

THE ADVOCATE

Shining the light for the fight against Domestic Violence

From the Director's Desk: Taking Stock and Looking Ahead Volume 32, Issue 9

Summer, 2014

It still feels like summer as we prepare this newsletter. But, change is coming. The kids are back in school, and soon the leaves will turn. Autumn is in the air!

As I reflect back on the summer and take stock of the future, it is evident that we are at an important turning point. With your support, we have weathered storms and emerged under sunnier skies. This past year we focused on further stabilizing and improving our organization's operations, and we developed our first strategic plan to prioritize and guide our growth.

We are now ready to move forward in new and exciting directions. Or, to use boating analogy, we are charting new territory and

setting sail!

For example, we are:

 Partnering with Northampton County to open our first "satellite" office in Eastville

 Working to become the Eastern Shore's first sexual assault services provider

 Adding staff to improve our volunteer program, community outreach, and children's services

 Exploring options to purchase land so we can have some much-needed room to grow

And so, while the most visible thing you might have seen was the damage caused by a car crash at our office, it has been a very productive few months behind the scenes as we have evaluated service gaps and developed plans to address them.

Our new, temporary office is at 130 Market Street. I hope you will stop in to see us, and most importantly, please know that our progress would not be happening without you. We still have much to learn and much to do. I am honored to have all your hands on deck for the voyage ahead.

Cristi

Cristi Lawton, Executive Director
Maria Alfonso, Shelter Advocate
Kanasha Hall, Client Advocate
Michele Van Hove, Finance & Office Management Director
Meg Adams, Office Assistant
Jocelyn Marshall, Volunteer Assistant

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We are so grateful to those who donated from June through August:

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We provide the following services to Accomack and Northampton Counties:

- 24-Hour Hotline and Emergency Shelter
- Individual Counseling
- Safety Planning
- Crisis Intervention
- Support Groups
- Legal Advocacy and Referrals
- Prevention, Education, and Community Outreach Services

Our services are FREE and CONFIDENTIAL

Men, women, and children are eligible to receive services.

Shelter stay is not required to access other services.



ESCADV staff and volunteers participated in Drummontown United Methodist Church's Vacation Bible School in July by teaching kids about healthy relationships.



Volunteer Malissa Watterson helps children color "shields of self respect"

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month



This October will mark the 27th year of shedding light on an issue that affects everyone in this country, regardless of gender, race, age, sexual orientation or socioeconomic status.

According to the National Domestic Violence Hotline, 1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men 18 and older in the U.S. will experience intimate partner violence in their lifetime.

The demand for domestic violence crisis services continues to rise. In Virginia, the number of adults and children receiving services rose 4.3 percent from 2011-2012, according to the

Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance. Our numbers are also increasing on the Eastern Shore. From January through mid-September of last year (2013), we had 38 shelter clients and provided 2,274 nights of shelter. This year, from January through mid-September, we have had 54 shelter clients and provided 2,955 nights of shelter. This equates to a 14% increase in domestic violence shelter clients.

This statistic does not include 10 additional people we have sheltered so far this year for reasons other than domestic violence (if we have space and resources,

we also accept homeless families).

Although much has been done over the last 20 years to combat domestic violence, there is still much to do. From candlelight vigils to survivor art displays, there are thousands of activities across the U.S. each October that mourn those who have died from intimate partner violence and celebrate those who have survived.

No one deserves to be abused. Please take the time this October, and every month, to help ensure we can all live without fear of violence.

You can support ESCADV and Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM)

Show Your Purple Pride-- On Saturday, October 11th, stop by ESCADV's booth at the Onancock Market to receive a large purple bow. Hang your bow on your front door or business to show your support for domestic violence awareness. You can also stop by our office at 130 Market Street throughout October to pick up a bow.

Peace Begins at Home-- Purchase a "Peace Begins At Home" license plate at our local DMV. Proceeds will support Virginia's Building Healthy Futures Fund, which will help pay for violence prevention programs that educate Virginia's children about healthy relationships.

Empty Place at the Table-- Ask your favorite restaurant if they would like to be in-

cluded in our "Empty Place at the Table" campaign. An empty seat complete with a special place setting will represent victims who left an empty place at their table after their lives were tragically lost due to domestic violence. If your restaurant agrees to showcase the display, please contact us.

Purple at the Bakery--The Corner Bakery in Onancock will make yummy purple treats in October. Proceeds will benefit ESCADV. Contact us for sale dates.

Donation Drives - This is a great time to have a shelter donation drive in our honor. Give us a call for a complete list of donations needed.

Biz After Hours-- Join us for Biz After Hours at our office at 130 Market Street on

Wednesday, November 5th from 5 to 7 p.m. Biz After Hours is sponsored by the Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce and is a chance for you to meet and network with our staff, board members and volunteers. This event is open to everyone and will be our wrap-up event for Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

Ask us to do a presentation at your church, business or civic club. We will be presenting at NASA, the Onancock Rotary Club, the Eastern Shore Community College, Dining for Women, and Oceanview United Methodist Church during October. Let us know if we can speak with your group as well!



