forward the work of domestic and sexual violence in Virginia.



30 YEARS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1994  
-2000

### **The Virginia Commission on Family Violence Prevention is Established**

After careful study, the Commission introduced omnibus legislation to standardize and improve the response of law enforcement in family violence situations by instituting mandatory arrest and the use of protective orders in cases of family abuse.

# { Sgt. Greg Beitzel }



**S**ergeant Greg Beitzel is a committed advocate for domestic violence victims, a highly skilled trainer, and a trailblazer. But most importantly, Greg is a good cop who “gets it,” whose efforts have transformed the response of law enforcement to domestic violence in real and concrete ways in Henrico County, in Virginia, and in other communities across the country. With more than 25 years of law enforcement experience before his retirement, Greg was knowledgeable about domestic violence and able to communicate to other officers the need for compassion for victims and firmness with perpetrators. Appealing to their hearts as well as their minds, Greg gently and relentlessly reminded them of their professional responsibility to “do the right thing,” cracking the cynicism of veteran officers and inspiring new recruits. But he didn’t stop there. He pressed for a domestic violence unit in Henrico County, not a popular idea at the time, and one was eventually established in 1996. Greg then set it in motion. As shift commander, he monitored the officers in his unit to make sure they did the right thing. He helped to establish Safe Harbor, the first domestic violence shelter in Henrico. And Greg’s training skills did not go unnoticed. He has been a trainer for the Action Alliance Training Institute, the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services, the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, and even the Ukraine. One nominator notes: “I was skeptical of a cop’s understanding of battered women’s issues but Greg proved me wrong. As we drove around the state together to offer training, we had many, many discussions. As much as I thought I could tell Greg about domestic violence, he could tell me more. These conversations became consultations as we both expanded our understanding and our trust.”



30 YEARS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**1996**

## VAdata is Created

This electronic web-based data collection system was designed for use by Virginia’s Sexual and Domestic Violence Service agencies as a tool for compiling information on both sexual and domestic violence. The data collected is used to educate local communities, change public policy, pass new legislation to better serve victims, and improve local sexual and domestic violence services.

# { Delegate Rob Bell }



**F**or the past decade, Delegate Rob Bell's legislative efforts have been instrumental in creating a safer Virginia for survivors of sexual and domestic violence. From the start, he has championed issues that were controversial and about which there was no clear consensus, such as removing the marital rape exemption from the forcible rape statute in 2002 and eliminating marital exemptions from the forcible sodomy and other sexual assault statutes in 2005. He supported legislative proposals requiring all law enforcement agencies to establish written policies on their response to sexual assault and Commonwealth's Attorneys to establish and lead a coordinated response to sexual assault. Most recently, he worked tirelessly with the Action Alliance to expand access to protective orders and "to get these laws right" in Virginia. Determined, smart, and meticulous, Delegate Bell has always been open to the voices of survivors when offering and making policy decisions for the Commonwealth.



## 30 YEARS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1996

### The Virginia Training Institute is Established

The institute was originally created to promote a consistent community response to domestic violence across Virginia through training standards and regional trainings for professionals in the criminal justice system. Today, the institute has broadened its work to provide education and training for professionals working in sexual and domestic violence programs and allied fields.

# Pat Brown



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at Brown, of the Women's Resource Center of the New River Valley, first became involved in this movement as a member of the Board of Director's of the WRC in the early 1980's. The WRC was the first domestic violence shelter to open its doors in Virginia. It is a tribute to the dedication of these early Board Members that this accomplishment occurred in rural Southwest Virginia, an area with more limited resources than other parts of the state. After serving on the WRC Board, Pat became Executive Director in 1986 and continues as Director today. During this time, Pat has grown the agency from a small shelter program into a widely recognized and respected sexual and domestic violence program.

Throughout her career, Pat has demonstrated a commitment to statewide work. Pat served on the Board of VAASA for fifteen years, serving on its Executive Committee for fourteen years including eight years as President. She was also an active member of VADV, serving on numerous committees and Task Forces. Pat has long recognized the importance of Public Policy work and through the years has regularly participated in "Lobby Days" (both State and Federal) in addition to her behind the scenes work with local representatives. In statewide work, Pat not only contributed through her passion for victim services, but also through her strong understanding of business, budgeting, grant writing – the less "glamorous" but absolutely essential aspects of our work against sexual and domestic violence. Although the WRC began as a domestic violence program, Pat has always placed a huge emphasis on equity in focus for sexual and domestic violence, and this is reflected in her organization and her statewide work.

