



Michigan Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence

Coalition Connection January 2003

The Michigan Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence is dedicated to the empowerment of all the state's survivors of domestic and sexual violence.

Our mission is to develop and promote efforts aimed at the elimination of all domestic and sexual violence in Michigan.

Domestic Violence Survivors Win Key Workplace Protection in Massachusetts Ruling

Reprinted from www.nowldef.org.

In a precedent-setting decision, a Massachusetts Superior Court recognized that a domestic violence victim can sue her employer if she is fired because of an absence from work to ensure her safety. The case is *Apessos v. Memorial Press Group*, No. 01-1474-A, 2002 Mass. Super. LEXIS 404 (Mass. Super. Ct. Sep. 30, 2002).

According to the plaintiff, Sophia Apessos, she was assaulted by her husband on a Saturday in July 2000. She called the police, who arrested her husband. She then left a message for her employer, saying she would have to miss work that Monday to go to court for a protective order.

That Monday, she went to court and, as the police suggested, got her locks changed. She spoke that day to her supervisor, and said she would be at work the next day. When she went to work Tuesday morning, she was fired.

NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund, along with Hale & Dorr, is representing Apessos, who came to NOW Legal Defense through the organization's Employment Rights for Survivors of Abuse project.

NOW Legal Defense argued that Apessos' discharge was in violation of the public policy to provide judicial relief to victims of domestic violence, and the implied covenant of good faith and fair dealing between an employer and employee.

The Massachusetts Superior Court held that these were valid claims, permitting Ms. Apessos' case to go forward: "The public policy interests here are primal, not complex: the protection of a victim from physical and emotional violence and the protection of a victim's livelihood. A victim should not have to seek physical safety at the cost of her employment."

This precedent will help not only women in Massachusetts, but also those in states that prohibit employers from discharging workers who simply seek to exercise their legal rights.

Please go to <http://www.nowldef.org/html/issues/vio/apessos.shtml> for a discussion of the successful decision in *Apessos v. Memorial Press Group*, including links to the decision itself, the complaint, briefs, and press coverage.

Federal Advisory Committee Appointee Will Push for Core-Service Funding

Reprinted from the Family Services Report, November 13, 2002.

A new member of the National Advisory Committee on Violence Against Women will push for increased funding for basic services when meetings begin shortly after the New Year.

Colleen Coble, executive director of the Missouri Coalition Against Domestic Violence, says the Violence Against Women Act has greatly improved the funding situation, replacing competitive funding with monies for each locality, but great need still exists for basic resources. This includes safe shelter, transitional housing, hotlines, support groups and assistance programs for dependent children.

Coble tells us fewer than half of the counties in Missouri offer these core services. With state budgetary problems, federal funding is even more vital at the local level, and she intends to push for additional monies, she says.

Administrative matters will be addressed as well to determine better ways to coordinate funding programs between the Justice and Health & Human Services departments.

The committee prepares to meet as the president signs the Justice Dept. Authorization Act (PL 107-273), which restores the Violence Against Women Office as an independent entity within the department. Coble calls the new law “incredibly valuable” and says it will allow the office to influence policy throughout the agency and make increasing grant funds easier.

As a long-time proponent at the state and local levels, national officials like Lynn Rosenthal, director of the National Network to End Domestic Violence, praise Coble’s appointment (FSR, 9/11 p6).

Collaborative Response to Crime Victims in Urban Areas

The Faith-Based Collaborative Project was made possible through a Federal grant through the Office for Victims of Crime, a division of the Department of Justice. Entitled "Collaborative Response to Crime Victims in Urban Areas," the purpose of this grant is to link together crime victim agencies and faith communities in urban areas. The first step in this three-year project is to pick five sites throughout the United States to carry out the goals of the project. Any organization interested in applying for a grant can download the application from the web site at:

<http://www.mdcrimevictims.org/grantapplicationkit.htm>. Request for proposals (RFP) must be received by **February 28, 2003**. Call Scott Beard at (301) 952-0063 with any questions.

Directory of Funders of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Programs

The *Directory of Funders for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Programs* provides information on potential funders for organizations and projects working with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) communities. All of the organizations listed have provided financial support to LGBT programs. This publication is the most comprehensive listing of LGBT funders in the country. You can access the Directory online at www.lgbtfunders.org/lgbtfunders/resource or call the Resource Center at (517) 381-4663.

For more information visit the Website at www.lgbtfunders.org.

