

**FAMILY VIOLENCE COORDINATING COUNCIL**  
**July 22, 2009**  
**ROOM 14, POTOMAC BUILDING**  
**5:00 P.M.**

<b>MEETING MINUTES</b>
------------------------

**Council in Attendance:** Judge Karen Abrams, John Helldorfer, Laura Joyce, Kathy Lacer, Lanny Lancaster, Kathleen OBrien, Ella May Russell, Sue Sabo, Elizabeth Schaeffer, Christina Taylor, and Tim Cameron.

**Absent:** Rona Harding, Judge John Slade, James Tanavage, and Mike Thompson.

**Guests:** Heather Bauer, Sheriffs Office; Sarah Gray, States Attorneys Office; Detective Julie Yingling, Corporal William Raddatz; Marlene Deal, Walden Sierra; Lisa Sheehan, Coordinator for the Child Advocacy Center; Jeanne Schmitt, Assistant Director of Services, Social Services; Cindy Wolf, St. Marys Hospital.

**Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order by Ella May Russell at 5:00 p.m.

**I. Approval of Minutes:**

Ella May Russell requested Council approval of the May 27, 2009 meeting minutes. Elizabeth Schaeffer seconded the motion. Council voted and meeting minutes were duly approved.

**II. Status Reports**

Sue Sabo reported that the information tracking system database was ready for use and that the Countys IT Department would be able to provide support for the system. Mark Stancliff, Network Manager for the St. Marys County Government IT Department will provide an overview of the system at the next meeting.

Christina Taylor introduced Sarah Gray. Sarah is the new Domestic Violence Coordinator for the St. Marys County States Attorneys Office.

**III. Committee Updates:**

**Multi-disciplinary Review Team Committee**

Julie Yingling reported that the Committee meetings are still being conducted. It was noted that a Social Services representative has been at the last few meetings which has been beneficial to the team.

**Fatality Review Committee**

Kathleen OBrien would like to set aside some time in September for the FVCC team to review another fatality case. Ella May Russell will gather a list of cases to review.

**IV. New Business/Discussion**

**A. Sexual Assault Protocols/Programs**

1). Rape Crisis Services - Marlene Deal distributed sexual assault response guidelines used by Walden when responding to sexual assault calls. Services offered are medical accompaniment and crisis services, advocacy, referrals, and counseling. Marlene will gather statistical data for the next meeting.

2). Child Advocacy Center - Lisa Sheehan gave an overview of the St. Marys County Child Advocacy Center located in Lexington Park, MD which formally opened on May 13, 2009.

The Center provides a safe environment for child victims of sexual abuse and their non-offending family members. The center spotlights the importance of collaboration between law enforcement, the courts and the social service agencies in working to reduce the trauma abused children experience. The facility is configured to enable one interviewer from law enforcement or child protective services to talk with the child, while other investigators observe from another room or review a video recording at a later time. This reduces the need for the child to have to retell the story to many different professionals. Lisa noted that the Child Advocacy Center has handled 8 cases since May 2009. Corporal Raddatz from the St. Marys County Sheriffs Office stated that he supports the St. Marys County Child Advocacy Center and that the Center was a great benefit to the community.

3). SAFE Program Elizabeth Schaeffer discussed the S.A.F.E. Nurse Program at St. Marys County Hospital. A S.A.F.E. Steering Committee meets every other month. The S.A.F.E. Nurse (Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner) program is designed to help victims of sexual assault get the medical attention and support services they need. A S.A.F.E. nurse has specialized training to conduct sexual assault forensic examinations. When a victim of sexual assault presents at the hospital, a S.A.F.E. nurse collects and preserves physical evidence from the victims body and/or clothing and documents the victims injuries. St. Marys Hospital handled 25 sexual assault cases last year which included both children and adults. Ms. Schaeffer stated that a new mandate has become effective in 2009 that allows victims of sexual assault to receive a S.A.F.E. exam without the presence of a law enforcement officer.

#### B. Creation of St. Marys County S.A.R.T. Program

Members discussed the necessity of developing a Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) program for St. Marys County. A Sexual Assault Response Team is a multidisciplinary team that works collaboratively to provide specialized services for victims of rape and sexual assault. Members of a SART team usually include a SAFE nurse or medical provider, a rape crisis advocate, a law enforcement officer and a prosecutor. FVCC members discussed the current process being used by St. Marys County agencies. Ella May Russell suggested the team gather more information about SART programs to ensure that were following the best practices. Marlene Deal will contact the SART Coordinator at the Maryland Coalition of Domestic Violence and ask if the coordinator can clarify the role of the advocate in a SART program and provide some onsite education about SART.

### V. Announcements

#### A. Project E.V.E.R. (Enhancing Victims Experiences in Recovery)

Walden Sierra will begin recruiting for an Impact Specialist for Project E.V.E.R. The project will serve victims who contact Walden Sierra via walk in or call in to crisis counseling. Outcomes for the project include improved system of coordinating information and services among providers who serve victims and offer victim assistance. The Impact Specialist will track cases across the 18-month project period.

#### B. After Hours Services

Laura Joyce announced that an economic recovery grant was approved for the Southern Maryland Center for Family Advocacy to fund services after hours. These services are limited to St. Marys County.

### VI. Next Meeting / Adjournment

Next Meeting: **There will be no meeting on Wednesday, August 26, 2009.** The next FVCC meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 23, 2009 at 5:00 p.m. in Room 14 of the Potomac Building.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted: Karen Gates, Recording Secretary