**DC VICTIM ASSISTANCE NETWORK (VAN)**

**MINUTES**

*Friday, April 18, 2014*

*Wilson Building, Room G-9*

**Leadership Council Present: Karma Cottman,** *DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence;*  **Daniel Rappaport**, *American University*; **Allison Jackson**, *Children’s National Medical Center;* **Michelle Palmer***, Wendt Center for Loss and Healing;* **Rachel Friedman***, Men Can Stop Rape;* **Gillian Chadwick,** *Ayuda;* **Tonya Turner***, Office of the Attorney General*

**Leadership Council Absent:** None.

**Members Present: Kate Margolis**, *DC Volunteer Lawyers Project*; **Brant Miller**, *DC Center for the LGBT Community*; **Stephanie Shea**, *Network for Victim Recovery of DC*;; **Peg Hacskaylo**, *District Alliance for Safe Housing*; **Lauren Vaughan**, *My Sister’s Place*; **Allison Medina**, *The Women’s Center*; **Jessica Li,** *API DVRP*; **Laura Banks Reed**, *Crime Victims’ Compensation Program*; **Chinh Le**, *Legal Aid Society*; **Kayce Simmons**, *Metropolitan Police Department Victim Services Branch;* **Florence Akurut**, *Metropolitan Police Department Victim Services Branch;* **Dawit Gizaw***, Ethiopian Community Services and Development Council;* **Winifred Wilson***, House of Ruth;* **Heidi Marcozzi**, *DC Forensic Nurse Examiners*; **K. Rose Gordy**, *Safe Shores*; **Mayra Ibarra**, *CARECEN*; **Theresa Vandergriff**, *Ramona’s Way;* **Jennifer White***, DC Office of the Attorney General;* **Sasha Ponappa**, *Deaf Abused Women’s Network*; **Amelia Missieledies**, *The Person Center*; **June Crenshaw**, *Rainbow Response*; **Teresa Tomassoni**, *Fair Girls*; **Ebony Wheeler**, *Men Can Stop Rape*; **Christa Heilman**, *Network for Victim Recovery of DC*

**Members Absent**: **Anne Seymour**, *Anne Seymour Consulting*; **Carolina de los Rios**, *Polaris Project;* **Jackie King**, *Ramona’s Way*; **Lindsey Sebastian**, *APALRC*; **Colleen Gallopin**, *Break the Cycle*; **Anne Wicks**, *DC Superior Court;* **Sarah Wampol**, *Fair Girls*; **Imoni Washington***, DC Bar Foundation;* **Andrea Rodriguez***, CARECEN*; **Natalia Otero**, *SAFE;* **Janese Bechtol***, Office of the Attorney General;* **Wemi Peters**, *Legal Aid Society of DC;* **Nikki Charles***, Network for Victim Recovery of DC;* **Jennifer Clark**, *US Attorneys’ Office*; **Sherelle Hessell-Gordon,** *DC Rape Crisis Center*; **Tyria Fields**, *Metropolitan Police Department Victim Services Branch;* **Liz Odungo***, DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence;* **Melanie Becker***, The Women’s Center;* **Heather DeVore**, *DC Forensic Nurse Examiners;* **Malik Washington**, *William Kellibrew Foundation;* **Shirley Clark**, *The Women’s Center*

**Guests Present: Amy Loudermilk***, Mayor’s Office on GLBT Affairs;* **Cecilia de los Santos***, Latin American Youth Center;* **Akosoa McFadgion***, Georgetown University*

**Staff Present: Cortney Fisher, Elizabeth Krauss, Luis Teran**

**The meeting was convened by the VAN Leadership Council.**

**Review of Minutes**

* Minutes from February 2014 were reviewed. Changes were requested: There was a typographical error in the date of the Minutes. It needs to be changed to February 2014 rather than December 2013.
* The Minutes were approved with requested changes.

