



KDVA UPDATE

Newsletter of the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association - Spring/Summer 2006

Legislative Update: News from the 2006 Kentucky General Assembly

On April 12, the 2006 Kentucky General Assembly adjourned sine die, ending just over three months of legislative activity. Over 1000 bills were introduced resulting in over 250 new laws including the FY 2007-08 state budget.

**By Sherry Currens
KDVA Executive Director**

On April 12, the 2006 Kentucky General Assembly adjourned sine die, ending just over three months of legislative activity. Over 1000 bills were introduced resulting in over 250 new laws including the FY 2007-08 state budget. The General Assembly considered several bills of interest to KDVA, including:

The state budget bill, HB 380, includes an additional \$ 675,000 per year of the biennium (\$45,000 per program) for Kentucky's 15 state-funded domestic violence programs. This is the first new state money that Kentucky domestic violence programs have received since 2000. The budget also includes pilot project funding for a domestic violence shelter in Madison County and debt service on \$1 million in bond funding to cover capital construction debt for The Center for Women and Families in Louisville.

Another highlight of the session was HB 537. This bill establishes a funding mechanism for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund that will generate at least 4.3 million per year of the upcoming biennium. These funds, along with \$500,000 per year from the Kentucky Housing Corporation, will be used to develop low-income housing. Funding for the trust fund has been vulnerable since 2003 when the General Assembly diverted its funding source – unclaimed lottery proceeds – to education.

Over 40 Kentucky organizations, including KDVA, supported HB 270 which would have required school districts to adopt anti-bullying policies and procedures for handling bullying, including formulating a disciplinary code that prohibited bullying and set out procedures for handling complaints. Under HB 270, sponsored by Representative Mike Cherry, students who bully, harass or intimidate other students would have been subject to suspension, expulsion or other appropriate action. Despite last minute efforts by the House of Representatives to revive the legislation, Senate

opponents, arguing that the bill was unnecessary, were able to stop the bill.

SB 11 would have created a new section of KRS Chapter 509 defining the crime of human trafficking and punishing it as a Class B felony. Trafficking, for both labor and the sex trade, is a growing problem in Kentucky and this bill, introduced by Senator David Boswell, would have made it easier to prosecute traffickers. The bill passed the Senate and the House (after being significantly weakened by a House Committee substitute) but time ran out before the two chambers could reach agreement on a final version.

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Women's Crisis Center Named Outstanding Non-Profit

Women's Crisis Center (WCC) was recently given the "Outstanding Non-Profit" Award by the Maysville-Mason County Area Chamber of Commerce. This was the first year for the award, which was voted on by Chamber members. The celebration was held on January 28 at the Chamber's Taking Care of Business awards ceremony honoring chamber organizations and their employees for exceptional service. "It's not a matter of who wins, there are no losers in this crowd," remarked Chamber Executive Director John D. Carpenter.



Other nominees for the Outstanding Non-Profit Award included the Museum Center and the Maysville Players. The award was accepted by Buffalo Trace Director Shari Stafford, who noted the extraordinary competition and commented, "It's really an honor just to be nominated along with this group."

"It's wonderful to be recognized by community business leaders and organizations for the services we provide to victims of domestic violence, rape and sexual abuse," said Executive Director, Kim Adams. WCC would like to thank the Maysville-Mason County Area Chamber of Commerce for organizing this event and for acknowledging what our community has to offer!

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President's Report

Lisa Holmes, KDVA President

By the time readers receive this publication, the state budget will likely be old news. Originally several years ago, the state made a commitment to fund one primary domestic violence shelter provider in each of the fifteen (15) area development districts. In Fiscal Year 1996, state General Funds allocated per resident day was \$42.51. In 2005, General Funds allocated per resident day was \$33.41. So, we have experienced a \$20.80 deficit per resident day. Yet the numbers of residential clients served continues to climb each year. Last year alone, programs received 32,422 domestic violence related calls and provided shelter to 3,916 victims of domestic violence. Yet we haven't seen an increase in funding since 2000.



Lisa Holmes
KDVA Board President

“Victims of domestic violence and their dependent children do not receive their fair share of the bounty we so liberally give to others. It is past time for a responsible re-distribution of General Funds.”

I had the opportunity to be in Frankfort several times this session speaking to Legislators and Senators regarding the growing numbers of clients we serve not only in our shelters, but also those clients who must continue to live at home with abusers. For these clients the services we provide become essential to their safety and existence. May victims need and will receive legal advocacy, counseling or appropriate referrals for services. When I heard that it costs approximately \$7,000,000.00 to pave one mile of road, or up to \$14,000,000.00 (if the road is hilly), I was dumbfounded. While I agree that roads are important. We are still talking about asphalt for goodness sakes. I know the song. If we don't have a good highway system, tourism dollars shrink. Restaurant and other service tax dollars

are lost. And, we Kentuckians pride ourselves on being great ambassadors, making travelers feel welcomed and appreciated, catering to every need by offering a wide array of accommodations, wonderful food and entertainment.

