



Making Sure The Victim's Voice Has A Place At The DOC's Table

From The Director

A few weeks ago, a colleague, who will remain nameless, came by my office and suggested I needed to prioritize my time better to include publishing THE TABLE on a more regular basis. It never occurred to me that there was a fan base out there that actually reads this newsletter and notices the publication lapses.

It's not that I haven't been thinking about publishing another issue of THE TABLE before this. It's just that getting VANS up and running these last few months has been such a time consuming project that putting out another issue of THE TABLE became just one more permanent resident on my daily "TO DO" list. I do have post-it notes plastered all over the wall in front of my desk which, if I could decipher the cryptic hieroglyphic symbols scribbled on them, probably contain some really great ideas for articles.

It's also not like we have been sitting around the victim services office doing nothing. In addition to our regular daily routine of providing information and support to victims and staff, we have been responding to the increase in business because of VANS. Not that we are complaining. Au contraire! One of the great things about VANS is that information about how to contact Victim Services is given at the end of every automated notification. As a result, more individuals, who otherwise wouldn't know about the Victim Services Program, are calling for additional information and help. Thus less time is available to write about it!

In January I celebrated my fifth anniversary as the Director of Victim Services. In the cosmic totality of longevity here in this Department, it isn't that long, unless of course you tally it in

dog years and then I am right up there with Judy Roberts! While it isn't as long a tenure as some in this Department, I can now participate in that game that long-timers play that goes something like this; "Do you remember 'so and so' (you fill in the name), Oh, yeah I remember him/her. S/he had the job before 'so and so' (fill in the name). Was that before or after we closed Woodstock?" OK, so at that point, I'm out!

A lot has happened in this Department over the last five years. The same could be said for Victim Services.

Since Victim Services was started ten years ago, we have trained our staff to work with victims and developed programs and services to address the needs of those who wish to participate in parole hearings, victim impact panels, victim offender dialogues, and support groups. Our biggest and most recent accomplishment, of course, is the total redesign and launch of VANS, which as of today has 2000 individuals registered to receive notification. This is almost the same number of individuals who were registered under our old system.

What is most impressive and gratifying for me however is the number of DOC staff who show a great understanding of victims' issues and include the victim's perspective when doing offender release and treatment planning. There is nothing that brings me a greater sense of satisfaction and pride than to sit in a case staffing and have others in the room, instead of me, advocate for the victim's needs. I see the whole "give a man a fish vs. teach the man to fish" thing flash before my eyes and along with a glimpse of a vision of a peaceful retirement ahead of me one day and it makes me smile.

Amy

VANS Update and Reminders



- A VANS Liaison group was created in December (see article below). See the VANS Liaison from your office/facility if you have questions or problems with VINEWatch. **If any of the following updates or reminders don't make any sense to you, you should probably make arrangements to get trained by your local VANS Liaison. Then they will make perfect sense!**
- The design problem that is causing double notifications for dual status offenders is still being worked on. They happen when a dual status offender is moved to another facility or is booked out to court.
- We discovered the Comment Section on the profile page in VINEWatch which we use if we want others to know something about a registrant. Instead of showing a “0” under the word “comment” it will indicate a number if there is a comment already in the sections. If you see that there is a comment, check it out. It could be something useful.
- Make sure that when talking to a victim you find out if they are registered in VANS and if they are not and want to be that you register them.
- If you are talking to a victim and they say that they are registered but you cannot find them when you go to “update profile” they might be registered anonymously. The only way to find if they are registered anonymously is to search for them by phone number not by profile name. If you want to change their registration to a non-anonymous registration, which we strongly suggest that you do, with the victim’s permission of course, you will have to delete the anonymous registration and create a new profile. The profile will include name, address, phone number, email and a PIN number. You will have to add the offender and the notification method again and update and it will be all set. . It is a bit of a hassle but well worth doing so that you have the name of the victim instead of just the phone number with no name. Explain that the information is still confidential even though it isn’t anonymous anymore.
- Remember to check the new notification directive to see the list of when to make non automated notifications.
- If a victim doesn’t want notification, you should create a profile for them anyway, attach an offender to them, and then disable the notification. That way we will have their contact information, but they won’t get notified.

