

# SAFVIC ON THE SCENE

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Save the Date	2
2011 TCP Instructors	3
Featured Agency	3
Featured Book	4

## America's Night Out Against Crime

This year the University of Houston Department of Public Safety will be hosting the popular, National Night Out (NNO) 2011 on Tuesday **October 4**, from 4:30pm to 8:00pm, the event will be concluded with a Walk in the Dark, where the students are encouraged to walk on the campus to point out any dark or unsafe areas on the campus.



Law Enforcement agencies or organizations who are interested in attending are encouraged to bring resources they wish to display, demonstrate and or pass out.

For more information about the event please email or call:

**Frank Rosas**  
713-743-0417  
[FRosas@central.UH.edu](mailto:FRosas@central.UH.edu)

or  
**Aaron O'Donley**  
713-743-0592

[AODonley@UH.edu](mailto:AODonley@UH.edu)

## This is the Time to Go the Extra Mile

By: Michelle Corrao

Director of Community Relations for Prevail Inc., Advocating for Victims of Crime and Abuse

*Michelle Corrao*  
A STORY OF TRIUMPH OVER TRAGEDY

"Please, let me go," I pleaded yet again.  
"Do you think I'm stupid?" my assailant retorted.  
"Just take my car and leave me here."  
Nothing.

I heard the trunk unlatch and the three men grew quiet. When they shoved me in the trunk, I knew I would die there. My ordeal began approximately two hours earlier as I unlocked the door to my home. A blinding blow to the back of my head left me stunned, bleeding, and at the mercy of three assailants. I was blindfolded, gagged, my hands were tied behind my back and I was thrown into the trunk of my car. My only hope as the car sped off was to pray for my life and for those I loved. When the car stopped, they took me out and brutally raped me. Now they were shoving me back into the trunk. My clothes were barely covering me – torn and bloody – and I knew they had no intention of ever letting me go.

As they backed out fast, the tires squealed and the car surged forward. I freed my hands again. It was harder, but I wouldn't give up. Without the use of my hands or eyes, life seemed unbearable. I frantically resumed searching for a way out. When they finally stopped the car, I was only partly conscious. I tried to remain alert and listen to their conversation, but I passed out.

When I awoke, I heard what sounded like a police radio and waited. I was disoriented. *Is it the police? Is it some sort of drug thing? It's so dark!* I heard the voice again and I took a chance, kicking lightly on the trunk.

"Is someone in there?" the voice commanded.  
"Please help me."

"I am Detective Billingsley of the Fort Wayne Police Department. Hold on and I will get you out."  
And that's how I met Detective Arthur Billingsley: a guardian angel; an answer to a thousand prayers.

Detective Billingsley, of course, sees himself quite differently than I do. His shift was wrapping up after an exhausting child investigation at the local hospital. Despite wanting to go home immediately, he followed his intuition upon seeing two suspicious men at the back door of a restaurant. Alerted by increasingly suspicious behavior he decided to drive around to the back and that is when he discovered what appeared to be simply an abandoned car, but was in all likelihood soon to be a coffin for a woman trapped in a nightmare.

That woman was me. And despite the passage of 15 years as of September 12, 2011, Detective Arthur Billingsley's voice is as clear to me as it was that night. His willingness to go the extra mile is what saved my life.

I tell this story because I want police and first responders everywhere to understand the positive impact they can have on victims of sexual assault. The main thing I want to convey is that *no interaction is neutral, it is either healing or wounding.*

Detective Billingsley saved my life that night, but it has taken years to recover what was taken from me.

Working with victims can be a thankless job. As first responders, law enforcement officers encounter victims of sexual assault at the height of their trauma. They are confused, often in shock from the physical and emotional ordeal, terrified, and in denial. This is not an emo-

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Human Trafficking Awareness Month in Houston

During the month of September, Houston Rescue and Restore Coalition will host a series of awareness events and trainings as part of our 5th annual Human Trafficking Awareness Month. The HRRRC believes an aware and educated public is the first step to eliminating human trafficking. Through these events we hope to educate and engage the community on the issue of human trafficking in order to rescue victims and prevent individuals from exploitation in the Greater Houston Area.