There is something a little wrong when the most vulnerable people in this Commonwealth are not as cared for. Victims of domestic violence and their dependent children do not receive their fair share of the bounty we so liberally give to others. It is past time for a responsible re-distribution of General Funds. Until shelter programs receive more General Fund

money we will not be able to provide all that victims and their children deserve. Lives will be lost and destroyed. At what cost? I think about seven million would help.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lisa Holmes".

Legislative Update (continued from pg. 1)

HB 115, introduced by Representative Stan Lee, would have authorized certified peace officers to enforce U. S. immigration laws and prohibit police agencies from prohibiting their officers from doing so. KDVA testified against the legislation, fearing that the bill, if passed, would stop victims of domestic violence from reporting abuse for fear of deportation. The bill made it out of the House Judiciary Committee but died after being recommitted to House Appropriations.

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KDVA Update is published by the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association. The KDVA works to provide a strong, statewide voice on behalf of domestic violence victims and their children by administering state and federal funds to fifteen of Kentucky's domestic violence programs serving as Primary Service Providers in the Area Development Districts, promoting public awareness, operating a Certification Program for domestic violence staff, and, among other things, advocating for state legislative initiatives to increase protection for domestic violence victims and their dependent children.

The KDVA provides networking opportunities for those helping fight domestic violence, provides legal assistance to domestic violence programs and attorneys representing domestic violence victims, and helps promote public awareness of domestic violence.

Kentucky Asset Success Initiative returns \$3.8 million to three communities through free tax-preparation: OASIS and Bethany House are part of effort; about 3,200 tax filers helped through 25 sites in 12 counties

By Mary O'Doherty
KASI Project Director

The Kentucky Asset Success Initiative (KASI) helped about 3,200 people file their taxes this year. More than a third of the families claimed the Earned Income Tax Credit.

Charlotte Tribble, executive director of Bethany House Abuse Shelter Inc. in Somerset managed the Lake Cumberland Asset Building Coalition. Linda Welch, director of non-residential services at OASIS in Owensboro, was on the coordinating committee for the Owensboro Asset Building Coalition. Linda also managed a tax-preparation site at OASIS.

The three tax-preparation projects help low and moderate-income families save about \$100 that they ordinarily might have paid to tax preparers. Equally important, the sites kept the families from being tempted by high-interest refund anticipation loans pushed by paid tax-preparers. Those cost an average of \$90 each.

The projects also ensure tax filers claim the Earned Income Tax Credit. Considered the country's largest and most effective anti-poverty program by many advocates for the poor, the tax credit puts more money in the pockets of low-income people each year than TANF, the federal anti-poverty program.

The effect on Kentucky's economy is hard to overstate. One of every five Kentucky taxpayers claims the federal credit, which typically results in a refund of \$1,000 to \$4,400. Most recipients spend the money in their local communities.

In spite of the tax credit's obvious advantages, thousands of Kentuckians – as many as 15 percent of all eligible filers, according to IRS estimates – fail each year to claim the EITC.

In the Lake Cumberland area, the Bethany House Abuse Center teamed up with AARP volunteers to provide the service. In Owensboro, OASIS was part of a community-wide coalition that served taxpayers at nine sites, one of which was at OASIS.

(continued on page 4)...

DV COUNCIL LOSES DEDICATED MEMBER

By The Laurel Co. Family Violence Prevention Council

In Memory of Sandy Owens



In 1998 the LCFVPC formed and has since flourished into a well-established local symbol of domestic violence prevention and awareness. Members volunteer their time, ideas and efforts to spread the word that violence should not be tolerated in our community.

The Laurel County Family Violence Prevention Council recently lost a very valuable member on December 7, 2005. Sandy Owens came on board with our council in 2002. She was employed at the time of her death by the Family Life Abuse Center in Mt. Vernon, KY as an Educational Outreach Advocate. Sandy had been part of the shelter staff for approximately four years. She was a passionate, caring person who worked tirelessly to combat domestic violence by speaking to various organizations, clubs and individuals whose concern was to end the horrific violence inflicted upon many families each and every day.

Sandy was something quite special to those who knew her. When you met Sandy she would immediately put you at ease as though she had known you for a lifetime. She had a gift of "gab" some might say. She was always the one from our council volunteering or being appointed to go visit local radio stations to do Public Service Announcements about DV, signing up to speak with local business owners when our council was trying to fundraise or get items donated for special events. She had a tremendous list of contacts within the community from which she could easily obtain support and assistance for the shelter, victims and our local council. She truly could make people believe in her cause and convince them wholeheartedly that they were doing a worthwhile, priceless thing to contribute to that cause.

