



Spring 2015

The Rutland County Women's Network & Shelter

P.O. Box 313
Rutland, VT 05702
www.rcwn.org

New Beginnings



On behalf of the Board of the Rutland County Women's Network and Shelter (RCWNS), I am thrilled to share that the organization welcomed a new Executive Director, Avaloy Haynes Lanning, in March. Avaloy joins RCWNS with decades of experience in human rights advocacy. She has worked throughout her career to promote the welfare and dignity of those who are the most vulnerable. Avaloy's work has taken her to many destinations including a significant

amount of time in Latvia and Belarus. Avaloy has been actively involved in the fight against human trafficking for 15 years and has a long history of legislative advocacy around this and other social justice issues.

Prior to joining RCWNS, Avaloy was the Executive Director of the Bennington County Coalition for the Homeless and served several years as Senior Director of Safe Horizon's Anti-Trafficking Program in New York City. Avaloy holds a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work for Tarleton State University in her home state of Texas and a Master's Degree in Social Work from the National Catholic School of Social Service at the Catholic University in Washington, DC.

Please join me in welcoming Avaloy!

Sincerely,
Linda Bunker
Chair, Board of Directors

Above Photo: Avaloy Lanning

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Needed!



Right: RCWNS staff receives a donation from "Ted Arbos Toys for Tots" in December 2014

The Rutland County Women's Network and Shelter is a non-profit human services agency dedicated to assisting survivors of domestic and sexual violence. Our focus includes prevention, education, outreach and safe housing to the communities of Rutland County with the goal of preventing and decreasing incidences of further abuse.

2014 Facts & Figures – The Rutland County Women's Network & Shelter

Number of Shelter Bed Nights: 2043

Number of Women Sheltered: 23

Number of Children Sheltered: 16

Unmet Shelter Requests: 39

The Rutland County Women's Network and Shelter is the largest single provider of emergency housing services in Rutland County. Because victims of domestic violence must often escape unsafe environments, they come to us to help provide short-term emergency housing during a difficult time in their lives. After providing basic shelter assistance, part of our mission is to work with these clients to help them transition to safe, permanent housing.



The Rutland County Women's Network and Shelter is proud to recognize Sexual Violence Awareness Month. This year's theme is campus sexual violence prevention.

Did you know?*

- One in five women will be a victim of completed or attempted sexual assault while in college.
- Among college women, nine out of 10 victims of rape and sexual assault knew the person who assaulted them
- More than 90% of sexual assault victims on college campuses do not report the assault
- 40% of colleges and universities reported not investigating a single sexual assault in the previous five years

The Power of Change

By Karis Williams, Direct Services Coordinator

Most of us resist change. However, no matter how hard we resist, change will enter our lives just the same. When we initiate the change ourselves, it's easier to adapt, however, it's still change and change is scary, even risky for those fleeing domestic violence.

What if all changes were good by default? People usually avoid changes and prefer to stay in their comfort zones, but I am a true believer that once you get the courage and take the first step to change, your life will become better.

We often forget that there are benefits to change. So I have spent the last several weeks considering those benefits as RCWNS goes through its own changes.

- Each change is a turning page. It is about closing one chapter and opening another one. Changes bring new beginnings and excitement to life. It allows us to refocus on our purpose and our mission. It provides us with new and innovative ideas. It gives us a breath of fresh air to do what we are supposed to do to best help ourselves.
- We never know what change may bring. When we turn from our usual path we find opportunities for personal growth and development. We discover new insights about different aspects of our lives. We learn lessons even from changes that did not lead us to where we wanted to be. Change brings new choices for happiness and fulfillment as it leads us to re-evaluate our lives and look at certain things from a new and different perspective.
- We all have things we'd like to improve. We also know that nothing will improve by itself. We need to do things differently to make that happen. Without change, there'd be no progress. Things move forward and develop because of change.

While change may be a little intimidating, it empowers us to be the best at who we are and in what we do. At RCWNS, understanding the positive benefits of change allows us to better help our clients as they go through their own personal change. If we can view change as a positive event, we can help others to do the same. Besides, without change, there would be no butterflies!



Shelter Coordinator Meg Morse joined the staff of the Rutland County Women's Network and Shelter in May 2014. Meg has a Bachelor of Social Work and B.A. in Sociology from Castleton State College. She had previously worked with both Rutland Dismas House and the Park Street Program. As Shelter Coordinator, Meg provides support and advocacy to the survivors and their children that reside in our emergency shelter. This includes assisting residents with finding employment and permanent housing, facilitating support groups and overseeing the day-to-day shelter operations.