Why people stay in abusive relationships

Leaving can be complicated and dangerous

With the video released of the knock-out punch Ray Rice planted on his then-fiancé's face, many are asking why she has not left the relationship. This much publicized case involving one of the NFL's best running backs is a good opportunity to educate others about why it can be so difficult to leave abusive relationships.

But, let's be honest: it is normal to have an immediate negative reaction when we see people return or stay in abusive relationships. We feel confused, impatient, and think "Just leave!" The reality is that our society has not yet come to terms with the complex dynamics of abusive relationships.

Below are some common reasons why people might stay, along with real quotes from survivors from a recent Twitter Campaign: "#WhyIStayed".

Attachment. It can be very hard to leave when you have invested a lot of time and energy in the relationship. "I loved him."

Fear. Abusers often threaten that they will hurt the person, their children, a pet, a family member/friend or themselves. Over 70% of domestic violence murders happen after the victim has left the relationship. "She told me she'd kill herself if I left." "I thought he would kill me."

Low self-esteem. Abusers may call their partner names, put them down and play mind games. Victims often believe that the abuse is their fault. "I kept telling myself if he didn't hit me, it wasn't

abuse."

"I didn't believe I deserved better."

"I was afraid of facing the future alone."

Lack of resources. People may not leave because they are scared that they will not be able to support themselves.

"Since I left, my son and I have been homeless twice." "There was no money to get out."

Children. Survivors may not want to "break up" the family or may be afraid that the abuser will take the children away or hurt them.

"She was the mother of our kids, and I didn't want them to grow up in a broken home like I did."

"I stayed because he said he would take my daughter, and no one would believe me."

Control. Victims often think that they can control their partner's abusive behavior by doing exactly what s/he wants.

"He isn't a bad person...it's my fault. If I just did everything the way he asked, it would be fine."

Hope for change. Abusers often promise that they will change and that the abuse will not happen again. "I thought I could change him."

Pressure from friends and family. Friends and family may not be supportive. "The hard part was people brushing it off, because they didn't think it was in his character."

"I stayed because I was told queer people of color aren't abusive. Don't air our dirty laundry. We're attacked

enough already."

Cultural or religious constraints. There are often strong beliefs that keep people from leaving.

"I stayed because my pastor told me that God hates divorce. It didn't cross my mind that God might hate abuse, too."

Family background. A family history of abuse is a strong indicator for future unhealthy relationships.

"I stayed because he treated me just like my dad treated my mother."

Guilt and Shame. Survivors often don't want others to know that they are being abused.

"I was too embarrassed to admit what was happening. Strong, independent women don't get tortured."

Isolation. Many abusers isolate their partner from her/his friends and family in order to gain more control. By the time they decide they want to leave, he or she may feel like they have no one to turn to and no where to go.

"I burned every bridge to be with that person."

One survivor summed up her experience by saying, "Leaving was not an event. It was a process."

Our parting thought is this: Perhaps the blame and burden should be redirected to the abuser and the question we should all be asking instead is "Why do they abuse someone they claim to love?"



How to help a friend or family member

If someone you know is being abused, here are some tips for what to do and say:

- **Listen and be supportive.** Don't be afraid to let them know your concerns. Let them know you want to help.
- **Acknowledge that they are in a very scary, difficult situation.** Let them know the abuse is not their fault. Listen to them, believe them, and encourage them to express their feelings. Don't be judgmental. Let them know that you are concerned about their safety.
- **Respect their choices.** Let them find their own way to decisions. Don't start with what you think they should do or insist that they take your advice.
- **Provide encouragement.** Help them identify the abusive behavior. Give them information about our services.

Follow the conversation:



#WhyIStayed
#WhyILeft

wish list

Thank you for considering our shelter needs:

Paper and Cleaning Products.

We are always in need of toilet paper, paper towels, and household cleaning supplies.

Stuff we can't always get at the FoodBank.

Coffee, tea, sugar, creamer, condiments, fresh produce and chocolate (chocolate makes everything seem better!)

Newborn supplies.

We have THREE newborn babies at our shelter plus one pregnant first-time mom. We could use help with diapers, baby clothes, and other baby supplies.



Volunteers at ESCADV are unpaid, but certainly NOT underappreciated! Be a part of our dynamic and growing team by giving your time and talents to make a positive difference in the lives domestic violence survivors.

We are currently recruiting volunteers to help with client transportation needs. If you have a car, a good driving record, and are willing to travel, we need you! You will help clients get to important appointments when the bus is not a practical option. Mileage reimbursement offered. Criminal background check and 20 hours of training required.

Contact ESCADV at 787-1329 to learn more.

From crisis to confidence: survivors move on, and you can help them succeed

Your old household items can be part of someone's new beginning

From June through August, we had six clients, with a total of seven children, move from shelter to new, safe housing. Four were able to access new "rapid rehousing" funds as part of the Homeless Solutions Program grant that was awarded to our local continuum of care, Community Partners of the Eastern Shore.