A few months prior to her death a local church was so inspired by her presentation that one of their women's groups chose to "adopt" the shelter in Mt. Vernon as an ongoing ministry. Not only was Sandy knowledgeable in the subject of domestic violence she was deeply concerned for the welfare of the many victims she came into daily contact with. Sandy Owens was selfless and 100% dedicated to the fight against domestic violence. She always put her victims and her work before everything else in her life. Sandy Owens will be sadly missed. The victims she served, as well as our council were truly blessed to have her on our side during her time here with us, working night and day toward a common goal, ending domestic violence.

KASI Initiative (continued from pg. 3)

Nevertheless, many Kentucky communities are losing out because thousands of families don't claim the credit or lost part of it to fees and loans.

The EITC was created in 1975 and has been expanded by both Republican and Democratic presidents because it is so effective at moving low-income families out of poverty and into the middle class.

The Center of Budget and Policy Priorities in Washington, D.C., which analyzes policies affecting low-income families, says multiple studies show that the tax credit has:

- Substantially increased the proportion of single mothers who work.
- Dramatically reduced the number of children in poverty.
- Moved many families from welfare to work by effectively increasing their wages by nearly \$2 an hour.

KASI coordinated three tax-preparation projects; two of them involved KDVA programs. Charlotte Tribble, executive director of Bethany House in Somerset ran a program with the AARP that served Pulaski, Casey, Wayne, McCreary and Russell counties. OASIS in Owensboro played a leadership role in the Owensboro-Daviess County Asset-Building Coalition. In eastern Kentucky, Hazard-Perry County Community Ministries coordinated a coalition of agencies, including LKLP, and the Owsley County Action Team in Boonesville. KDVA is the fiscal agent of KASI.



Who Qualifies?

The Earned Income Tax Credit can boost the returns of low-income filers by as much as \$4,536. Taxpayers with two or more children who earn as much as \$36,348 qualify. A taxpayer who earns \$32,000 and has one child qualifies, while a taxpayer with no children must earn no more than \$12,120 to qualify.

KASI is one of more than 40 projects funded through the Annie E. Casey Foundation's National Tax Assistance for Working Families Campaign. The Center for Women and Families is involved with the Louisville Asset-Building Coalition, which has been supported by the Casey foundation since 2002.

KDVA Staff News:



Sara Ouellette - Vagina Warrior and Battered Woman's Advocate for over 4 years is KDVA's new Resource/ Training Coordinator. Sara will be working to manage and maintain the clearinghouse along with assisting in providing training across the state. She is a graduate of Eastern Kentucky University and comes to us after having worked at the YWCA Spouse Abuse Center and Chrysalis House Inc. in Lexington, Kentucky. Welcome Sara.

Kristi Abner - Is a native of Kentucky. She and her 5 adopted children live on their Paint Horse farm in Harrodsburg, KY. She is working with Karen Clark as the new Accounting Assistant. She attended Midway College with her focus on Business and Child Development.



SPECIAL THEME ISSUE

Women in Prison / Women's Justice

I have had the amazing privilege to work with and meet 13 women that are or were serving prison sentences for killing their abusers. They have shared with me over the years their stories of tragedy, attempted escapes, and years filled with fear, control and torture. Through all the stories and layers of abuse the survivor in each one of them has remained. Our hope was that one day justice would finally be served and someone would hear their cries for mercy. The Patton administration in 2003 was petitioned to review these cases and grant clemency. This did not happen and once again the women struggled to hold onto hope. Although we have been able to celebrate the release of four of the women, nine remain. We as a community can restore justice for the remaining women.

KDVA has worked to support women in prison who have been victims of Domestic Violence since 1995. We know that 90% of women in prison have experience violence in their lives. We have created resources and support networks and will continue to provide advocacy for women who have been silenced by injustice. The Kentucky Domestic Violence Association supports the release of the women and asks you to get involved and help these mothers, grandmothers, daughters, sisters and friends receive the justice that is long overdue.

Christy Burch-Epperson
Advocate, KDVA

I was first exposed to the plight of women in prison in 1988 when I was invited to attend a workshop at the Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women (KCIW) hosted by the Family Enlightenment Group, a prison support group. The women in the group were domestic violence survivors and had arranged for Sue Ostoff, then Program Coordinator for the National Clearinghouse in the Defense of Battered Women in Philadelphia and a local attorney to talk about domestic violence and crimes that were abuse-related.