In recent years, Pat has demonstrated her commitment to statewide work by supporting other members of her staff to hold Governing Body positions with the Action Alliance. She is also well known as a provider of technical assistance to new agency directors and others struggling with the nuts and bolts of running a successful non-profit organization. A visionary, mentor, savvy administrator and true advocate, Pat helped build an outstanding local program while making many significant and lasting gifts to the statewide coalition.

## 30 YEARS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

2000  
-2002

### Men of Vision Campaign is Created

VAASA created a Men of Vision campaign to honor and involve men in the movement to end sexual violence against women.





# Judy Castelee



**J**udy Castelee's passion, vision, and work in the sexual and domestic violence movement involve a moral compass that orients around the voices and experiences of survivors. Always! Judy began her work at the Women's Resource Center of the New River Valley (WRCNRV) in the 1980's, where she touched virtually every aspect of that agency's work. In addition to decades of work at the WRCNRV, Judy also served as Interim Director of Virginians Aligned Against Sexual Assault during a period of transition for that coalition. Currently the Executive Director of Project Horizon, Judy has continued her strong work on the state level, including multiple terms on the Governing Body of the Action Alliance, serving as the Governing Body Facilitator, and serving on almost every Action Alliance committee there is. Throughout her career, she has impacted services and policy at both regional and state levels, including championing the first forensic nursing program in the New River Valley and advocating for widespread changes to marital rape and sexual assault laws. Vast and substantial as these accomplishments are, they reflect only a tip of the iceberg of Judy's impact on sexual and domestic violence coalition work in Virginia. Her nominator wrote: "In my eyes Judy has made the largest contribution to the movement through her consistent mentoring of new professionals in the field. Without her, I would not have had the confidence or opportunity to actively participate in the work of the Alliance. Judy played an integral role in the first 30 years of the Action Alliance through her own voice and work, and she is helping to build the next 30 years through her mentorship. If I, along with the others she has touched, can make half the impact that she has, the next 30 years of Action Alliance work will be tremendous."

## 30 YEARS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

2001

### First Sexual Assault Awareness Month is Celebrated

Sexual Assault Awareness Month was established to raise awareness and promote prevention of sexual assault, specifically within the context of the violence against women movement.

# Steve Clementi

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Steve Clementi embodies the terms “true corporate partner,” but to many in the sexual and domestic violence world they have been lucky enough to call Steve a friend. Described by many as the all around “nicest guy you ever want to work with” in 2005 Steve helped coordinate a partnership between the Action Alliance, Verizon Wireless and the Verizon Foundation to support the Red Flag Campaign (a program that has brought national attention to domestic violence prevention on college campuses). As a funder, it would have been easy to walk away from this project, but true to his partnering spirit and continued commitment to this effort, Steve has participated as a member of the Red Flag Advisory Committee, attending and speaking at several Action Alliance events to promote the project. Thanks to Steve’s efforts, the Verizon Foundation continues to support the Red Flag Campaign and has donated nearly \$150,000 to this initiative over the past six years.



Part of Steve’s role with Verizon was to manage the Verizon Foundation in Virginia, along with employee giving programs, which annually donated approximately \$4M to non-profit organizations throughout the Commonwealth. Domestic violence prevention, a key funding priority of the Verizon Foundation, received a significant portion of the Foundation’s support annually as grants were awarded to domestic violence agencies across Virginia. Steve and the Verizon Foundation were instrumental in helping to establish partnerships that raised the awareness level among key stakeholder groups in Virginia for this important issue.

Steve’s support of domestic violence did not stop there, he also developed an RFP process in Virginia between the Verizon Foundation and the Verizon Wireless Hopeline program to award \$125,000 to 15 domestic violence organizations throughout Virginia, including the Action Alliance. Grants were awarded for programs that addressed victim violence, education, prevention, awareness, provided workforce skills training and programs that focused on youth. It is this type of creative, collaborative spirit that makes Steve stand out in the crowd. He is a shining example in the corporate world of someone who can listen to the needs of his local community and respond as a true partner.