For more information about Houston Human Trafficking Awareness Month events please visit [www.houstonrrc.org](http://www.houstonrrc.org).





RAINN Day is RAINN's annual campaign to raise awareness and educate students against sexual violence on college campuses. RAINN DAY is a grass-roots program designed to empower college students to raise awareness of sexual violence and recovery resources on their campus. Each year, RAINN Day reaches over 1 million students! RAINN Day 2011 is **Thursday, September 22nd!**

Visit the RAINN website to learn how you can participate in the 2011 RAINN DAY at [www.rainn.org](http://www.rainn.org).

### 2011 SAFVIC Instructor of the Year



In recognition of his loyal service, dedication, and commitment to the SAFVIC Program, the SAFVIC Staff would like to congratulate Wayne Springer for being this year's recipient of the Instructor of the Year award!

(Continued from page 1)

tional state that is conducive to helpful testimony.

As much as I wanted to cooperate with the first responders, I was often incapable of focusing. I felt dirty, ashamed, angry, and humiliated. The questions that I was asked all seemed to continue the nightmare that had started at the hands of my assailants. I wanted privacy, but received hours of questioning and examinations in brightly lit rooms filled with strangers. I had no idea what to expect next, and had no control over anything.

Remember when talking to me that I am someone's sister, daughter, wife, and mother. I am experiencing what is likely the worst emotional and possibly physical trauma of my life. I am scared. The assailant knows where I live or work, what I drive. I know now that I am not safe. Even if you catch him, I am never really going to feel safe again. I am humiliated at having to tell what has been done to me. I am having difficulty focusing. I'm confused. If I answer your questions and you leave, I may tell the nurse or doctor more details later. I may remember things and tell them to several others on the sexual assault response team. Taking the extra step to collect all the evidence and understand the whole picture is crucial.

It may sound trite to say that becoming a victim was not something I planned. But no victim is ever trained to be a good witness. Getting good evidence falls on your shoulders.

Even when mutual and loving, try to imagine how you would describe your last sexual encounter. Would you provide details? Would you be accurate? Yet this is what you are expecting and needing from the victim. This is the one time that going the extra mile to gather evidence and truly listen to the victim will have major dividends.

Looking back at that night, I realize that God truly blessed me with the people that helped me. Having worked at Prevail, a victim awareness and support program in Noblesville, IN, serving as a voice for victims of crime, I have learned that my experience is

not always standard. Sometimes the wounds of victimization are made deeper by the people who are trying to help. Understanding what victims need can turn every interaction into a healing one.

What all victims need is empathy. Acknowledge that they have been traumatized and it wasn't their fault. Give them back control. Allow them to have input in the decisions being made. All illusions of control have been stripped from them. They need to be empowered and that means their voices need to be heard. To feel in control, they need information. Always start by telling them who you are, what you need, and why. Try to let them know what will happen next and what their options are.

Victims also need privacy – a chance to just be. Your shift may be ending soon and you may need answers or access to them, but they need time to breathe. They need reassurance that they are safe and being given time to simply be in a safe place can go a long way towards building trust. As exhausting as the assault is, the hours of questioning and examinations can be overwhelming for most victims. Ultimately, reassurance, empathy, information, and a sense of security are crucial.

Finally, it is essential that victims feel a connection to someone specific. Having one contact person among law enforcement is crucial, and certainly requires going above and beyond the norm.

Years after my ordeal, I spoke with Neil Moore, who was Police Chief in Fort Wayne, IN, at the time of my assault. I asked him how many victims had returned to thank him. His answer was none. But know that what you do is far from unappreciated. Know that for each victim, the interaction with law enforcement is as unforgettable as the assault. The assault is undeniably wounding. The power you have is to start the healing.