However, they all started from scratch, with little or

nothing to set up their new homes.



You can help these clients and the ones who will be

moving in the future make a fresh start. Please consider donating your gently used household items and furniture and/or making a special financial gift designated for "client transitions".

We can arrange to pick up furniture and your donation is tax-deductible. Please contact us at 787-1329 to learn more and donate.



Thank you Girl Scouts Virginia Ross, Branham James and Yeats James of Troop 1456 build a Children's Playhouse for our shelter!



"Thank you for giving the Girl Scouts a chance to work with your wonderful organization. The girls each have a huge feeling of pride knowing that they are bringing joy to the children who stay at the shelter." -Jennifer Ross, mother of Virginia Ross

Thank you John Callendar, Laura Lucas, Malissa Watterson, Susan Weir and Casey Weir for all your help during our temporary office move!

Right: Our "pod cast" of amazing volunteers clean out our storage pod as part of our office move.





Survivors chart new courses; build new lives

We gather A LOT of statistics about our work, and we have included some in the sidebar to the right. They give a good overview of the positive difference we make. But in looking over the 8-page report we most commonly run, the numbers that stand out and speak most clearly of our success is in the report section called “Exit Plans”. When survivors leave our shelter, we record where they are going. This

is called their “Exit Plan.” I am thrilled to report that **so far this year, and to the best of our knowledge, none of our shelter clients returned back to a home with an abuser present.** 1 returned home where the abuser was no longer present; 2 left the area; 8 moved in with non-abusing friends or relatives; 6 moved into self-supported housing; 1 moved into transitional housing; and 2 were unknown (they departed before we could complete the

exit interview).

These statistics reflect our hard work; our clients’ hard work; and our abiding belief that with time, compassion, empowerment, and adequate resources, survivors can and do move on to better lives. One mother who moved into her new home this summer summed it up: *“You helped me and my daughter have a fresh start.”*



Moving Forward: ESCADV adds new programs, staff, Board Members and looks to expand in Accomack and Northampton

The sad reality is that increased services for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault are needed. The good news is that ESCADV is working hard to expand services to meet community needs.

We are reaching out to underserved populations in Northampton. We now have emergency shelter options available in Northampton. In addition, we are partnering with the County to establish a new “satellite” office in Eastville. A new Client Services Advocate will be hired soon and will be based at the office 2 days per week to provide counseling, outreach and legal

advocacy services.

We are working to become a sexual assault resources provider. Currently, there are no providers on the Eastern Shore, which arguably makes our region the most underserved in the state. We are working to secure funding and training needed to provide sexual assault counseling and related services.

We are expanding our volunteer recruitment, community outreach and children’s services. A new full-time staff position will help us ensure that we have adequate volunteers, that we do more to educate and engage the community, and that we work more

closely with the children in our shelter.

We are adding Board Members. Our active and engaged Board now includes Bel Holden, Human Resources Manager at Perdue, and Arventa Smith, Employment Service Manager at the Virginia Employment Commission.

We hope to expand our office. We are exploring options to acquire land adjacent to our office at 155 Market Street in Onancock. Additional space for counseling, children’s services, and donations is needed.

Your Support at Work: January 1—August 31

Hotline calls: 77

Total Sheltered: 64
Adults: 30
Children: 34

Total Nights of Shelter: 3,272

Advocacy: 88 clients and over 1,600+ hours

Community Engagement Activities: 80+



ESCADV DONORS
In the Spotlight



Generous support from the Arthur W. Perdue Foundation will help ESCADV provide sexual assault services and increased outreach to children and the community.



Ocean View United Methodist Church in Wachapreague has been a loyal monthly donor for a long time. They are a small but mighty congregation!



Support from Walmart will be used for community outreach and education this year.

Non-Profit Org.

U.S. Postage

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**Eastern Shore Coalition
Against Domestic Violence
(ESCADV)**

P.O. Box 3
Onancock, VA 23417

Phone: 757-787-1329
Toll Free: 877-787-1329
Hearing Impaired: 757-787-0928
Email: escadvoffice@escadv.com

We're on the web!

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This issue of *The Advocate* is dedicated in honor of Evelyn Ray, our former Office Manager who recently retired after 17+ years at ESCADV. It is also dedicated in memory of A'janae Jones, who passed away this summer and was the granddaughter of ESCADV employee Jocelyn Marshall.



Above: Board President Peaches Dodge hugs Evelyn Ray at her retirement party.



Right: A'janae Jones was so loved, and our thoughts and prayers are with her family.



YOU can provide a safe harbor for those in need of safety

The most dangerous time for a survivor of domestic violence and their children is when they try to leave an abusive relationship. Your support helps provide a safe place for survivors to regroup, recover, and rebuild their lives.

YES! I will support ESCADV's work to provide safety and end domestic violence in our community.

Enclosed is my donation of \$ _____

Name: _____ Address: _____
Phone: _____ Email: _____

This gift is made in honor/memory of: _____

Please send an "In Honor" card to them at the following address:

Please contact me, I am interested in learning more and being involved.