30 YEARS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

2002

## Stalking Bill is Passed

Virginia became one of the first states in the country to enact a stalking statute. Despite challenges and changes, the bill continues to provide legal and law enforcement protections to individuals being stalked by family members, acquaintances and strangers, as well as sanctions to those committing this crime.

# { Gay Cutchin }

**A**mong her many accomplishments, Gay Cutchin has been instrumental in bringing the issues of campus sexual assault to the forefront, both at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) and within the statewide coalition. Gay first stepped up when the position of statewide coordinator for Campus Sexual Assault ended and she kept that network going. She agreed to host the next statewide campus sexual assault conferences and continued to do so for the next 10 years. At the same time, Gay was developing her own office of Sexual Assault Services at VCU. Gay mentored and inspired countless students during her tenure there, and was instrumental in reaching out to men on issues of sexual and domestic violence. Gay assured that sexual and domestic violence issues would be institutionalized in the curriculum when she helped to establish the Violence Against Women certificate program in the Sociology Department. After her “retirement” in 2006, Gay continued to work at VCU on a project to add resources and services for victims of sexual and domestic violence on the campus. In 2000, Gay also helped with the creation of one of Virginia’s newest sexual and domestic violence programs, Safe Harbor, in Henrico County. Working at the grass roots level, she built alliances in the local community, convened board members who would support the effort, and then hired and supervised the center staff. Currently, she is chair of the board for The James House (a sexual and domestic violence program serving the tri cities area) and continues to provide services and her expertise statewide. Recognized as one of the leaders in Virginia’s sexual violence movement, Gay is called on by the Action Alliance, the Virginia Department of Health, and the Governor’s Office to offer her advice and experience on statewide anti-violence initiatives. One nominator wrote: “With Gay, there was never a “can we do it?” It was “when are we going to do it?” And the answer was always now!”



## 30 YEARS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

2002

### Silent Witness Virginia is Created

This program seeks to raise awareness of domestic violence and creates opportunities for healing. Virginians who have lost loved ones to domestic violence are invited to share their stories, via a life-sized plywood silhouette that is created as a memorial to individual victims. The silhouettes are painted red, and bear a plaque with the story of the incident. The Silent Witness display now travels throughout the state, raising awareness in local communities. To date, over 30 women, children and men have been memorialized.





# { Kathleen Demro }

**K**athleen Demro has served the sexual and domestic violence field at the state and local level for twenty four years. She started as an undergraduate at The College of William and Mary where she founded SAFER, the Student Alliance For Ending Rape. Volunteering at the local nonprofit sexual and domestic violence agency, Avalon, she secured her first full-time job there after college. Three years later she moved back to her home town and served as the Director of the Campbell County Victim/Witness Program, a court-based advocacy program. When the chance came to do this work at the state level, Kathleen jumped at the opportunity, working fourteen years at the Department of Criminal Justice Services in the Victims Services Section. While there, she administered funding, monitored and mentored grantees and their programs, supported community collaboration, and trained at state and national conferences. Last year, Kathleen moved back to the local level when she accepted the Executive Director position at Safe Harbor, a sexual and domestic violence program located in Henrico County. Kathleen draws on her substantial experience and expertise in the field of sexual and domestic violence when she serves as faculty member for several state and national training organizations, including the Action Alliance Training Institute. One nominator wrote: "Coupling her extensive training and experience in the sexual and domestic violence field with that of her work in the non-profit world, she has become an expert on trauma and its impact on both survivors and advocates, on non-profit board development, and on non-profit management. Kathleen is a seasoned trainer, fearless advocate, and tireless leader providing support to the Action Alliance in addition to any local program that calls on her for assistance."



## 30 YEARS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**2004**

### "Break the Silence Campaign" is Created

The Action Alliance launched the first ever statewide public awareness campaign in Virginia focusing on the African American community, with the goal of publicizing the statewide hotline and educating family, friends, victims and the faith community on how to recognize and respond to abuse when it happens in their communities.



# Deb Downing

**I**nstructor, trail blazer, champion for women, mentor, advocate—all words that apply when describing the accomplishments of Deb Downing. Officially, she is known for her most recent work at the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services where she worked for over 21 years, administering state and federal funding to approximately 200 grant programs and providing training and technical assistance to law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, and victims services providers to address domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. Prior to coming to the state, Deb was Executive Director of the Shelter for Help in Emergency in Charlottesville, growing the program and mentoring many advocates during this decade of service. Her career includes work with community action agencies, domestic violence shelters, VCU, the Department of Social Services, and numerous advisory and non-profit boards of directors across the state.