**Michelle Corrao**  
Director of Community Relations  
Prevail, Inc.  
[www.prevailinc.com](http://www.prevailinc.com)

## Save the Date

### The North Texas Alliance presents **The 8th Annual Innovative Approaches to Family Violence Conference**

Formally the *Cutting Edge Conference*

The day includes a plenary speaker and workshop sessions including:

- From Barrier to Benefit: Community Engagement for Primary Prevention
- Cultural Awareness: Laying the Groundwork for Primary Prevention
- Social Marketing: Shifting Attitudes and Behaviors
- Thinking Outside of the Box: Creative Ways of Reaching Out to the Community

**January 13, 2012**  
**City Place Conference Center**  
**2711 N. Haskell Ave. #100**  
**Dallas, TX 75204**

**with National Speakers Russell Strand and Dr. Terri Pease**

[For more information or to register for the conference, click here.](#)



## SAFVIC Welcomes 10 New TCPS Instructors



(From top row, left to right)

**Sherri West**  
Port Aransas Police Department

**Susie Hammond**  
Houston CO. Sheriff's Office

**Katy Thompson**  
League City Police Department

**Betty Wafer**  
Dallas Police Department

**Candy Vickers**  
Houston I.S.D. Police Department

**Connie Eccles**  
Freeport Police Department

**Angie Brewer**  
Anderson CO. Sheriff's Office

**Stacci Hamilton**  
St. Edwards Univ. Police Department

**Sophia Gray**  
Dallas Police Department

**Megan Jones**  
Hays CO. Sheriff's Office

We would like to congratulate and welcome our new SAFVIC for Telecommunication Professionals (TCPs) Instructors! They recently completed the 24 hour SAFVIC for TCPs Instructor Course in Austin, Texas on August 15th - 17th.

The true first responder in any emergency is the Telecommunication Professionals whose primary objectives are to respond to calls appropriately and ensure victim and officer safety. The Sexual Assault and Family Violence Investigators Course for Telecommunication Professionals (SAFVIC for TCPs) is designed to provide 911 call-takers around the state with the tools they need to effectively identify and facilitate sexual assault and family violence calls.



### Advocacy Center

for crime victims and children

By Alyssa Mendez

The Advocacy Center for Crime Victims and Children, headquartered in Waco, Texas works to bring about healing to children and adults who are victims of crime and to facilitate change to end violence through advocacy, collaboration, and community awareness. The umbrella agency has four programs, the Children's Advocacy Center, Court Appointed Special Advocates, The Victims Center, and Prevention and Education, who together offer many services to children and victims of crime in McLennan, Hill, Falls, Limestone, Bosque and Freestone counties. Our mission is to promote healing of children and crime victims through advocacy, collaboration, prevention and treatment.

The Victims Center provides prevention, support, advocacy and counseling for sexual assault survivors and other victims of crime. Although 70% of those served by the agency are affected

### Featured Agency

by sexual assault, the agency works with victims of all violent crime. Crisis intervention advocates are available immediately 24/7 through a crisis hotline. Sexual assault nurse examiners conduct forensic medical examinations at local hospitals. Case management and advocacy for clients with law enforcement, the court system and other agencies are available, along with counseling and support groups.

Court Appointed Special Advocates play a role in the lives of abused and neglected children in the foster care system. The program's volunteers form a relationship with a child and become familiar with everyone involved in the child's life. Through the information they gather, they are able to make recommendations that help the court make informed decisions about a safe, permanent placement for the child. CASA volunteers have a special opportunity to make a life-long difference in the life of a child and stop a cycle of abuse and neglect for generations to come. Unlike any other volunteer opportunity,

(Continued on page 4)

### October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month

The Domestic Violence Awareness Project (DVAP) is a diverse and unique partnership of local, tribal, state, and national domestic violence organizations and networks. The DVAP collaborates to collect, develop, and distribute resources and ideas relevant to advocates' ongoing public and prevention awareness and education efforts not only in preparation for Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM), but also throughout the year.