Local VANS Liaisons Created in Each Facility

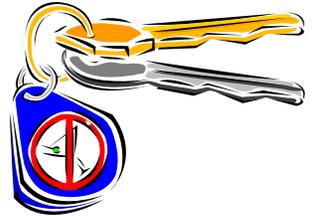
After trying to get every staff member trained on how to use VINEWatch and fielding lots of questions from staff, the Victims Services Program decided it would be more efficient to have a VANS Liaison in each field office and facility. Each facility designated a VANS Liaison who participated in a one day Train the Trainer Vinewatch training. The morning was spent learning about the ins and outs of the VINEWatch system, and the afternoon was a practice session where the Liaisons trained staff member from Central Office who had never before used VINEWatch. The VANS Liaisons (listed below) are responsible for training the staff in their office/facility on how to use VINEWatch, fielding questions and updating their colleagues, resetting passwords for those staff who get locked out of their VINEWatch account, and communicating any design issues to Victim Services. The group will meet quarterly to receive updates, share concerns and generally keep the system working. If you have any questions about VANS and how to use VINEWatch, please contact your local VANS Liaison.

Liaison	Location	Liaison	Location
Kit Andrews	Barre P&P	Lisa Wilson	Chittenden
Steve Bushey	Burlington P&P	Sue Ransom Kelley	Southern State
Lisa Cameron	Brattleboro P&P	Tim Simoneau	Northern State
Anne Cosgrove	St Johnsbury P&P	Tina Heywood	Northeast Regional
Mark Devins	Hartford P&P	Phil Fernandez	Marble Valley
Rae Hirst	Springfield P&P	Jim Kamel	Southeast Work Camp
Richard Eckrote	Rutland P&P	Charlie Remick	Northeast Work Camp
Janette Hoague	St Albans P&P	Ruthie Holmes	Northwest

Victim Services Working with DUI Impact Coordinators

As a result of recent retirements and re-alignment of duties, Victim Services has agreed to expand its duties beyond just coordinating the victim impact portion of the DUI Impact Program and will be working more closely with the local DUI Impact Program Coordinators from each field office.

On March 18th, DUI Impact Program Coordinators from each field office joined Ariel Brugger, the Vermont Victim Impact Panel Program Coordinator, and Amy Holloway, the Director of Victim Services, for a one day meeting to do in-service training, discuss the program, and share ideas and resources. There was a lively discussion about the expected goals and outcomes for the program and lots of sharing of ideas about how to use statistics effectively, the advantages of small group exercises, and tips on how to use the curriculum to its best advantage. The group talked about some of the challenges of recruiting and using survivor impact panelists and previewed the new Impact Panel DVD that can be used when there is a shortage of available impact panelists. Participants found the chance to get together beneficial, and so, there will be quarterly training meetings planned for the future.



Victim Offender Dialogue Program Update

In December 2009 Victim Services completed its 12th Victim-Offender Dialogue. The VOD program, which was started in Vermont in the fall of 2006, is a victim initiated and centered program for victims of serious and violent crimes who want the chance to meet with the individual who caused them harm. Trained facilitators meet with both the victim and the offender for months in advance of the actual dialogue to determine what the victim's needs are, if the offender is willing to participate, and if the process would be beneficial to both parties. An offender's participation is totally voluntary and the offender will not be given any special consideration for release or parole if s/he participates.

In addition to the twelve completed dialogues, there have been an additional 10 cases that are either still in preparation or, after discussions with both the victim and the offender, it was determined that a dialogue cannot happen at this time. Any victim/survivor or affected person who is interested in participating in the Victim Offender Dialogue Program should contact Amy Holloway at 802 241-2302 for more information.

Homicide Survivors Support Group

The Homicide Survivor's Group, aka The Tear Soup Group, continues to meet every two or three months. This is an unstructured support group for individuals who have lost a loved one to a murder and who would find it comforting and empowering to be with others who have had the same experience. Notices for this group come out of the Victim Services Central Office. If you know of someone who is interested in participating in the group, have them either email or call Amy Holloway at 802 241-2302 or amy.holloway@ahs.state.vt.us.

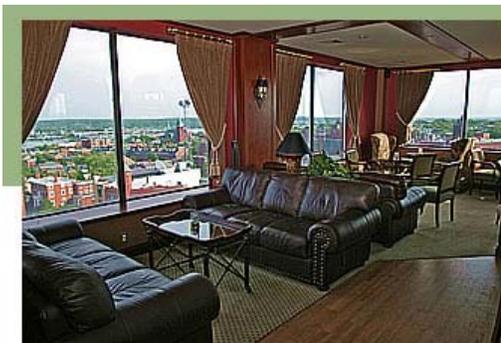


National Victim Services in Corrections Conference Portland, Maine October 19-21

The National Association of Victim Service Professionals in Corrections (NAVSPIC) will be holding its annual conference in Portland, Maine in October 2010. Victim Services Directors from Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Vermont have been working together to create a conference that will focus on Refining our Practice. Victim Services within Corrections is a growing field and the conference will provide participants the chance to discuss and further define the role that victim services play within a correctional setting. A victim's panel will open the conference followed by workshops focused on the role of victim services in re-entry, domestic violence programming for offenders, PREA, and restorative justice.

