

CVSVC CONNECTIONS

A Publication of Albany County Crime Victim and Sexual Violence Center
"Proudly Serving the Community since 1975"



Daniel P. McCoy
Albany County Executive

Summer 2016

Welcome to the Albany County Crime Victim and Sexual Violence Center!

We are excited to share our work with you through this newsletter.

I want to thank Heather Eckert, our new Administrative Aide, for the energy and creativity that put this all together.

At the Center, we have the opportunity to work with dynamic partners in the community to address all forms of interpersonal violence and create culture change in our communities. We want this newsletter to provide us a venue to invite you to become involved in this journey to create a safer world for all of us.

I hope that you enjoy reading about what we are doing and take a moment to check out our website (www.albanycounty.com/cvsvc) and like us on Facebook (<https://facebook.com/albanycountycvsvc/>)



Karen Ziegler
Director

Join us in being the change we want to see in the world.

2016 Sexual Assault Hotline Statistics

Emergency Room Accompaniments: 73
Victims receiving counseling: 178
Accompaniments with law enforcement: 14
Office of Victim Services applications completed (and another 26 given): 45
Child Protective Services calls: 12
Referrals: 16

On 4/11/16 the County Legislature incorporated CVSVC into the Albany County Charter! We would like to thank the County Executive and the members of the Albany County Legislature for supporting us in the work we do.



The mission of the Crime Victim and Sexual Violence Center (CVSVC) is to provide direct and comprehensive services to all individuals affected by sexual assault and other crimes of personal violence. Utilizing therapy, advocacy, community mobilization, prevention education and bystander engagement, CVSVC seeks to change societal conditions that allow and perpetuate oppression.

In conjunction with Governor Cuomo's "Enough is Enough" policy, CVSVC was awarded a grant to create a new position, College Sexual Assault Coordinator. In May 2016, Elyse Nepa joined our team as our very first College Sexual Assault Coordinator, working with all the colleges and universities in Albany County to prevent and educate students about rape and sexual assault on campus and knowing their Title IX rights. Elyse recently wrote about rape culture in response to the Brock Turner case, here is what she had to say:



"It goes without saying that advocates play a valuable and vital role in the lives of victims. More often than not, individuals are not trained on how to communicate with victims of a sexual assault and end up re-victimizing survivors over, and over, and over again. Many victim advocates will tell you that they see this every day. Every single day. Any time you ask "why", you are not asking a question, you are making an accusation. To sit with a victim, and to hold their hand, to have to explain over and over again that it is not their fault, only to have a series of other individuals consistently and ruthlessly blame them is disheartening and must stop.

It is infuriating that victims are repeatedly traumatized. It is despairing that some universities and colleges prioritize championship rings over fundamental human rights. It is indeed unfortunate that our society thrives on rape culture, and even worse that people deny this very fact.

My life, my path, this journey I am on, all led me to this very point in time. I challenge you to remove yourself from the center and stand in the shoes of a person who has been violated at the deepest levels physically, mentally, and spiritually. I challenge you to stand up and recognize what is happening in the world around you. I challenge you to acknowledge that 1 in 5 women and 1 in 6 men reported that they were sexually assaulted. Those are our friends, our family members, our neighbors, our classmates. Rape culture is here and has been for far too long. The time for change is now, friends. Right now."

Did You Know?

- ✓ Annually, rape costs the U.S. more than any other crime (\$127 billion)
- ✓ 1 in 5 women & 1 in 16 men are sexually assaulted while in college.
- ✓ More than 90% of sexual assault victims on college campuses do not report the assault.

National Sexual Violence Resource Center - www.nsvrc.org

Is there a college-bound person in your life? Check out these tips for starting the conversation about preventing sexual assault on campus:

<https://www.rainn.org/news/have-you-had-talk>

Volunteer Opportunities

CVSVC relies on the dedication of our amazing volunteers. The Center utilizes these volunteers as court advocates, crisis hotline counselors and office volunteers.

Sexual Assault Hotline Advocates provide crisis intervention, support, information and referrals to survivors of sexual assault and/or their friends and family. Volunteers also operate a 24-hour sexual assault crisis hotline.

Court Advocates provide victims of crime with emotional support, court advocacy, information & referrals, and assistance in completing and filing compensation forms for the New York State Office of Victim Services.

Applications and descriptions can be found on our website:

<http://www.albanycounty.com/Government/Departments/CrimeVictimandSexualViolenceCenter/CSVSCVolunteer.aspx>



Volunteer Voices

Andrea Portnick

Andrea has been a Hotline Volunteer with CVSVC since 2005. We can't say enough positive things about Andrea's commitment to our office! She has been a consistent, dependable helper, especially on the weekends when we often need the most help! We caught up with Andrea to find out what keeps her coming back year after year:

"What keeps me volunteering is knowing that because I am there, a victim won't be alone when they need to talk, won't be alone in the hospital emergency room, and will get the information they need. Because I am there a victim might take their first steps towards being a survivor. The cases that leave the largest impact on me are the ones which start as a phone call where I advise the victim to go to the emergency room and end with me as the advocate in the ER for that victim.

I have learned so much from being a hotline volunteer and crime victim advocate. I am still always looking to grow that knowledge and to find other ways to make a difference. I also look for ways to bring different parts of the community together.

I found a voice as an advocate. On numerous occasions I have spoken before the Albany County Legislature in support of CVSVC. I have written letters, editorials, and blogged in support of CVSVC and other victim issues. I have offered support and protested with local clergy abuse survivors. I found that many of their obstacles and struggles are very similar to those that rape victims have had to face over the past several decades."

THANK YOU for your hard work & dedication Andrea!

Meet the CVSVC STAFF!



Bernard Amador
*Supervising Crime
Victim Caseworker*



Amanda Petrie
*Crime Victim Caseworker
DV Specialist*



Carolyn Crawford
*Crime Victim
Caseworker*



Allison Kopmar
*Crime Victim
Caseworker*



Erin Weiss
Clinical Supervisor



Patricka Elliott
Therapist



Rennisse Bains
Prevention Educator



Elyse Nepa
*Campus Sexual
Assault Coordinator*



Kaitlin Wax
Volunteer Coordinator



Joanne Gulum
Confidential Secretary



Heather Eckert
Administrative Aide

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Albany County Crime Victim and Sexual Violence Center

Proudly serving the community since 1975

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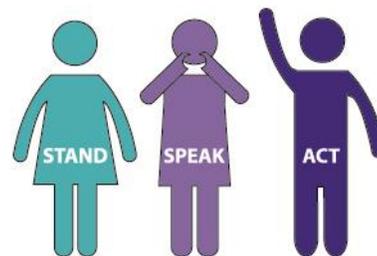
email cvsvc@albanycountyny.gov

website www.albanycounty.com/cvsvc

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/5388804794/>

24-Hour Sexual Assault Hotline (518) 447-7716

Free advocacy and confidential counseling for crime victims in Albany County



ADVOCACY COUNSELING **HOTLINE EDUCATION**

No person in the United States shall, on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity (as defined in paragraph 249(c)(4) of title 18, United States Code), sexual orientation, or disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity funded in whole or in part with funds made available under [VAWA], and any other program or activity funded in whole or in part with funds appropriated for grants, cooperative agreements, and other assistance administered by the Office on Violence Against Women.