

VICTIM ADVOCATE

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Issue 53



This Month: Domestic Violence Awareness and a word from VOVCA Director Janet Doev

Victims of Violent Crimes Advocates coordinate probono legal representation



Victims of Violent Crimes Advocates

Victims of Violent Crimes Advocates is a statewide not-for-profit organization that specializes in helping victims of violent crimes navigate the justice system, know their rights, and connect them with support networks that will help them through one of the most difficult times in their life.



Albany County Bar Association President Walter Barry begins conference

In light of the recent budget cuts announced by the Office of the Albany County Executive many victims of violent crimes who cannot afford their own legal representation will face extended delays in receiving a public defender.

Victims of Violent Crimes Advocates will immediately begin connecting victims with probono lawyers.

VOVCA is coordinating with the Office of the Albany County Executive and the Albany County Bar Association to provide the probono legal representation to the victims of violent crimes after county budget cuts has resulted in unavoidable furloughs.

These layoffs have severely limited the public defender's office ability to provide timely service to an ever increasing caseload.

"Given the recent budget cuts here in Albany County we at the Albany County Bar Association know it is imperative for victims of crime to have legal representation" said Jennifer Lee, Vice President of the Albany County Bar Association. Albany County Executive Ben Smith was in attendance at the press conference announcing this partnership and was unable to give a timetable as to when the furloughs would be ended, especially for an office as important as the public defender.

"There is no date in mind as of now, but we are doing everything we can to make sure residents get the services they need." Smith said.

Until the furloughs are cancelled timely legal representation can be reached through VOVCA at 518.444.1234 or at the website, www.vovca.org.

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Survivors Alexis Coffey and Katherine Isaacs offer advice to future survivors



Alexis Coffey speaks at conference with Katherine Isaacs (far right)

Albany police say it was one of the most harrowing incidents in recent memory. While walking to her car after leaving work 20 year old Alexis Coffey was assaulted and nearly kidnapped by two male

assailants. Coffey managed to fight off her attackers and escape with minor injuries. The perpetrators were apprehended and were recently convicted.

Coffey credits her attendance

at a recent safety seminar for her ability to escape.

“I had just recently taken a RAD class that Albany County offered and I’m so glad I did because it saved my life”.

Coffey is talking about the Rape Aggression Defense program that Albany County has been offering to local schools, businesses, and other organizations. It provides basic self-defense instruction to women so that they may protect themselves better.

After the attempted abduction and police report Coffey was told about Victims of Violent Crimes Advocates.

“I didn’t even know where to start. VOVCA was there for me the whole way. I would have been

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VOVCA Director Janet Doev speaks on Domestic Violence Awareness



VOVCA Director Janet Doev

On July 12th 1986 while walking home from a night on the town with my friends and former law school classmates the unthinkable happened. I was assaulted by my fiancé at the time, a man I had come to trust, who I lived with, and I had never expected to harm me.

This experience forever changed the way I viewed the world and after a number of other incidents

that summer and fall I finally had him arrested. I had taken so long to report this abuse because it was from someone I cared about, someone I trusted, and I truly thought at the time that each assault would be the last.

I was a junior prosecutor when the proceedings occurred and even with my education and experience the ordeal was overwhelming. It was because of this that the idea for VOVCA began.

Domestic violence happens, and it happens to people you know. It is whether or not they reach for help that could determine the outcome of that violence. Awareness is key and if you know someone who may be a victim of domestic abuse you should never ignore the signs. VOVCA is a great resource if you determine abuse is occurring.



Survivors Alexis Coffey and Katherine Isaacs offer advice to future survivors

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lost without them.”

Survivor Katherine Isaacs has since attended a R.A.D course through Albany County but at the time of her assault she had never heard of the program.

“I was completely naïve. I told myself that something like what happened to me would never happen to me. I had zero awareness and was completely unprepared”.

Isaacs was a victim of a brutal home invasion and assault in 2010. Isaacs was hospitalized for three weeks for extensive head trauma

and internal injuries. She had to undergo three surgeries. The assailants were eventually identified, arrested, and convicted.

“When I finally came to I had no memory of what happened. An Albany cop put me in touch with VOVCA and they helped me every step of the way. More than anything else they helped me survive the devastating aftermath of my assault. It is because of them that I can stand here with confidence and call myself a survivor.”

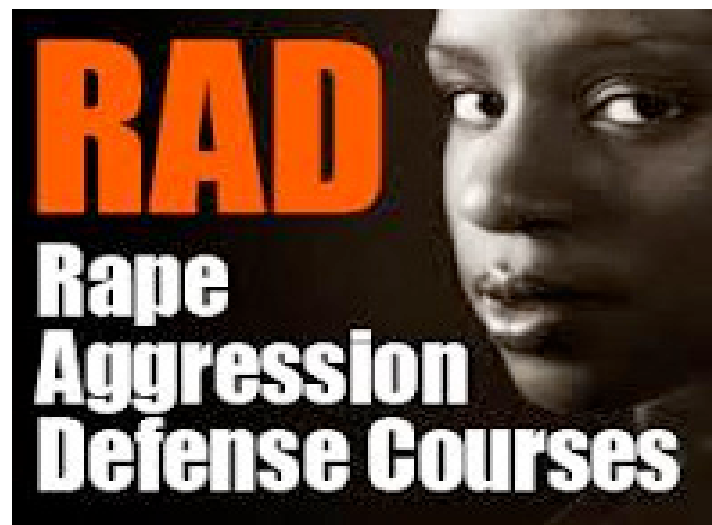
Both survivors attended a recent convention hosted by VOVCA

in which they spoke about the necessity for awareness, personal responsibility and a proactive approach to personal safety.

“It’s in your hands. Seriously, look at Alexis and what she did with training and awareness. If I had known then what I know now I never would have been so complacent.” Isaacs said.

The Albany County Rape Aggression Defense program is a sponsor of VOVCA and is highly recommended for those looking for an introduction to self-defense.

Partners in Outreach




RAD
Rape
Aggression
Defense Courses



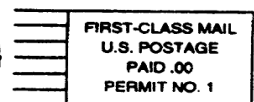
SHINE THE LIGHT ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE!

October is
 Domestic Violence
 Awareness Month

OPDV

Fighting Crime,  *Building Hope.*

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