Sexual Violence Prevention E-News

March 17, 2008

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1. Sexual Assault Awareness Month, April 2008

Designated as Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM), April brings an annual opportunity to focus awareness on sexual violence and its prevention. It is also an opportunity to highlight the efforts of individuals and agencies that provide rape crisis intervention and prevention services while offering support to sexual assault survivors, victims and their families. SAAM raises awareness of sexual violence and its prevention through special events while highlighting sexual violence as a major public health issue and reinforces the need for prevention efforts. For ideas on how to observe SAAM in your community link to the National Sexual Violence Resource Center: http://www.nsvrc.org/saam/ and to the Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault, www.mncasa.org

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2. Author presentation: “The Queen’s Daughter, April 14, 2008

Author Melissa McCormick will present on her book "The Queen's Daughter," on April 14, 2008 from 2:00-4:00 p.m. and again from 7:00-9:00 p.m. Melissa will describe the events of her kidnapping and sexual assault, and how she escaped the following day. Her story also includes her long and painful journey to overcome her ordeal. She is a dynamic speaker and hopes to help other victims of sexual assault find the courage to get on with their own lives and live up to their full potential. A discussion will follow her presentation.

Location: Rainy River Community College Theater
International Falls, MN 56649
Time: 2pm - 4pm & 7pm - 9pm

Sponsored by Sunrise Center Against Sexual Abuse
Contact: Donna Gustafson, Executive Director, donna@thesunrisecenterifmn.com
218-283-9334 or 1-877-283-9334

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3. Conference: Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention, April 23-24, 2008

This year's Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota conference “Prevention Works: Igniting Change for Families” will offer opportunities to learn from the strengths of many cultures; to make connections between child abuse prevention and related issues; to apply family strengthening strategies in business, health care, non-profit, community and individual settings; to learn about research supporting best practices in family strengthening work; to develop and benefit from parent leadership; and, to improve our knowledge and skill in serving families.

April 23 and 24, 2008
Continuing Education and Conference Center, University of Minnesota – Saint Paul Campus
For further information link to: www.pcamn.org

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4. Next SVPN meeting: Minnesota Men's Action Network: Alliance to Prevent Sexual and Domestic Violence, May 9, 2008

Men have a unique opportunity and responsibility to be involved in sexual violence prevention. We will discuss how we are organizing men in the state, how you can involve men locally, and how men can be most effective in aligning with women to create equal, safe and sexually responsible relationships in our homes, our social institutions and our communities.

Hold the date: Friday, May 9, 2008. News on location to follow soon.

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5. Conference: 21st Annual Conference on Crime Victims, May 28-30, 2008

The Department of Public Safety Office of Justice Programs is pleased to sponsor the 21st Annual Conference on Crime Victims: Victims: The Real Story. This year's conference will be held May 28- May 30, 2008, at Cragun's Conference Center in Brainerd, Minnesota.

The goal of the Annual Conference on Crime Victims is to provide education and training on issues related to crime and victimization. It is a multidisciplinary event that brings professionals together to improve skills, share information, network, and learn how to help their communities.

For more information link to www.dps.state.mn.us/OJP

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6. Press Release: Local Responses to Prostitution (Thursday, March 13, 2008)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact: Vednita Carter, Executive Director, Breaking Free, 651-645-6557 or vcarter@breakingfree.net

LOCAL RESPONSES TO PROSTITUTION
SAINT PAUL, March 13, 2008 – With New York Governor Elliot Spitzer recently linked to the sex trade as a purchaser of services, conversations and debate about the sex industry range from, "It's a victimless crime," to "There's no sliding scale in the exploitation of women… Either you exploit a woman in the commercial sex trade or you don't." In Minnesota, law enforcement, criminal justice and social service agencies are employing innovative and aggressive means to stop the demand for prostitution and hold johns accountable, while supporting the true victims, the women, children and men who are prostituted.