**VAN Committee Updates**

* Michelle Palmer of the Leadership Council reminded the VAN members to participate in their assigned committee. The committee work is where the work for the VAN is done and where everyone’s perspectives are best heard.
* The **Standards and Accountability Board** was tabled. The co-chairs, **Nikki Charles and Natalia Otero,** presented a proposal to the Leadership Council, but neither chair was able to make it to the meeting to present the proposal. The proposal will be presented at the June 2014 meeting.The Standards and Accountability Board was unable to meet since the December meeting due to a fire in the court house. Their next meeting is scheduled for early March. They will present recommended structures for the Committee to the Leadership Council in time for their April meeting.
* The **Mental Health Services Committee** is chaired **by Michelle Palmer.** The Mental Health Committee has developed a basic survey that was distributed and will be redistributed. The survey is intended to get a clear idea of the services that are provided to crime victims within the VAN and within the District’s core service agencies. The next Mental Health Committee meeting is scheduled for May 13, 2014.
* The **Mass Violence and Emergency Response Committee** is chaired **by Anne Seymour with Allison Jackson** as the liaison to the Leadership Council. **Cortney Fisher** provided the report in Anne Seymour’s absence. The Mass Disaster and Emergency Response Committee has provided comments and guidance on the District’s Family Assistance Center and Family Reunification Center plan to the Office of Victim Services. The Office of Victim Services has been officially designated as the lead for the revision of the District’s Family Assistance and Reunification Center plan with regard to victim services. The Office of Victim Services has been working very closely with Kevin O’Brien, Director of Disaster Mental Health at the Department of Behavioral Health, and the Department of Human Services. The Committee will next meet when a draft of the revised FAC/FRC is presented back to the Committee after revision. Additionally, the Mass Violence and Emergency Response Committee has disseminated a survey that assess each VAN agency’s ability to respond during or after an incident of mass violence. If you haven’t done so, please complete the survey.
* The **Policy and Legislative Committee** is chaired by **Tonya Turner** and **Karma Cottman**. Tonya Turner provided the report regarding new initiatives of the Policy and Legislative Committee. It has recently been brought to the attention of the Committee that teens in domestic violence situations do not have housing available when they are not comfortable going home. This is a gap that needs to be addressed with a legislative solution, currently at 12 youth can file for restraining orders but do not have the opportunity to enter housing. **Daniel Rappaport** and **Tonya Turner** are creating a committee for teen housing; anyone interested in the committee can email Tonya. Karma Cottman provided the report on the OVS Budget Hearing. The testimony provided by VAN members was well received by Councilman Wells, who was impressed with the consistency of testimony. The VAN members asked for a 1.8 million increase on the current budget request to cover new projects and the suspect increased requests for services from the domestic violence hotline, Sexual Assault Victim Rights Amendment Act, the multicultural outreach, and the interpreter bank. The committee is hopeful for at least a partial increase. The **Department of Human Services** budget hearing is on April 30, and VAN members are encouraged to testify. The Leadership Council asked the membership about their preference regarding submitting testimony as a VAN in the future.

**Updates from Office of Victim Services**

**New Business and Announcements**

**Adrianne Todman** the Executive Director of the **DC Housing Authority** made a request for partnership with the providers of the VAN. DCHA has recently begun youth engagement and case management in the Benning Road properties. DCHA has noticed significant victimization among their residents and have asked for the assistance of victim services organizations to work with their residents. DCHA thanks those organizations already working in their properties. Providers who are interested in working with DCHA, please contact Adrianne Todman at atodman@dchousing.org or 202.535.1513.

The **Wendt Center for Loss and Healing** is currently accepting applications for kids aged 6-16 who have experienced a death related loss and would like to attend Camp. Applications are also being accepted for volunteers who have also experience a death related loss.

**FAIR Girls** has opened their new crisis apartment for girls and trans girls, aged 18-24, who have been trafficked and/or commercially sexually exploited. There are 3 beds that will be available for 30 days at a time.

**The Women’s Center** is able to provide free and low cost domestic violence counseling at the DC location. They also have a Spanish speaking clinician.

**DVRP** is now fully staffed and has a new staff member who has a Muslim **WHATS THE RIGHT WORD?** DVRP case managers speak a variety of different languages including Japanese, Vietnamese, and Urdu. Their Crisis Hotline is open Monday-Thursday from 8:00 am to 7:30, and Friday 9:00 to 6:30. The number is **202.833.2233.**

**Ayuda** has been awarded the grant from OVS for the Victim Services Interpreter Bank. Gillian will present more information at the next VAN meeting, if you have questions feel free to email her at Gillian@ayuda.org.

**Rainbow Response** has been awarded a grant from OVS to do outreach to the LGBTQ community.

**The Person Center** has been awarded a grant from OVS to do outreach in the African Immigrant community.

(Meeting was closed for Executive Session.)

**The meeting was adjourned by the Leadership Council.**

***Next meeting scheduled for June 20, 2014 @ 10 am***

***Wilson Building, Room 527***