I will never forget that sobering experience. While the Warden of KCIW at the time, Betty Kassuleke, and the correction officer sponsor of the group, Vel Montgomery, were incredibly supportive, it was very difficult to listen to the stories of women inmates, who, after years of battering, had resorted to injuring or killing their abusers and had then received long prison sentences.

Unfortunately, too many domestic violence victims –whether through overwhelming fear, lack of resources, lack of knowledge about resources, or failure of law enforcement and the courts to take battering seriously – find the violence escalating until they believe that their only alternative is to fight back. According to the research, there is demographically no difference between battered women who resort to violence and those who don't. Older women, younger women, poor women, wealthy women, women with and without children, and women of all races, colors and creeds use violence equally in response to battering. The only indicator of when a woman will use deadly force in response to being abused is the level of violence. As violence escalates, battered women are more likely to fight back.

KDVA believes that supporting battered women who have killed or injured their partners is an important part of our mission. KDVA was active in efforts to pursue clemency for the battered women in prison whose sentences were commuted by Governor Jones in 1995 and continues to work with the Office of Public Advocacy on clemency issues. While KDVA does not support the use of violence, it does support the victims of domestic violence who have used violence because they believed it was necessary to protect themselves and, in many cases, their children.

Sherry Currens
Director, KDVA

Happened by Patriarchy: Women in Prison

by Temima Fruchte

“Females are secondary.”

This statement, made in 1998 by Andrew Winston, the chairman of the Virginia Board of Corrections, essentially sums up the position of women in the larger scheme of the U.S. prison hierarchy. Winston conceded that this is the unfortunate case in terms of the design of many American prisons and inmate services. Most of these services, he stated at the 1998 Friends of Incarcerated Women conference, are built to benefit males.

Because of this still-true case of nationwide neglect, such things as “male guards touching prisoners’ breasts and genitals during daily pat-down and strip searches, watching women as they shower and dress and...selling women to male inmates for sex” were cited as being “common practice” by

a 1999 Report by Amnesty International entitled “Not Part of My Sentence: Violations of the Human Rights of Women in Custody.”

And, reports Amnesty International, sexual abuse and harassment are not the only things women prisoners have to deal with—and are not protected from—on a daily basis. Women prisoners are also subjected to inadequate and often abusive medical “care,” unnecessary separation from children, lesser access to facilities and privilege that male prisoners might have, and, in some cases, unnecessarily harsh measures such as extended isolation and restraints.

What follows are just a few notable facts and statistics gleaned from articles written within the last four years—including the relatively comprehensive Amnesty report—on the treatment and conditions of women in prison in the United States.

**from Off Our Backs (Feb 2001)
Reprinted with permission**

- Between 1985 and 1997, the number of women in prison more than tripled to a total of 138,000 women.
- The rapid increase of female incarceration is primarily a result of the war on drugs which was launched in the 1980s. The number of women sentenced to state prisons for drug crimes increased tenfold between 1986 and 1996.
- The most common type of crime that women have been imprisoned for in recent years is violation of laws prohibiting the possession of sale of drugs. Women are rarely imprisoned for violent crimes, and much less so than incarcerated men.
- As of 1999, the rate of imprisonment of black women was more than eight times the rate of the imprisonment of white women. The rate of imprisonment of Hispanic women at this time also exceeded that of white women, by almost four times. The “war on drugs,” specifically, has had an impact on minority women disproportionately more significant than that on white women.
- As of 1999, there were estimated to be more than 80,000 mothers among the women in prison and jail, with approximately 200,000 children under 18 years of age.
- The majority of women in prison:
 - Are incarcerated for nonviolent crimes
 - Are mothers and are incarcerated at great distance from their children
 - Are more likely to suffer from HIV and mental illness than men
- More than a third of women in state prisons and jails reported that they were physically or sexually abused as children, twice the rate of abuse reported by all women. The rate of reported child abuse for incarcerated men is far lower than that for women, but about double that of the general male population.
- More than 36% of women inmates reported that they had been abused sexually or physically by age 17. Studies conducted among the general population found that 12 to 17 percent had been abused as children.
- Nearly 50% of women in prison, jail, or on probation had been physically abused at any age compared with 10% of men.
- One third of women in state prisons said they had been raped before they were incarcerated.
- More than half of women inmates who reported abuse had been abused by spouses or boyfriends.
- According to a 1997 survey of 52 Departments of Corrections, only 27 of them reported providing substance abuse programs tailored to women; only 19 provided domestic violence programs; and only 9 provided women’s health education.
- According to Human Rights Watch, lesbian and transgendered prisoners are often targeted for sexual abuse.
- Incidents of the sexual abuse of female inmates by prison officials are not often reported—victims fear retaliation by officials, and such retaliation has been documented. While international standards for humane treatment of prisoners call for mostly female supervision of female inmates, most women’s prisons in the US employ male guards and do not monitor or establish restrictions regarding treatment of women prisoners by male guards. As a consequence, touching and viewing of female prisoners’ bodies by male jail and prison officials is permitted under US law.
- Seventy percent of those who guard women prisoners are men. In Canada, 91 percent of guards in women’s prisons are women.
- A woman prisoner who is the victim of abusive or improper treatment by male guards cannot legitimately use prison or jail complaints procedures unless this harmful treatment transgresses the standards of that specific jail or prison.
- The 1999 Amnesty report cites numerous examples of pregnant women, women in labor, and women giving birth being shackled to their beds, in many cases unable even to roll over in an attempt to lessen their discomfort.
- In 1997, 3.5% of women State prisoners were HIV positive compared to 2.2% of male State prisoners.
- The health care of women in prison is inadequate in light of such statistics. In a 1996 national survey of jail inmates, fewer than half of the women (only 47%) had received even a basic medical examination upon admittance to the facility. There are also limited mental health resources for women.
- As of 1999, there were about ten times as many women in U.S. prisons and jails as there were in Western European countries.