Deb has dedicated her life to the development of partnerships to end violence against women. In 2000, Deb received the Beacon Peace Award from Virginians Against Domestic Violence for her “commitment to positive change through extraordinary efforts in education and training.” In 2006, she received the DCJS Director’s Career Achievement Award for an employee who is considered an expert in their field, is highly regarded by peers in the industry, has assumed leadership at the state and national level, and is frequently called upon for advice because of her expertise and experience. In 2010 she received both the Beacon of Hope Award from Safe Harbor and the Catalyst Award from the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance.

Deb’s self described “hearts work” began when she created and founded Camp Mabon, a program for women who have survived sexual violence, including childhood sexual abuse and sexual assault in the context of domestic violence. The camp location and activities are planned to provide a positive, pivotal, and transformative outdoor experience, particularly for survivors who may have limited resources and/or few opportunities to take part in such an event.

Deb is a true matriarch of our work always with an eye on developing new leaders in the movement with amazing results. If you look around the state, almost every other advocate you meet was trained or mentored by Deb! While currently retired, Deb remains actively involved with Safe Harbor, the Wild Women of Wisdom Task Force and the Survivor Caucus all of which she helped to establish—her legacy is truly vast and full of grace.



## 30 YEARS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

2004

### The Virginia Sexual & Domestic Violence Victim Fund is Established

Provides \$2.4 million annually to Commonwealth attorneys, law enforcement and victim services agencies. The legislation was significant in its designation of program funding for children, either affected by or victims of sexual violence, domestic violence, stalking and family abuse.



# { Kay Edwards }

**K**assandra (Kay) Edwards has been a steadfast leader in the sexual and domestic violence movements. She has brought her previous experience with rape crisis and victim witness advocacy to her statewide work as VAWA and then V-STOP Administrator, making positive and lasting change for survivors in Virginia. Kay uses her position at the Department of Criminal Justice to provide training and technical assistance throughout Virginia. As grant monitor and reviewer, she bridges national and statewide grant initiatives focused on sexual and domestic violence response. She is a member of the Women of Color Caucus and the Social Justice Task Force, has served on Alliance committees on confidentiality, accreditation, and leadership development, and provided training on leadership and cultural competency. A pragmatist at heart, Kay maintains a calm demeanor and focuses on consensus-building, even around the most difficult issues. One nominator wrote: "I see Cassandra and I see a head held high fighter for all people (with a smile). I can almost hear her saying "I got this," which makes you smile. I know it's not the amount of words you use to get the message across, but the reason, the power, the truth, the fact and the heart behind them."

## 30 YEARS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**2004**

### Transformation of Two Statewide Coalitions Into One Unified Organization

After much deliberation and discussion, Virginians Aligned Against Sexual Assault and Virginians Against Domestic Violence joined forces to become the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance. The merger, resulted in enhancing direct services to victims of sexual assault and domestic violence, increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of the state coalition in its work with local agencies, and promoting a paradigm shift for Virginia's response to sexual and domestic violence.

# Regina Pack Eller

**R**egina Pack Eller has been a statewide advocate in the sexual and domestic violence movement for over 24 years. She has represented her local program enthusiastically, spending countless hours driving across the state to ensure that the voices of survivors and advocates in Southwest Virginia were heard. Her advocacy work at the state level brought a strong yet gentle voice of reason to the movement to end sexual and domestic violence. Prior to the merger of the two coalitions, Regina provided leadership to Virginians Aligned Against Sexual Assault (VAASA) serving as board president. Helping to build this organization in its infancy, Regina fondly remembers early VAASA meetings and the amazing women there who mentored her and welcomed her as an equal. For the last several years Regina has served on the Action Alliance Accreditation committee, helping to guide agencies across the state in achieving high standards for delivery of services. Always believing in professional development for herself, her staff and the sexual and domestic violence community, Regina has been an active presence in the annual retreats of the statewide coalition since its beginning.