Cisco Systems and TechSoup Announce New Nationwide Product Donation Program

Cisco and TechSoup (<http://www.techsoup.org/>), the nonprofit technology Web site created by CompuMentor, have announced a networking product donation program to benefit nonprofit organizations across the United States. The new joint initiative will give qualified nonprofits access to Cisco's networking solutions at greatly reduced prices, as well as support during the decision-making, installation, and ongoing use of the system.

The program is designed to provide nonprofits with both networking hardware and the added support that is needed for nonprofits to make the best use of these product donations. Through the initiative, Cisco will effectively donate a portion of the cost of the equipment, along with a one-year technical support contract through the SMARTNet program. Cisco will donate six different Internet Starter Kits, or "bundled" solutions, as well as other networking components. Depending on their intended use, the kits will contain routers, switches, access points, interface cards, and other equipment that enables nonprofits to network office workstations, share an Internet connection, and centralize data storage and backup.

Qualified nonprofits can order the kits through TechSoup. Each kit also includes a one-year service and support contract for the donated hardware.

Products and eligibility guidelines are available on DiscounTech

(<http://www.techsoup.org/discountech>), TechSoup's product distribution service.

RFP Link: http://www.techsoup.org/news_article.cfm?

New Teen Relationship Web site

The Teen Relationship Web site provides information, resource links and a chat room for teens who want to explore and discuss relationship issues with someone close to their own age. The Teen Relationship Web chat room is facilitated by a group of teens and young adults, who have completed 40 hours of training on issues of dating violence, sexual assault/harassment and healthy relationships. Visit the site at www.teenrelationships.org. Other Internet resources for teens are available at www.mcadv.org/mrcdsv/web/links.html.

25 Years of Coalition Treasures Exhibit

The Michigan Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence (MCADSV) is commemorating 25 years of service and we are soliciting archival materials (especially

photos, T-shirts, brochures, Silent Witness silhouettes, children's artwork, or quilts) of the "early years" that we will use to display at the 2003 Annual Conference. For planning purposes, please contact Sherry Brockway at (517) 347-7000 ext. 14 or at sbrockway@mcasds.org to let her know you are sending items for the exhibit. To ensure proper return of your items, please send a self-addressed stamped package. Please forward any items by May 1, 2003 to: MCADSV, 3893 Okemos Rd., Ste. B2, Okemos, MI 48864, Attn: Sherry.

Mark Your Calendars!

Michigan Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence
Women of Color Institute and Annual Conference
June 21-25, 2003.

This Far By Faith

The Black Church and Domestic Violence Institute announces the 5th annual *This Far By Faith* Training Conference February 14-16, 2003 in Atlanta, Georgia. Featured workshops include undoing racism, men's movement to end violence, womanist theology, and faith and feminism. Also featuring music makers, liturgical dancers, dramatic vignettes and Rev. Aubra Love. For more information, including registration information, visit <http://www.bcdvi.org/thisfarbyfaith.htm>.

International Conference on Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault and Stalking

Join fellow law enforcement personnel, prosecutors, victim advocates, judges, parole and probation officers, rape crisis workers, medical personnel, faith community members, educators and others in San Diego, California April 23-25 for a conference highlighting promising practices and emerging issues in domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking. Featured presenters include Anne O'Dell, Trinka Porrata, Joanne Archambault, and Michigan's own Leslie Hagen. For more information call (858) 679-2913 or visit www.mysati.com.

Sexual Assault Response Team Training Conference

The Second National Sexual Assault Response Team Training Conference will be in New Orleans, Louisiana May 21-23, 2003. Registration for the conference will open in January. Workshops for all Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) members—law enforcement, SANEs, advocates, crime lab specialists and prosecutors—will be featured in breakout sessions. Experts in the field will address all aspects of forensic evidence collection and utilization. Visit www.sane-sart.com for more information.

Empowering Our Communities

In an effort to promote equity within victim services and improve access for underserved victims of gender-based violence, Arte Sana will be hosting a national training institute in April. Our keynote presenter will be Melissa Farley, a national expert on sexual trafficking and prostitution who has worked on issues of violence against women

for the past 25 years. For a registration brochure, send your mailing address and other contact information to: artesanando@yahoo.com. Please visit the following link for further details and program updates <http://www.arte-sana.com>.

the calendar

TECHNICAL
ASSISTANCE, TRAINING & NETWORKING THROUGH
MCADSV

Wage and Labor Technical Assistance Conference Call

■ FEBRUARY 3

Leadership Institute—Cultural Competency for Programs

■ FEBRUARY 5-6

LIVONIA, MI

Leadership Institute—Personnel/Human Resources Management

■ MARCH 24-25

GRAND RAPIDS, MI



Visit MCADSV on the Web

www.mcadsv.org