Development & Marketing Coordinator Jennifer Yakunovich began in June 2014. Jennifer has a B.A. in History and a M.Ed. from Southern New Hampshire University. Jennifer comes to RCWNS from the Manchester Historic Association in Manchester, N.H. where she spent 8 years working as the Museum Educator. Jennifer is a native of Rutland and is happy to be back in the community where she grew up. Here at RCWNS, Jennifer is responsible for fundraising and outreach, grant management and other administrative tasks.

Mark Your Calendars!!!



Walk A Mile In Her Shoes

October 2015

Downtown Rutland

CSJ Students Provide a New Beginning

In the of Fall of 2014, students and staff from the College of St. Joseph Provider Program took on the challenge of renovating one of the organization's transitional apartments. The Rutland County Women's Network and Shelter owns two transitional apartments where survivors and their children can live, free of charge, as they move towards a more safe and peaceful life. The CSJ students were tasked with developing ideas, soliciting donations, and executing their designs. There were roughly 40 volunteers and over 600 hours of work that went into completing this project. This was much-needed work would not have been accomplished if not for the hard work and dedication of the students and staff.



Kitchen Before



Bedroom Before



Kitchen After



Bedroom After

RCWNS and the CSJ Provider scholars would like to thank the following businesses and individuals for their support on the RCWNS Provider Place apartment renovation:

Home Depot of Rutland
 Yankee Paint
 LaValley Building Supply
 Carpet Warehouse
 Stafford Technical Center Video Communications Program
 The Griffin Family
 Dr. Jonas Prida
 Tom Beland
 Dr. Bob Goddard
 Julie Rosmus
 Donna Lewis
 Judy Morgan

New Beginnings

By Jennifer Firpo, Legal Coordinator/Systems Advocate

“New beginnings are often disguised as painful endings” Lao Tzu

I've been an advocate at the Rutland County Women's Network and Shelter for 7 years as of March 17th. I love this job but being an advocate is not always easy. Sometimes it can be frustrating, often tiring. There's vicarious trauma to navigate through as well as compassion fatigue. I think sometimes we all wonder what the heck we were thinking when we decided to take on this work!

Despite all of that there are definite joys. We have the privilege of witnessing so many new beginnings as we walk alongside our clients.

- The Mom who is finally allowed to parent her children
- The Child who can go to school without a knot in their stomach from the tension in the home
- The Woman who can call her family and speak freely without worry that she may say the wrong thing
- The Man who can go to work and not worry that his cell phone will ring so much that his job is in danger
- All of the people who can start to live without the constant anticipation of an explosion
- The day we run into a client who is handling a difficult situation and says with a smile “I didn't call you because I know I can do this on my own.”

Even when someone comes to us on what may seem like the worst day, they are also coming to us on what could be the beginning of a new life.

Our Court Partnership



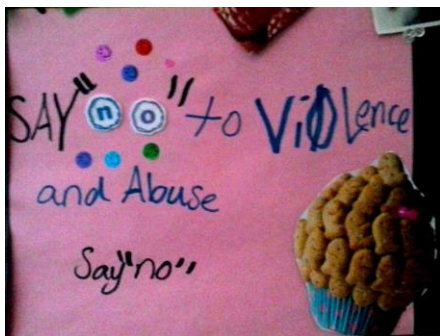
An Advocate from the Rutland County Women's Network and Shelter is available at the Rutland County Superior Court, Family Division every Friday to help victims of domestic and sexual violence who are seeking a Relief From Abuse Order (RFA). We partner with Attorney John Lamson of “Have Justice, Will Travel” in educating victims on the process of RFA's and discussing all options. While our advocate is not a lawyer, and does not give legal advice, RCWNS is there to help the victim navigate the system and provide support in what is often a confusing and stressful situation. Obtaining a RFA is an important step in addressing the power an abuser exerts over the victim, and working together makes sure the process goes smoothly. If you have questions or would like assistance obtaining an RFA, please call (802) 775-6788.