Regina Pack Eller continues to work tirelessly to serve those who have experienced sexual violence. Continuing her professional development, Regina is an accredited advocate through the National Advocate Credentialing Program, as an Advanced Advocate, Comprehensive Intervention Specialist. She has taken this training, along with her almost quarter century of advocacy, and mentored many staff from Southwest Virginia encouraging them to become active in statewide work. All of this was accomplished while continuing to provide countless hours of direct service to survivors as she helped build her local program. She is an inspiring, passionate advocate with staying power, always making sure the voices of survivors are heard from all parts of the state.



30 YEARS OF ACCOMPLISHMENT

2005

## Enhancing Services to Children & Youth Exposed to Domestic Violence is Developed

Through national funding from the Department of Health & Human Services, the Action Alliance assisted with the development of a state-wide advisory council to research and develop best practice models for services to children exposed to domestic violence.





# { Candace Feathers }

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andace Feathers is one of the founding mothers of our statewide work, a true innovator who laid the groundwork for many of the early organizational and legislative successes in domestic violence in Virginia. As Executive Director of Virginians Against Domestic Violence in the mid-1980's, Candace worked tirelessly to provide support to local programs and to advocate for the growing statewide coalition. With both vision and passion, Candace did it all! Among her contributions, Candace developed public awareness materials and a public speakers' manual, prepared a brochure on battered women's legal rights and resources; created a poster for Domestic Violence Awareness Month, provided consultation to shelters and other domestic violence programs, coordinated annual statewide conferences, developed and delivered training to professionals, edited a quarterly newsletter, wrote grants to fund VADV, supervised agency volunteers, and managed its business affairs. She coordinated legislative efforts that resulted in the creation of the Family and Children's Trust Fund and in establishing criminal penalties for violations of protective orders. Candace then took this experience to the Hampton Roads area, where she instigated and implemented domestic violence and sexual assault programs in the region. With an eye on the tie between these local efforts and the statewide coalition, she has been instrumental to the evolution of both.



## 30 YEARS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**2006**

### Virginia Commission on Sexual Violence is Convened

This groundbreaking commission created by Governor Tim Kaine, accomplished many important tasks including a comprehensive study of the direct service and prevention efforts throughout Virginia. The recommendations from this commission increased prevention work in Virginia, helped pass new legislation to support sexual assault survivors, and had an impact on local programs' service delivery.



# Dr. Marcella Fierro

**A**s Virginia's Chief Medical Examiner from 1994 to 2007, Dr. Marcella Fierro established programs in the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner that continue to clarify the scope of fatal domestic violence in Virginia today. As part of the Virginia Commission of Family Violence Prevention, Dr. Fierro implemented the Family and Intimate Partner Homicide Surveillance Project. After ten years of data collection and analysis, we know that roughly one in three homicides in Virginia results from domestic violence. These data shape our understanding of lethal intimate partner violence and of persons at risk and, in turn, influence policy and program development within the statewide coalition. For example, identification of a clear racial disparity among homicide victims, where African American women are at much higher risk of death related to domestic violence, continues to inform work at the Action Alliance and within its Women of Color Caucus. Dr. Fierro is utterly committed to the science of forensic pathology and to using that knowledge to create public health solutions that improve the human condition. As Chief Medical Examiner, she was tireless in her advocacy for such programs and in moving the accompanying anti-violence efforts forward. When describing the importance of these programs, Dr. Fierro often made this comment. "There is so much hurt, despair, devastation, hatred, and violence that comes through the back doors of our morgue. Our job is to do something good with the stories of the dead, to advocate for them when they can no longer speak for themselves." A remarkable public health visionary and leader, Dr. Fierro embodies the creed of the forensic pathologist that "the dead shall teach the living."



## 30 YEARS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

2007

### The Art of Surviving Art Exhibit is Launched

The Action Alliance created the Art of Surviving, a dynamic exhibit of artwork and poetry created by survivors of sexual violence across Virginia, reflecting the perspectives and work of survivors of sexual violence. The exhibit encourages healing and offers a venue for survivors to speak out about the realities of sexual violence and survivorship.