In the following pages we are presenting some of the writing, poetry and artwork done by women in prison. Please take the time to hear their stories and voices...

TEACHING THE WORLD ABOUT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

by Antoinette

We are not asking for money. We are asking for your support, for your voice. This is not an attempt to change the world in a day. The world will not change with only one person. Unity is what is needed to make a difference. This is a human being trying to connect with people who do not necessarily understand Domestic Violence. For all of the women that are involved in this unique project, it is very hard to open up to people we have never met. In life bad choices will be made, but how you come out of that situation is what matters.

"Failure is just a way for our lives to show us we're moving in the wrong direction, that we should try something different."

"The same questions follow every woman through girlhood and

adolescence: Can I really do this? Will I get it right? Am I okay?

The quote, "you use a metal nutcracker to crack open a nut," comes to mind. To open up our hearts and mouths the DPA and KDVA used their love and support. We want to be viewed as human beings not criminals. Each one of us has a name. We are all SURVIVORS!

In life, changes will come, some good, some bad. You have to learn to make the best of every situation that comes your way. My name is Antoinette Johnson and I have always been pessimistic about everything.

The day I learned to view things positively was the worst day of my life. The day I was convicted of manslaughter in the first degree. Any person would say that they would stay positive if they were faced with this situation. I beg to differ. Emotionally I felt drained. I felt lost, afraid, and my spirits were broken. I had a lot of times where I was completely clueless as to what my future held.

Sometimes I sit and think of all the things I have done in life, and realize I did not turn out the way I had planned. I can honestly tell you that the saying, "You live and you learn," could not be truer. As human beings we make mistakes to later find the correct way to go about things.

I made a mistake that cost me years of my life. I see where I went wrong in some situations. In others I still have not figured everything out yet. The advice I would give is to never take the law into your own hands.

I'm not some expert with fancy degrees, but I can tell you this—if a person hits you once in your relationship, that person will do it again. It may not be the same day, week, month, or even year. It will slowly sneak up on you when you least expect it. Not unless it has happened so often that you can see it before it comes.

(continued on page 8)...



Teaching the World... (continued from pg. 7)

To a person who has never experienced abuse it is easy to say, "leave." It would be the best way to get away from the abuser. Unfortunately, sometimes leaving is not an option. This is coming from someone who has experience, and can actually feel your pain.

The abused person has to learn to speak up, It may be too hard to just walk away. You can talk to someone you feel comfortable talking to and do not be afraid to share your problems. I promise the more you use your voice the easier it will be to get out when the opportunity comes.

There is someone who will listen and not get tired or be mad at you, because you have not left yet. There are people who care about you that have never met you. Domestic violence is not funny to them. They happen to take it very seriously. When the police do not listen or your friends and loved ones turn their backs on you, there is someone who will be there. Domestic Violence Shelters and Hotlines are always available.

I used to have dreams of being a teacher, a singer, and a lot of other things. Now I just dream of being alive. Today I look into the eyes of my friends, some people I have never met, some that I have touched and do not even know it, some that remind me of myself, and most if not all that will live in my memories forever. I am a victim of domestic violence and I am not ashamed.

It can be hard to break away from an abusive relationship. Especially when your other half is your lifeline so to speak. If you have children in common look at them and think where would he or she be without me? Will he or she be the next victim of this madman?

Abuse can affect a female child differently than a male. For instance, abuse can affect a little girl in a way that will make her think that being abused is normal. She could grow up and go through the same abuse that you have experienced. A little boy could think it is okay to mimic behavior learned from inside the home. He could become the abuser.