In Minnesota there are an estimated 8,000 to 12,000 women and children involved in prostitution on any given night. The average age of entry into prostitution is age 13, with 75 percent of prostituted women having been sexually assaulted before age 18. Nearly all prostituted women are chemically dependent, and one out of three experiences serious and persistent mental health issues. Victims are methodically lured into prostitution from every socioeconomic strata. Homeless and runaway or throwaway youth can expect to be approached by a pimp, john or drug dealer within 36 hours on the street.

"Prostitution is not glamorous. It is highly damaging and for many of its victims the damage can never be repaired," according to Vednita Carter, executive director of Breaking Free, an agency that provides services to help women escape prostitution.

The Minnesota Statewide Human Trafficking Task Force is vigorously opposed to the legalization of prostitution. Studies of countries that have legalized prostitution have found that regulating prostitution results in a climate that allows criminal gangs, violence and child prostitution to flourish. The Task Force is committed to ending human trafficking and ending the social environment that allows it to take place.

In Ramsey County and the state of Minnesota efforts are underway among civic and social service providers to shed light on the degradation and suffering caused by prostitution and to hold johns accountable. "Stop the Demand" is a partnership of Breaking Free, the St. Paul City Attorney's Office, Ramsey County Attorney's Office and the St. Paul Police Department, to assure that the purchasers of women in prostitution are held accountable and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

“Prostitution is NOT a victimless crime,” says St. Paul City Attorney John Choi. “There are serious consequences for those who are arrested, charged, or convicted of soliciting prostitution in St. Paul. The city has and will continue to dedicate resources to eradicate prostitution because of the detrimental effect it has on our neighborhood and those who engage in this behavior.”

Breaking Free, St. Paul Police Chief John Harrington, the St. Paul City Attorney John Choi, and the Minnesota Statewide Human Trafficking Task Force held a press conference on Thursday, March 13 at St. Paul City Hall.

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7. Christine Stark responds to Opinion: Prostitution: The sex act that’s illogically illegal (3-15-08 Star Tribune)

The one point I agree with Steve Chapman in his piece “Prostitution: The Sex Act That is Illogically Illegal” is that it is hard to feel sympathy for a hypocrite like Spitzer. However, the rest of his piece is woefully misinformed. As a formerly prostituted child and young adult, I disagree that prostitution should be legalized. Prostitution is an industry of sexual exploitation, predominately of women and youth. Prostituted women and youth are raped, beaten, and otherwise tortured by pimps and johns. A study in Canada reveals that prostituted women and girls have a 40% higher mortality rate than non-prostituted women and girls. Also, women-of-color are disproportionately used in prostitution. American Indian women and youth are trafficked off the reservations and in urban areas and African-American women and youth are often trafficked between major urban areas like Minneapolis and Chicago. Many of the women don’t have high school educations. Many of the women end up with severe physical, mental, and emotional disabilities after being in prostitution. Another study reports that prostituted women have higher rates of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder than war veterans. Most prostituted women and youth are coerced into prostitution by poverty, racism, lack of opportunity, and drug and alcohol addictions. The vast majority are primed to be used by pimps and johns because they were abused in the home as children. The average age of prostitution is thirteen-years-old in the U.S. and even lower in other countries. This means that the average prostituted woman has been abused for five years when she turns that “magical” age of eighteen and then supposedly “chooses” to be a whore. Another study conducted with thousands of prostituted people by Melissa Farley states that 89% of the prostituted people interviewed wanted to get out of prostitution immediately. This backs up what those of us used in prostitution know from experience: prostitution is organized rape and battery of women and youth and the vast majority of those in it want out now.