# { Janett Forte }

**A**s a social worker and activist, Janett Forte has committed her career to women's issues, human rights and social justice work. She had a dramatic impact on developing community response as the Coordinator for the Chesterfield Sexual and Domestic Violence Resource Center. In this capacity, Janett helped to establish a local government commitment to coordinated services in Chesterfield, establishing one of the first domestic violence coordinating councils in Virginia. For this work Janett received the YWCA Outstanding Woman of the Year award in government/politics. During this time, Janett became a statewide leader assisting with the launch of one of the first primary prevention Delta projects in Chesterfield County, laying early groundwork for other similar initiatives throughout the state. From the mid 1980's through 2004 Janett served on the board of Virginians Against Domestic Violence, taking on several leadership roles, including board president during the last year of the organizations existence. This position allowed her to play a pivotal part in assisting with the transformation into the Action Alliance. Janett was also a part of the creation of the Social Justice Task Force in 1998, which helped initiate many of the anti-racism projects the Action Alliance would later take on. At an Action Alliance Retreat in 2004, Janett was part of the start-up of the Wild Women of Wisdom Task Force, a group working to support long time advocates in the field while mentoring and supporting the next generation of leadership. Training has always been a large part of Janett's service, where she has served on the Action Alliance's training institute, providing dozens of trainings over the years to local, state, community and national groups. Most recently, Janett has taken her anti-violence work to an international level making many trips to Central America helping to fundraise and build services for survivors of sexual and domestic violence in some of the most underserved parts of the world. She truly makes this issue a global one with her passion and dedication causing more than one advocate to say "I want to be Janett Forte when I grow up!"



30 YEARS OF ACTION

**2007**

## The Red Flag Campaign is Created

The Action Alliance, along with college students, college personnel and community victim advocates, created a groundbreaking public awareness campaign designed to address dating violence and promote the prevention of dating violence on college campuses. The campaign posters reflect racially and ethnically diverse models, and illustrate both heterosexual and same-sex relationships. The campaign has received national recognition and accolades and has been adopted on over 150 campuses across the country.



# Patricia Foster

**P**atricia Foster has been a strong advocate in the violence against women field. With a gentle and courageous spirit, she serves as a Victim Services Grant Monitor at the Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) monitoring grant compliance for Sexual Assault Services, Victim/Witness Assistance, V-STOP, Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Victim Fund, and Recovery Act programs. In addition Patricia supports many local programs by providing training and technical assistance consultation in addition to assistance with maintenance of procedures and guidelines for victim related grant administration including data collections for statewide and federal reporting. She provides support regarding the administration of grants and guidance and training to grantees and criminal justice professionals regarding program and project implementation.



Bravely carrying the torch of the sexual and domestic violence movement into victim services, Patricia has used her previous experience as a victim witness advocate helping individuals in the criminal justice system understand specific issues of survivors. Prior to working at DCJS, Patricia worked in various positions within the Victims Services profession providing direct services to victims and witnesses of crime that include: YWCA Women's Advocacy Program, Citizens Against Family Violence, Inc., Martinsville and Henrico Victim Witness Assistant Programs.

Patricia has devoted over twenty years of service assisting in the Victims' Rights field and has become a strong advocate. She has served on, and has chaired various victims' services projects and committees such as serving in collaboration with local and statewide partners to bring and implement the Office of Victims of Crime Statewide Victim Assistance Academy in Virginia, in addition to participating in the Women of Color Caucus. Her gentleness and the strength in her speech can command a room, her steadfast dedication and calm, reassuring personality help all who come in contact with her believe we can move forward...always.



30 YEARS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

2010

## Action Alliance Membership Commits to Becoming an Anti-Racist Coalition

The Action Alliance has a long history of working to address the effect of multiple oppressions on survivors of sexual and domestic violence. In 2010, the Action Alliance membership formally agreed to commit to address the underlying cultural and institutional disadvantages suffered by people of color that put people of color at greater risk for sexual and domestic violence, and inhibit the ability of survivors of color to access safety and justice.

# { Pat Groot }

**A** founding mother of the sexual violence movement in Virginia, Pat Groot helped build the statewide coalition, Virginians Aligned Against Sexual Assault (VAASA). As the first Director of VAASA, she not only provided leadership in securing funding for the first sexual assault crisis centers in Virginia, she became recognized as a national expert in public policy, advocating for the rights of people sexually victimized.