Look into a mirror. Your choices can mold your children's lives. Imagine your loved one as the abuser and possibly losing their lives, because the victim stood up for him or herself and fought back making a non-repairable mistake. You have to look at domestic violence from all angles. It can affect more than just you.

The adults of today make the future. It is our voices that are heard and leave impressions on younger, confused, and intelligent minds. We are all survivors. I stand here today proving that all negative things can be turned into positives.

There's life after death, a healing after an unbearable pain. I have learned that "Love does not hurt." Whoever made up the saying, "Love Hurts" should have seen the black eyes, the blood, the

bruises, the broken bones, and other injuries that can and cannot be seen with the naked eye. I would like to know what those people felt when they saw the images of battered women. Do you see love, sadness, compassion, rage, happiness, or hatred?

The emotional scars never heal the way the physical scars do. Mentally you beat yourself up feeling like you could not hold your own life together, so how can you possibly be any good to your kids or anyone else? Emotionally you are damaged. Emotional abuse can hinder your growth as a person. It becomes a challenge to trust and love again. Paranoia can set in and keep you afraid in any type of abusive predicament. You begin to feel like you are not normal and that you are only able to give a portion of yourself in a relationship, because you cannot let go of past hurts and emotional baggage.

"If I could wipe every tear, hold every hand, hug every person, walk with everyone both male and female that has been abused I would. I may not be able to help every person, but I will start with one and go from there."

If I could wipe every tear, hold every hand, hug every person, walk with everyone both male and female that has been abused I would. I may not be able to help every person, but I will start with one and go from there. These words are from a young lady who thought she lost her life the day she made a bad mistake.

I have come so far that I even surprised myself. I am a woman, a daughter, a sister, a granddaughter, a friend, a spokesperson, but most of all I am a learner. I know it is not right to take the law into your own hands now! Even if the police do not help you right away, do not give up! You can make it! Keep this in mind: love does not hurt. I often find myself afraid to even meet people. I have to stop repeating the cycle of negative thoughts and experiences. Just for today I challenge you to love yourself and everything else will fall into place.

Never forget your loved ones and those who stood by you throughout your struggle to break free. It affects individuals in ways that one may never know. For example: a parent may feel like they are unable to protect you. Your family may even become over protective once you come out of an abusive relationship. Always be thankful for the support given by love ones, and try to extend that support after you have escaped this life-altering experience. Keep in mind these are the people who stuck around when everyone else had given up on you.

I have been where you are now, where you have been, and where some of you will go. I survived and so can you. Use your voice. It can be heard. People will listen to you. There is help available—all you have to do is ask for it.



I know for myself, that without support I would be deeply depressed and hopeless.

I was in a rut, had nothing to hope for and had no self-esteem or confidence. I had to re-learn all those values again, and to love and forgive myself. It's been a long hard road from thinking with a victims mentality to a confident woman on a mission, with many warriors on our side for the rough fight. You are sharing our dreams of justice and teaching society about domestic violence. We need to work to stop the myths about why we, domestic violence victims, stayed. It wasn't because we liked it or deserved it! Society needs to learn what a healthy relationship is. I know it is not control, domination, threats, battering or beatings! We need to teach our children how to love with a healthy mind and have a relationship that cultivates and nurtures. Relationships that give you a tender loving spirit, peace of mind and a soft place to fall. We can no longer keep abuse a secret and it needs to stop with this generation. Be a part of the solution, the healing and change of our children's future as our own.

Society has judged us without understanding the effects of years of abuse, torture, fear, terror, pain and pure misery. Which all of these things eat away at all your values, morals, and joys in life. You feel trapped and hopeless; death at this point is your best friend and a way out. I (we) was driven to the point, it was him or me (us), even though I was raised to value life and I did all my life. The abuse robbed me of who I was and pushed my mind over the edge! Now, I have to live with that forever! I believe if one is taught better, one can realize what the consequences of their actions upon another person are and how they can lead, and not repeat the curse. Living with this is hard and no one need be in my shoes.

Let's wise up, Society, and stop the abuse with this generation. Respect one another and love life to its fullest. Don't be cruel, be kind. Love one another like God intended!