The U.S. should not legalize prostitution. Studies in countries where prostitution is legal reveal that when prostitution is legalized international and domestic trafficking into the area increases, child prostitution increases, and the women are actually treated worse because the state sanctions prostitution which explicitly lends support to the johns who become more violent. Prostitution must remain illegal, but that does not equal support of the status quo. The status quo targets the prostituted women and youth, the victims of prostitution, while typically protecting the pimps and johns. What we need are better laws that treat those who use, rape, batter, and kill prostituted women and youth as sexual predators. We also need direct services for prostituted women and youth. Prostituted women and youth know that men like Spitzer are not an anomaly. Wealthy, powerful men use and sell prostituted women and youth in this country all the time. He just happened to get caught.

Opinion submitted by Author/Advocate Christine Stark to Star Tribune on 3-16-08

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8. New State Report Cards on Teen Dating Violence

Break the Cycle has issued the first-ever report cards evaluating the level of legal protection each state offers young victims of domestic and dating violence. Fifteen states received a grade of “F” while only three – California, New Hampshire and Oklahoma – received grades of “A.” Read more: http://endabuse.org/newsflash/index.php3?Search=Article&NewsFlashID=965

The report was issued in conjunction with “National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Week” in February. The State-by-State Teen Dating Violence Report Card 2008 is available at www.breakthecycle.org/pdf/state-report-card-full-report.pdf.

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9. Report: A Guide to Addressing Teen Dating and Sexual Violence in a School Setting

This new publication entitled "A Guide to Addressing Teen Dating and Sexual Violence in a School Setting,” written by Peace Over Violence in LA, is intended to encourage schools to develop policies and protocols regarding teen dating violence and sexual violence. Link to: www.safestate.org www.safestate.org/domesticviolence

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10. Minnesota Resource: Cordelia Anderson, Sensibilities, Inc.

Cordelia Anderson is a nationally known speaker and consultant on sexual violence and child sexual exploitation prevention. Her career has been dedicated to prevention of various forms of harm including: sexual violence, child sexual abuse and exploitation, bullying, interpersonal violence, child abuse and family violence, gender violence, youth violence and the impact pornography and the sexually toxic society.

For more information, link to: http://cordeliaanderson.com/

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11. Prevalence and effects of rape myths in print journalism: the Kobe Bryant case

Prevalence and effects of rape myths in print journalism: the Kobe Bryant case

Franiuk R, Seefelt JL, Cepress SL, Vandello JA. Violence Against Women 2008; 14(3): 287-309.
Affiliation: Aurora University.
DOI: 10.1177/1077801207313971 http://vaw.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/14/3/287
(Copyright © 2008, Sage Publications)

Two studies examine the prevalence and effects of rape myths in the print media covering a real-life case of alleged sexual assault. Study 1 was an archival study of 156 sources from around the country. Articles about

the Kobe Bryant case were coded for instances of rape myths, among other variables. Of the articles, 65 mentioned at least one rape myth (with “she’s lying” being the single most common myth perpetuated). Study 2 assessed participants' (N = 62) prior knowledge of the Bryant case and exposed them to a myth-endorsing or myth-challenging article about the case. Those exposed to the myth-endorsing article were more likely to believe that Bryant was not guilty and the alleged victim was lying. The implications for victim reporting and reducing sexual assault in general are discussed. From www.safetylit.org

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12. Beyond the campus: unacknowledged rape among low-income women

Beyond the campus: unacknowledged rape among low-income women

Littleton H, Radecki Breitkopf C, Berenson A. Violence Against Women 2008; 14(3): 269-86.
Affiliation: Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas, USA
DOI: 10.1177/1077801207313733 http://vaw.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/14/3/269
(Copyright © 2008, Sage Publications)

Studies of college rape victims have found that many are unacknowledged; that is, they do not label their experience rape. The current study investigated factors associated with unacknowledged rape among low-income women. Out of a sample of 1,033 women, 167 reported having experienced rape. Unacknowledged victims, relative to acknowledged victims, reported less violent assaults and more alcohol use before the assault and were more likely to have been assaulted by a romantic partner. Unacknowledged victims also disclosed less often and reported fewer feelings of stigma. Implications of the work for future studies of unacknowledged rape are discussed. From www.safetylit.org

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13. NSVRC Funding Alert

February 25, 2008
National Resource Center on Domestic Violence & National Sexual Violence Resource Center

The FUNDING ALERT provides a synopsis of the available funding that can be used by individuals and/or agencies working to end domestic violence and sexual assault.

