



# Sexual Assault Services of Calhoun County Newsletter

Spring 2013

## Sexual Assault Awareness Month 2013

Slowly, but surely, we see progress toward the warm spring we've been awaiting for what seems a very long time. At Sexual Assault Services (SAS), we often must carefully reflect in order to recognize the progress made to assist survivors and engage our community in responding to and preventing future sexual violence. It can feel similar to waiting for spring after a long, cold winter.

Just as there are true signs of spring around us in nature, we also have evidence of change in the way our community responds to sexual assault and child sexual abuse. Our countywide sexual assault protocol clearly spells out the commitment that our partners and we have made when a victim reports sexual assault. The child abuse protocol within our broader sexual assault protocol guides us in the operation of our Child Advocacy Center (CAC). Our programs have evolved from our early beginnings into best-practice, expert level services. And just like the way winter pushes its way back into our spring warming trend, with cold and even a few snowflakes, we may feel resistance to moving forward that feels like taking steps backward.

This month, we are proud to honor several individuals who have journeyed with us to help others and improve our response and services along the way. We recognize the amazing volunteers who take time out from their busy lives and loved ones to assist sexual assault victims in crisis, giving almost 8,000 hours annually. We also honor some of our committed community partners by giving annual awards to those who have worked with us in the various systems to assist victims, work to hold offenders accountable in the criminal justice system and work to provide prevention programming to children and youth in our schools. Each year we are humbled by the work of others as we review our steady progress in the face of obstacles. These awards are given to some who have helped us overcome obstacles and provide the best possible outcomes for our community. Our award winners are featured in this newsletter. Please join all of us at SAS in thanking them and all others who help survivors of sexual assault everywhere.

Sincerely,

Joyce Siegel  
SAS Program Manager

## CAC Champion for Children Award

SAS was honored to award Detective Luis Tejada, Albion Department of Public Safety, the 2013 Sexual Assault Services CAC Champion for Children Award. Detective Tejada is dedicated, caring, hardworking and respectful of families and team members. He collaborates with other law enforcement agencies when his help is needed or when it will best serve the family involved. He goes out of his way to help parents feel heard, cared for and supported. He works tirelessly on cases he is assigned to and is always available to families and team members. Even though criminal sexual conduct cases are not the only crimes he investigates, he makes families feel that their case is a priority. The families he has helped speak highly of him and have an immense amount of trust and respect for him. Team members respect his excellent work on cases and his connection to families in Albion. He comes to the CAC with a positive, nonjudgmental, open and friendly demeanor. His exemplary advocacy, hard work and dedication to helping children and families have shown through his work at the CAC. We are proud to have him as part of our team!



Dannielle Kostrab and Detective Luis Tejada

## Outstanding Community Advocate Awards

This year SAS was pleased to give the 2013 Outstanding Community Advocate Award to Denice Mack, victim services director at the Branch County Prosecutor's office; Union City Public Schools; and Dianne Thomas, director of the Betsy Dole Women's Resource Center at Olivet College.

Denice Mack was honored because of her outstanding collaborative work with our agency over the years. There is no doubt that a diverse population of crime victims have benefitted from her heartfelt advocacy during her tenure at the Branch County Prosecutor's office. Perhaps the most remarkable impact has been Denice's fierce determination to ensure that children who have been sexually abused in Branch County benefit from the multidisciplinary services offered at the Calhoun County Children's Advocacy Center. Denice understands how important it is to partner with SAS in order to share resources since our counties are so close to one another. Denice is truly a gift to the Branch County community and to the professionals she interacts with across the state.  
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## Outstanding Community Advocate Awards

Union City Public Schools (UCPS) was awarded the Outstanding Community Advocate award because of the way it advocates for the children and families in their district. Christina Feneley, high school principal; Stacy Guertler, middle school counselor; and Mandi MacDonald, elementary school counselor, were specifically honored because they have been the driving force behind the partnership between UCPS and SAS for many years. Feneley, Guertler and MacDonald have been keenly aware that sexual assault prevention services (body safety lessons) and bullying prevention programs empower children with knowledge thereby reducing the rate of victimization. This powerful trio have also advocated for additional specialized services when children and families are in need of additional counseling or support services after a disclosure of a sexual assault.



*From left to right are Denice Mack, Christina Feneley and Stacy Guertler. Not pictured is Mandi MacDonald.*

Dianne Thomas has worked tirelessly to raise awareness, enhance campus safety and help victims of sexual assault through her work as director of the Betsy Dole Women's Center at Olivet College. Her enthusiastic collaboration with our agency has facilitated a link to services that would otherwise be unavailable to survivors in her area. Because of her efforts, we have been able to provide sexual assault prevention activities on campus and services to survivors. Diane's commitment to survivors and her dedication to help have had a positive impact in the lives of many.



*Diane Thomas*

## Douglas Mehlhorn MD Memorial Award

Every year we honor one of our victim advocates the Douglas Mehlhorn MD Memorial Award for Outstanding Community Volunteerism and Service. This year we were honored to present the award to Fran Shank. Fran has volunteered with SAS for three years. She is an extremely caring and compassionate woman who has the capacity to make survivors feel valued and respected through her actions, her choice of words and her behavior.



*Volunteer coordinator, Pam Buchko (left) and Fran Shank*

## Detective LaVern Brann Memorial Award

This award is in memory of Detective LaVern Brann to recognize outstanding work with sexual assault cases in the criminal justice field. Sarah Lincoln is the first prosecutor to receive this award. She has been a consistent model of collaboration, respect and a shared vision of justice while working with SAS, the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) program and the CAC.