Since the first observed DVAM, in October 1987, diverse activities have been conducted with one common theme: mourning those who have died because of domestic violence, celebrating those who have survived, and connecting those who work to end violence.

For more information about DVPA campaigns and materials and how to participate, please visit <http://dvam.vawnet.org/>





"Piecing together the tools needed to effectively investigate and prevent sexual assault, family violence, & stalking."

## Contact Us:

### Jennifer Greene

Program Manager  
jennifer.greene@safvic.org

### Brooke Hinojosa

Program Coordinator  
brooke.hinojosa@safvic.org

### Sarah Romero

Program Analyst  
sarah.romero@safvic.org

### Kelsey Downey

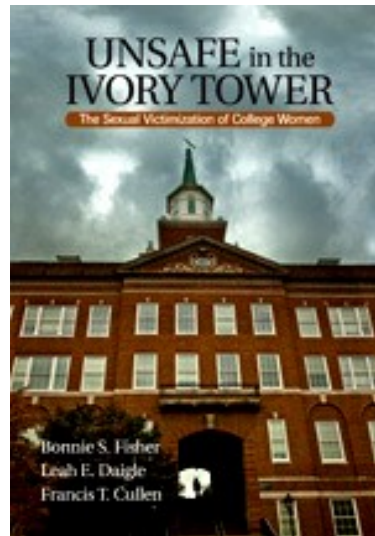
Program Assistant  
kelsey.downey@safvic.org

[www.safvic.org](http://www.safvic.org)

6200 La Calma, Ste. 200  
Austin, Texas 78752  
Phone: 1-800-848-2088  
Fax: 1-866-210-6173



## Featured Book



### Unsafe in the Ivory Tower: The Sexual Victimization of College Women

By Bonnie S. Fisher, Leah E. Daigle, Francis T. Cullen

**NEW** to the **SAFVIC Library:** *Unsafe in the Ivory Tower* examines the nature and dimensions of a salient social problem—the sexual victimization of female college students today, and how women respond when they are, in fact, sexually victimized. The authors discuss the research that scholars have conducted to illuminate the origins and extent of this controversial issue as well as what can be done to prevent it. Students and other interested readers learn about the nature of victimization while simultaneously gaining an understanding of the ways in which criminologists, victimologists, and social scientists conduct research that informs theory and policy debates.

#### Key Features

- Provides detailed information about sexual victimization on college campuses today
- Introduces broad lessons about the interactions of ideology, science and methodology, and public policy
- Integrates current data, research, and theory, based on the authors' national studies of more than 8,000 randomly selected female college students

**This book is available in the SAFVIC Library to SAFVIC Instructors only.**

\*Be sure to check out the other four books that have recently been added to the SAFVIC Library!

(Continued from page 3)

CASA empowers everyday people to serve officers of the court and work with and on behalf of a foster child.

The Children's Advocacy Center provides a holistic, coordinated response to suspected sexual and physical abuse. Services include digitally recorded interviews that allow children an opportunity to tell their story, medical examinations and weekly case reviews that oversee each case from beginning to end. The program also partners with agencies such as law enforcement, Child Protective Services, the District Attorney, the medical community, social workers and case managers and pursues safety for children exposed to drug-abuse environments. Along with the services provided to victims, the program educates the community in ways to prevent child deaths, child abuse and violence, and through family enrichment groups

provides ways to communicate and discipline non-violently.

The Prevention and Education program offers professional and community education, training and other support related to the prevention of sexual violence, including the development of organizational policies. The program serves school and college personnel, students, parents, faith communities, law enforcement, public, medical and mental health professionals, and civil and business groups and includes topics such as bullying and bystander intervention, preventing sexual violence, masculinity, media and culture and health relationships.

**For immediate assistance, call the 24-hour Crisis Hotline at 254-752-7233 or toll free at 1-888-867-7233.**

**To contact the agency, call 254-752-9330 or visit their website at [www.advocacyctr.org](http://www.advocacyctr.org).**