As awareness of sexual assault issues began taking off in Virginia in the early 1980's, Pat played an integral role in working on several important legislative and policy issues. She worked alongside Nancy Brock, Director of Response in Norfolk and H. Lane Kneedler, Esq. to orchestrate passage of the Marital Sexual Assault Statute in 1986. Pat served as a consultant to the U.S. Department of the Navy following the Tailhook assaults in the early 1990's, providing input that would lead to the development of the Navy's Sexual Assault Victim Intervention (SAVI) Program. Pat also co-staffed the Legal Issues Committee of the Virginia Commission on the Reduction of Sexual Assault Victimization, resulting in the most substantial law reform enacted under the efforts of one commission. During this period of rapid change, Pat served on several Virginia Commissions and Task Forces representing the voices of survivors of sexual assault.



Not stopping at the statewide level, Pat co-founded with Gail Burns-Smith of CONNSACS, the National Alliance of Sexual Assault Coalitions, later known as the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence. This new alliance was instrumental in securing passage of the U.S. National Violence Against Women Act and related funding of programs for services to victims of sexual assault and other violence. Pat also assisted with the initiation of the first National Directory of Sexual Assault Crisis Centers, and served as a consultant to the Center for Disease Control Violence Prevention Division and the Violence Against Women Act Office.

One of Pat's most amazing legacies is her ability to do so much with so little. Spending countless hours and sleepless nights, she not only fought to secure funding and services in Virginia, she mentored many advocates along the way. One advocate reflected on her experiences, "Pat kindly and patiently taught me everything I needed to know about VAASA, sexual violence, my local program, 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... In truth, Pat led me step by step through every aspect of my programs function as a sexual assault crisis center, and the role VAASA played in the state."

## 30 YEARS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**2011**

### Expanded Access to Protective Orders

The passage of major legislation providing equal access and equal levels of protection for victims of dating violence, sexual assault and stalking through civil protective orders that have historically offered greater protection for victims of family abuse.



## { Ted Heck }

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hen the Action Alliance reached out to the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer (LGBTQ) service community in 2004, Ted Heck was the first to respond. He has been devoted to the issue ever since. Ted worked with the LGBTQ<sup>2</sup> (Q<sup>2</sup> stands for Questioning and Queer) Task Force to create and deliver statewide training on the topic of intimate partner, sexual, and hate crime violence in the LGBTQ community. While domestic violence occurs at about the same rate in the LGBTQ community as in any other community, very few LGBTQ survivors seek support or services from sexual and domestic violence agencies. Ted's work has opened doors and opened minds. LGBTQ survivors are not yet fully accessing services, but sexual and domestic violence programs across Virginia are more aware of their unique needs. In turn, LGBTQ service organizations are more aware of sexual and intimate partner violence in the LGBTQ community. Ted has also been able to tie his work in HIV prevention to the issue of violence intervention and prevention in the LGBTQ community – a unique and “uncommon” approach to addressing sexual and intimate partner violence. In addition, Ted just completed two terms as an active member of the Action Alliance's Governing Body. He is a founding board member of the Virginia Anti-Violence Project, a statewide non-profit addressing violence in the LGBTQ community. To quote his nominators: “A quiet, unassuming man, Ted's presence at the Action Alliance has been both catalyzing and transformative. He has led the way to assure transgender inclusion among Virginia's sexual and domestic violence programs. Ted hails from Quaker community and brings with him a sense of peace and justice in all that he does.”





# The Honorable Janet Howell



**S**enator Janet Howell has been a long time advocate and champion of legislation to support the rights of victims of sexual and domestic violence in Virginia. Meeting with family members of homicide victims, survivors of incest and those in violent relationships has helped the Senator to better understand the complicated issues around anti-violence work. As Chair of the Commission on Family Violence, Senator Howell promoted numerous legislative proposals that helped lead the way to overhaul Virginia's approach to sexual and domestic violence. Included in her impressive legislative work are stronger domestic violence arrest laws, tougher laws for child sexual abuse, stalking and gun control, in addition to work on expanding the number of Child Advocacy Centers in Virginia, to better assist child victims of sexual abuse. Believing that domestic violence victims need services to help them make more informed decisions, Senator Howell introduced budget amendments to add services such as housing and counseling programs to serve victims and their children. During her twenty years of legislative service, Senator Howell has been honored by numerous victims' rights organizations, the Fraternal Order of Police, the Virginia Association of Sheriffs and the Chiefs of Police for her anti-violence work. While she is grateful for these awards and accolades the Senator contends "...the real reward is knowing there are fewer victims of violence as a result of my efforts."