*Sarah Lincoln and her husband Brent*

This dedication has provided outstanding service to victims of sexual assault while seeking strong criminal justice outcomes for them and the community. We are very proud to have Sarah as part of our multidisciplinary team in Calhoun County.

## Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Program Award

It is our great pleasure to honor Selma Elstun for ten years of dedication in easing the suffering of those hurt by sexual violence in our community through recognizing her as the SAS Outstanding SANE 2013. Selma has been an invaluable member of our SANE program since she joined us in 2003. Her vast nursing experience along with an eagerness to learn and serve has been inspiring to SAS staff as well as to our SANE team. She has been a part of the educational experience of every nurse joining our team since 2003. Selma teaches them not only the skills necessary to be a good SANE but demonstrates the dedication and compassion



*SANE Coordinator, Phyllis VanOrder (left) and Selma Elstun*

our patients and community deserve. Her work on our annual mini golf fundraiser is legendary and we're frequently asked if she'll be back running the door prize give-away because her energy is so enjoyable!

Selma has demonstrated great mastery in dealing with difficult situations and circumstances in ways that honor and respect everyone involved. Advocates, patients and their families have commented about how much they appreciate working with her. Selma's use of appropriate humor has been pivotal in many group activities we've had over the years. It is a gift she gives to patients and families to aid in their healing. Thank you for your dedication, wisdom, hard work, compassion and support for these last ten years. You've helped make our SANE team one of the best in the state and it is with so much gratitude we honor you!

## Crime Victim Right's Week Award



*Maureen McNamara*

SAS was pleased to receive word that this year's Crime Victim's Rights Week Award is going to our very own Maureen McNamara. Nora Geiger, director of Crime Victim Rights Unit at the Calhoun County Prosecutor's office, said, "Maureen is receiving this award because of her many years of dedicated service to the victims of this county. She first assisted domestic violence victims with her work at SAFE Place. She continued her work with victims by going to work for Sexual Assault Services. She has shown a true passion for working with victims of crimes. Throughout her career, she has assisted many people to survive and recover from the assaults inflicted on them. She will be honored with a service award at a breakfast on Wednesday, April 24th at Addington Hills Café." Congratulations, Maureen!

## About Sexual Assault Services

Our group of 33 dedicated volunteer advocates is the lifeblood of our organization. During the FY 2011-2012, SAS held two volunteer advocate trainings; one in October of 2011 and one in March of 2012. The October and March trainings yielded a total of 26 participants; 14 of whom attended for informational purposes and 12 of whom participated in order to become a volunteer advocate. The 25-hour classroom training, combined with readings from our training manual, strives to educate participants on all of the services/programs of SAS, vicarious trauma and self-care, the dynamics of sexual violence and child abuse. Our community is fortunate to have a field of 33 culturally diverse volunteer advocates who donated an amazing 8,170 hours of on-call time during the October 1, 2011 – September 30, 2012 fiscal year time period! Our Volunteer Program Coordinator spearheads a monthly meeting for all of the volunteer advocates. This meeting serves a dual purpose; an essential de-briefing for the crisis calls the advocates responded to during the month and a valuable continuing education piece.



## Sexual Assault Services of Calhoun County

36 W. Manchester St.  
Battle Creek, MI 49037  
(269) 245-3925

Office Hours  
Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**24** HOUR Crisis Line  
**888.383.2192**

Child Advocacy Center  
(269) 245-3835

sascc.net



### Sexual Assault Services of Calhoun County Mission Statement

Sexual Assault Services of Calhoun County is committed to providing empathic, non-judgmental, comprehensive services, support and advocacy for survivors and others affected by sexual assault or abuse; raising awareness of sexual assault; and engaging others to join in working toward a community free of sexual violence.



Bronson Battle Creek Hospital is a major partner with Sexual Assault Services, donating space and in-kind services, making Sexual Assault Services a department of Bronson Battle Creek Hospital. This project is funded by Grant No. 20448-16V11 awarded to Bronson Battle Creek by the Michigan Crime Victim Services Commission. The agreement award of \$ 315,526 (80%) of the project, comes from the Federal Crime Victims Fund, established by the Victims of Crime Act of 1984 administered by the Office of Victims of Crime, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Bronson Battle Creek Hospital provides the required match valued at \$78,882 by the use of volunteers. Sexual Assault Services wishes to thank the Michigan Domestic Violence Sexual Assault Prevention and Treatment Board for their financial support of this project. This project was supported by Grant No. 99-WF-NX-0026 by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. (STOP GRANT) This project was supported by a Sexual Violence Prevention and Education Grant from the Michigan Department of Community Health, Centers for Disease Control. Sexual Assault Services receives an accredited center grant from the National Children's Alliance/MI Chapter of the NCA. Sexual Assault Services also receives in-kind support from Oaklawn Hospital and Crossroads Church and Ministries in Marshall, and St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Battle Creek. Sexual Assault Services is a United Way of the Battle Creek and Kalamazoo Region Community Solutions Partner. Other current funding sources include: The Marshall United Way, and the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Council. Donations have been received from the Battle Creek Kiwanis Club, Marshall Exchange Club, and many generous individuals and organizations.

**Assistance is available to Victims of Crime who wish to apply for Crime Victims Compensation. Visit the SAS Website: [www.sascc.net](http://www.sascc.net)**  
All Services are Free of Charge.