"A Whole New Light"

By Meg Morse, Shelter Coordinator

For the women I work with, a new beginning starts the moment they enter our office or pick up the phone to speak with an advocate. It's not easy to one day decide "enough is enough" and leave the life you've been living for years. My job is to ensure each individual I come in contact with has the tools and resources to leave an abusive relationship and start on a new path towards a healthy life.

It's not easy to start a new beginning alone. On a daily basis I see the struggles put in front of individuals and I'm grateful to meet so many brave women who overcome such challenging situations. For a person who has never witnessed any form of abuse or trauma, a new beginning may be something positive like relocating for a job or adopting a baby. But for the women I come in contact with, a new start might mean leaving a relationship of ten years where she has not been able to drive, go shopping, or even manage her own money. Imagine a life where you couldn't even carry a cell phone or leave the house without supervision. Then one day your whole life changes with just one phone call to RCWNS. Suddenly there is a whole new light ahead with millions of possibilities. For me, that is what I call a new beginning. I am incredibly lucky as Shelter Advocate to meet these amazing individuals.



Artwork from children in shelter
Valentine's Day 2015

Shelter Resident Feels at Home

By Anonymous

Coming to the Rutland County Women's Network and Shelter is best described like coming home and immediately having a family that supports a healthy and safe living environment. Being embraced by such an immediate concern for my family's well being showed me that the staff at RCWNS is more like a family. All of our needs have been met. This experience is not at all like I expected. My children and I have flourished because of the support and stability provided to us. We have started a new life, with healthier coping skills, tools and support services to continue moving forward in a positive way. We have developed relationships in the community with area agencies and have created strong support networks. In support groups provided by staff we have worked past emotional barriers created by an abusive relationship, therefore forming healthy bonds and lifelong friendships. We are forever grateful for the blessing we have received in coming here. Starting a new life is very intimidating. The staff at RCWNS has taken the most difficult parts away allowing the children and I to be excited about tomorrow.

**Not in Rutland County? Statewide
Hotlines Are Available:**

Domestic Violence – 800-228-7395

Sexual Violence – 800-489-7273

Support Groups Available

The Rutland County Women's Network and Shelter offers support group for domestic and sexual violence survivors

Mondays at 3 p.m.

Tuesdays at 1 p.m.

101 Grove Street, Rutland, VT

Free of Charge

These advocate facilitated support groups are a safe place to ask questions, share experiences, know that you are not alone.

Please call (802) 775-6788 with questions.



Small Dog
ELECTRONICS

Always by your side

Thank you to Small Dog Electronics for adopting RCWNS during National Domestic Violence Awareness Month! They generously hosted a candle light vigil at their Rutland Store and donated a portion of their October sales. We were able to raise over \$3,000 to help support our programs.



RCWNS Staff

Avaloy Haynes Lanning
Executive Director

Jennifer Firpo
Legal Coordinator/Systems
Advocate

Ashley Greenfield
FSH Service Coordinator

Meg Morse
Shelter Coordinator

Karis Williams
Direct Services Coordinator

Jennifer Yakunovich
Development & Marketing
Coordinator

Board of Directors

Linda Bunker, Chair

Amy Bremel

Bobbi Gagne

Linda Ingold

Regina Kohlhepp

Amy Lear

Help End Domestic Violence: Volunteer & Make A Difference

The Rutland County Women's Network and Shelter is recruiting a team of very special volunteers who will be trained to take hotline phone calls from victims of domestic and/or sexual violence and direct them to the help and services they need to break the cycle of abuse. Volunteers will be intensively trained, must be 18 years of age or older and be willing to serve on an on-call shift basis for our 24/7 hotline. Those interested must submit an application along with references. Successful applicants will participate in a six-session training course. If you, or someone you know, is interested in this opportunity to make a difference in the lives of families in our community, please give us a call at 775-6788, ext. 19, or email karisw@rcwn.org.



HELP PUT AN
END TO
Domestic
Violence!

MAKE A DIFFERENCE:

BECOME A HOTLINE VOLUNTEER

The Rutland County Women's Network and Shelter needs your help to stop domestic violence from endangering families in our community. We are recruiting a team of very special volunteers who will be trained to take hotline phone calls from domestic violence victims and help them explore the options available, and connect them with the services they need, to stop the cycle of abuse. Successful applicants will receive intensive training and full support. Call us at 802-775-6788.

The Rutland County Women's Network and Shelter is a 501(c)(3) non-profit. With your help, we can break the cycle of abuse.

The Rutland County Women's Network & Shelter

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