The current FUNDING ALERT can be accessed at:
http://new.vawnet.org/category/index_pages.php?category_id=417

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14. Funding Opportunity: Target Corporation Family Violence Prevention Grants

Target Corporation is accepting applications for its Family Violence Prevention Grants to support healthy family relationships and environments. Award amounts are $1,000-$3,000. Eligible applicants include 501(C)(3) organizations, schools, libraries, and public agencies. Deadline: May 31, 2008

Contact the Target Corporation grant program directly for complete program information and application guidelines:
http://sites.target.com/site/en/corporate/page.jsp?contentId=PRD03-003409.

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15. Calendar

March 27, 2008, Moving Beyond He- Said She-Said: Effectively Investigating and Prosecuting Consent-Defense Cases, Duluth, MN. Link to: to www.pavsa.org or call 218-726-1442.

March 28, 2008, At Center Focus: Responding to Sexual Assault in Marginalized Communities, Duluth, MN. Link to: to www.pavsa.org or call 218-726-1442.

March 31-April 2, 2008, International Conference on Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence and Stalking, New Orleans, LA. For more information and to register, link to:
http://www.evawintl.org/conferencedetail.aspx?confid=6

April, 2008 Conference: Truth Telling in Preaching: Sexual and Domestic Violence, Washington, DC. To register link to: http://www.cathedral.org/cathedral/college/preachers/conferenceSchedule.shtml

April 9-11, 12th Annual MnATSA conference, Minneapolis, MN. Link to www.mnatsa.org

April 14, 2008, “The Queen’s Daughter” Author presentation, International Falls, MN. For more information contact donna@thesunrisecenterifmn.com 218-283-9334 or 1-877-283-9334

April 15-16, 2008, MN Conference on Adolescent Females, “Connecting in a World of Disconnect.” Contact Sue Weyer at 651-295-8216. www.mngirls.org

April 19, 2008, Walk a Mile in Her Shoes, Registration starting at 7 a.m., Walk begins at 8:30 a.m. For more information contact the Fairview Ridges Hospital Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner (SAFE) Program at 952-892-2714.

April 20-23, 2008, 26th Annual Protecting our Children Conference, National American Indian Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect, Minneapolis, MN. For more information link to: National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA) http://www.nicwa.org/conference/#about or contact Isla Dane at isla@nicwa.org 503/222-4044.

April 23-24, 2008, Child Abuse Prevention Conference. Prevention Works: Igniting Change for Families, St. Paul, MN. For more information link to www.pcamn.org

April 23-25, 2008, Restoring the Sacred Trails of Our Grandmothers: Communities Healing from Sexual Violence, Morton, MN. Contact the Minnesota Indian Women’s Sexual Assault Coalition at 651-646-4800 or link to www.miwsac.org

May 1-2, 2008, 17th Annual Minnesota Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy, Prevention and Parenting (MOAPPP) Conference, Minneapolis, MN. For more information link to:

www.moappp.org/training/conference.html.

May 9, 2008, Sexual Violence Prevention Network (SVPN). For more information link to: www.health.state.mn.us/injury/topic/svp

May 28-30, Annual Conference on Crime Victims, Brainerd, MN. For more information link to: www.dps.state.mn.us/OJP

August 1, 2008, Sexual Violence Prevention Network (SVPN). For more information link to: www.health.state.mn.us/injury/topic/svp

November 7, 2008, Sexual Violence Prevention Network (SVPN). For more information link to: www.health.state.mn.us/injury/topic/svp
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