The Annual Victim Offender Dialogue Summit will be held on October 19th followed by the NAVSPIC Conference on the 20th. Professional development and victim/survivor Scholarships will be available. Please contact Amy Holloway (amy.holloway@ahs.state.vt.us) if you are interested in attending.

Save the Date



“TOP OF THE EAST” Eastland Park Hotel, Portland Maine

October 19, 20, 21 2010

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF VICTIM
SERVICE PROFESSIONALS IN CORRECTIONS**

ANNUAL CONFERENCE



“I HAVE A QUESTION”



Throughout the design, training, and implementation period Victim Services has been asked a lot of really good questions about VANS. We included them in the last issue, but some are still questions that are being asked, so we are repeating them this time around.

Have the glitches that affect dual status offenders been fixed?

Not quite yet, but we are getting closer. We keep getting scenarios that we didn't anticipate, so we are trying to get all of the fixes done at the same time and it is taking longer than we thought it would.

What do I do when the database is down and an offender is being released or booked into a facility?

It is in this circumstance that you will have to initiate an OVERRIDE. You can do that by simply calling the Appriss Operations Center at 1-866-APPRISS (1-866-277-7477) or you can do it yourself manually through VINEWatch. To do it manually, log onto VINEWatch, and search the offender whose status you need to change by clicking on “offender” under the Search category on the left hand side. Search by last name. When the offender's name comes up, click on to the OID # which will bring you to the offender's page. At the top of the page, you will see the Override button. Click on that button and then put a check in the “Override Custody” box, fill in the details and then click the “Generate Notification” box and fill in the “Reason for Override” box, and finally click “update”.

Why is it that sometimes I go into VINEWatch and there is only a phone number and no name for a victim?

If a victim registered by phone and didn't zero in to speak to an operator who would have added a name and an address, then the victim registered anonymously. The victim might also have registered on line and not filled in the Contact information. It is best, if you are talking to a victim and you realize they are registered anonymously, to change the registration and create a profile for the victim. Unfortunately, until they redesign this section of VINEWatch, which I understand is in the works, you will have to jot down the notification method information (phone number/email address), delete that registration and create a new profile that will contain the name, address and the phone number/pin/email address. Remember if you delete an anonymous registration and create a profile, you are going to have to add the offender again to the profile. If you have any problem with this, see your local VANS Liaison who will help you.

Explain to me again about the Apology Letter Bank.

If the offender wants to send an apology or a clarification letter to his/her victim, it needs to come to the Letter Bank first. These sorts of letters should never go directly to a victim without being reviewed by Victim Services. If the letter is court ordered and the victim knows it is coming, it is still a good idea to run it through the Apology Letter Bank before sending it to the victim. Just contact Amy Holloway at amy.holloway@ahs.state.vt.us to discuss any letters that the offender wants to send to the victim.

CRIME VICTIMS RIGHT WEEK

This year The Victim Services Program will be holding three events to commemorate Victims' Rights Week. The first will be a reception at Central Office in the Chapel Conference Room on Tuesday, April 20th from 9-10:30. All are welcome. (see invitation below) We will again set up the "*Saving A Place at the Table*" Display. This year we will be using all twenty of our place settings and many of the victim/survivor families who have donated place settings will be in attendance.

On April 27th and 29th the *Saving a Place at the Table* display will go on the road to Southern State and Northern State to be presented to inmates who are participating in the VTPSA, CSC and INDAP programs. The inmates will have the chance to experience the display and then participate in a discussion with Victim Service staff members and victim survivors who will speak about the impact that crime has on them .

This display is very powerful and as you remember, inspired the name of this newsletter, THE TABLE. We hope that it will continue to inspire the Department of Corrections to keep the victim's voice at the DOC's table.



You are cordially invited to
A Celebration in Honor of Crime Victim's Rights Week
Tuesday April 20, 2010
9-10:30 am
Department of Corrections
Chapel Conference Room, Waterbury Vermont

This year's theme is Fairness, Dignity and Respect

Please join the Department of Corrections' Victim Services Staff
As we honor and remember crime victims and survivors

Refreshments

"Saving a Place at the Table" Display