My name is Bertha and I have been in prison

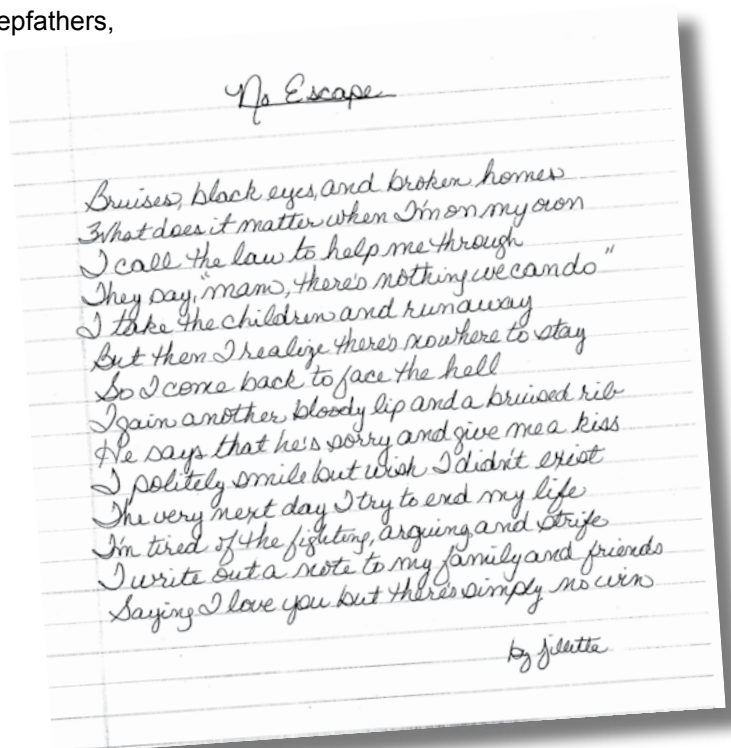
since 1999. Oh you say, you must have done a terrible deed or I wouldn't be here. I, in fear of my life, of being killed, took the life of my cruel abusive husband who terrorized me over and over again.

The suffering I endured began for me as a child with stepfathers, uncles and people I never knew. Growing up, I thought being abused was normal and as an adult chose one abusive relationship after the next. Being punched, kicked, slapped, stomped and raped was my life, as I knew it. I became numb, useless, a wasted person.

Then came that cold winter in the 90's, I believe, when my husband stuck a 38 to my head and pulled the trigger. By God's grace I survived being shot and some years later I met someone who I thought would never ever hurt me. Almost immediately after we married the horror and abuse began. I was stuck with no way or where to turn. I left many times, but he would somehow convince me he would change. Wrong again.

Those words have echoed in my mind these past seven years. Looking back over the years of abuse doesn't seem real sometimes, other times it's overpowering.

How can justice be served with more injustice? Whatever happened to doing the right thing as a government?

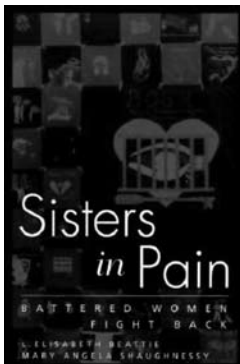


Clearinghouse Update Featured Theme: Women in Prison / Women's Justice

Sisters in Pain: Battered Women Fight Back By L. Elisabeth Beattie, Mary Angela Shaughnessy

University Press of Kentucky (2000)
ISBN: 0813121515

In 1995 Kentucky governor Brereton Jones granted parole to ten women who had been convicted of killing, conspiring to kill, or assaulting the men who had abused them for years.



The media began referring to them as the "Sisters in Pain," a name they embraced. These are their stories.

L. Elisabeth Beattie and Mary Angela Shaughnessy's interviews of seven of the Sisters in Pain detail the physical, sexual, or psychological abuse they suffered at the hands of their husbands or boyfriends, battery beyond comprehension.

Anyone who has ever asked, "Why don't they just leave?" will come to understand the interconnected strands of abuse that make just living through another day a personal triumph. Beattie and Shaughnessy address the pervasive nature of domestic violence in America and explore the legal ramifications of fighting back.

Their interviews with the Sisters in Pain reveal the ways in which these women have picked up the pieces of their shattered lives and learned to face the future.

L. Elisabeth Beattie, writer-in-residence and associate professor

of English at Midway College, is the editor of Conversations with Kentucky Writers, Conversations with Kentucky Writers II, and Savory Memories. Mary Angela Shaughnessy, a Sister of Charity of Nazareth, is university legal counsel and head of the doctoral program in educational leadership at Spalding University in Louisville.

(publisher's annotation)



When Battered Women Kill by Angela Browne Free Press (1989) ISBN: 0029038812

Browne is a psychologist at the University of New Hampshire's Family Violence Research Center. Her book is the culmination of six years devoted to in-depth

interviewing of 250 brutalized wives, including 42 whose despair drove them to kill their husbands. The author's professional objectivity does not lessen the dramatic impact of the many accounts she includes of women repeatedly

beaten by their spouses. More than 1.5 million women seek medical treatment each year because of assault by a male partner, but the few who kill to escape this torture are judged harshly and sentenced to prison. This is an important book that should force public action to help victims and victimizers - both of whom are equally unable to help themselves.

(Publishers Weekly)

Justifiable Homicide: Battered Women, Self Defense and the Law by Cynthia K. Gillespie Ohio State University Press; Reprint edition (1990) ISBN: 0814205216

This is a study to set women's blood boiling. Seattle attorney Gillespie details how unjust the judiciary is to battered women who kill their tormentors. She shows that the law of self defense is judged by many courts not to apply to battered women. Some judges, for example, have disallowed testimony on previous batterings, while others have refused to permit experts on the so-called "battered women's syndrome" to be heard, on the grounds that the formulation is too recent for any expertise to have been developed. And such elements as the victim's inability to leave the battering husband/lover have been discounted. In a "summing-up," Gillespie presents recommendations that should be read by all lawyers and judges.

(Publishers Weekly)

Other books and websites:

Convicted Survivors: The Imprisonment of Battered Women Who Kill
by Elizabeth D. Leonard
SUNY Press (2002)
ISBN: 0791453286

Fighting Back: A Battered Woman's Desperate Struggle
by Robert Davidson
Ballantine Books (2000)
ISBN: 0449005429

A World Apart: Women, Prison, and Life Behind Bars
by Christina Rathbone
Random House (2005)
ISBN: 1400061660

Women in Prison: Inside the Concrete Womb
by Kathryn Watterson
Northeastern University Press;
Revised edition (1996)
ISBN: 1555532381

The Criminal Justice System & Women: Offenders Prisoners, Victims, and Workers
by Barbara Raffel Price, Natalie J. Sokoloff
McGraw-Hill (2003)
ISBN: 0072463996

Too Much Time: Women in Prison
by Jane Evelyn Atwood
Phaidon Press (2000)
ISBN: 0714839736

Black Women's Experiences of Criminal Justice: A Discourse on Disadvantage
by Ruth Chigwada-Bailey
Waterside Press UK, 2nd ed. (2002)
ISBN: 187287052X



www.prisonactivist.org
www.correctionsproject.com
www.freebatteredwomen.org
www.justicenow.org

Books are available for checkout at KDVA's Clearinghouse as well as through your local independent bookseller.

Ways To Help Support Women In Prison

Support can come in many forms from those who are interested in helping women in prison. Here are some ways you can help:

1. Learn more about this issue. Check out some of the books and websites highlighted on our Clearinghouse Page in this newsletter.

2. Work with agencies or organizations to identify women in need of support:

- Send words of support in a letter or with a card
- Send money orders to the women to help them get what they need
- You can order a book for a woman in prison
 - books have to be sent directly by the retailer, distributor, or editor
 - If you ordered from Amazon you can have it drop shipped to them, but re
- Get a magazine subscription sent to the prison for the women's resource area.
 - off our backs and Ms. Magazine magazines offer free subscriptions
- Visit women

3. Talk to other people about helping, get your friends involved

4. Look at current events; check on legislation that will affect Domestic Violence Victims, and Women In Prison and Get Political:

- Write a letter to the editor
- Write your congressman
- Write the governor:
Governor Ernie Fletcher
700 Capital Avenue
Frankfort, KY 40601
Ph. (502) 564-2611
Email by going to governor.ky.gov

Please contact KDVA for additional ways to get involved:

email us at womensjustice@kdva.org

Kentucky Domestic Violence Association
PO Box 356
Frankfort, Kentucky 40602
(502) 209-5382

KDVA MEMBER PROGRAMS

Barren River Area Safe Space

in Bowling Green
Lee Alcott
(270) 781-9334

Bethany House Abuse Shelter

in Somerset
Charlotte Tribble
(606) 679-1553

Big Sandy Family Abuse Center

in Prestonsburg
Connie Little
(606) 285-9076

Bluegrass Domestic Violence Program

in Lexington
Darlene Thomas
(859) 233-0657

Center for Women & Families

in Louisville
Jane Burks
(502) 581-7200

D.O.V.E.S.

in Morehead
Donna Overbee
(606) 784-6880

Family Life Abuse Center

in Mount Vernon
Peggy Hancock
(606) 256-9511

LKLP Safe House

in Hazard
Lois Valentine
(606) 439-3961

Merryman House

in Paducah
Vonnie Hays-Adams
(270) 443-6001

Owensboro Area Shelter (OASIS)

in Owensboro
Becky Hagan
(270) 685-0260

Safe Harbor

in Ashland
Ann Perkins
(606) 329-9304

Sanctuary, Inc.

in Hopkinsville
Helen Kinton
(270) 885-4572

SpringHaven, Inc.

in Elizabethtown
Lisa Holmes
(270) 765-4057

Women's Crisis Center (Northern KY)

in Covington
Kimberley Adams
(859) 491-3335

Women's Crisis Center (Buffalo Trace)

in Maysville
Shari Stafford
(606) 564-6708



Kentucky Domestic Violence Association
PO Box 356
Frankfort, KY 40602

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