

# Have Justice – Will Travel

*Helping to End the Generational Cycle of Violence*



## NEWS

WINTER 2004-2005

### Strengthening Our Foundation

*A Family Home Becomes Needed Office Space*



*HJWT staff on the steps of our new offices (L-R): Front row: Founder Wynona Ward, Diana Lischer-Goodband, Mary Claassen, Harold Ward  
Second Row: Johnnie Mae Doyle, Robin Goodrum, Janet Babcock  
Third Row: Jessica McManus, Kathryn Kennedy, Donna Bushika*

Six years ago, Have Justice – Will Travel (HJWT) was conceived by a woman who wanted to help women and children who were about to begin living in the 21st century, yet were living under the same conditions that she grew up in

during the 20th century: poverty, spousal battering, child abuse, alcoholism, little or no health care, and no way out.

Spouse and child abuse were common when HJWT Founder Wynona

Ward was growing up. When Wynona's mother asked the minister for help, he said that marriage was for better or worse until death do you part. If this woman – who raised five children on

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## In a World of Suffering, Generosity and Kindness Still Abound



kind of assistance to get away from the punches she took and the choking she routinely suffered.

Memories like these keep me working diligently to help poor women and children who are victims of domestic violence. Concerns about finances have certainly been on my mind in the past year. Early in the year we were successful at gaining funding for our two southern Vermont offices and for half-time paralegal Robin Goodrum to assist the HJWT attorneys. Funding, however, was coming to an end for Kathryn A. C. Kennedy, Esq. who is assigned to Washington and Lamoille counties, and for myself and Johnnie Mae Doyle, our central Vermont administrative assistant.

I vividly recall growing up poor on a rural, back road in Vermont. My mother, with only an eighth grade education, often sat at the kitchen table trying to figure out where a few cents had gone in her checkbook. Once she found her error, she then needed to stretch those cents into dollars so she could put food on the table for her family and shoes on her children's feet before winter came. I can only imagine the desperation she felt with no place to turn to for financial help or for any

Without a development person or grant writer on staff, the worry of finding funding to keep women and children safe has fallen upon my shoulders – as it did my mother's. It is difficult to describe how I felt when HJWT received an enormously generous donation in June 2004 of a \$50,000 grant to fund Kate's position, and a second \$50,000 grant to fund the work of my staff and I in central Vermont. The woman who heads the foundation that gave these funds wishes

to remain anonymous, but to her goes my most sincere appreciation and gratefulness. Tears flowed freely then and still do when I think of saving women's lives with this money.

HJWT success stories continue to grow. One of Kate's clients with three children turned to substance abuse while living with an abusive husband; she eventually left him and is putting her life together by attending school to become a paralegal. She is attending our fall Women in Transition Group and has aspirations of becoming a lawyer someday. One of my clients began a job recently at a prominent local medical center after graduating from VT Technical College. Two years ago she came to me in tears because her husband abused her adolescent daughter. Today, after receiving legal and social services from HJWT and participating in individual and family counseling, this mother and her children are doing well.

It is always wonderful to see women and children's lives improve once they are free from abuse. I often say that it is the story of one woman helping another, who helps another, who helps another.

Generous donors enable HJWT to continue to help abused women and children. I thank this anonymous donor from the bottom of my heart, for she is truly an inspiration to us all.

*Wynona Ward*

## Have Justice – Will Travel, Inc.

is a non-profit organization that operates exclusively on grants, fellowships, and private contributions.

If you wish to make a tax-deductible donation, please make your check payable to:

***Have Justice-Will Travel, Inc.***

9580 VT Route 113, Chelsea, VT 05038

In-kind donations for clients and office needs will be gladly accepted. Please call (802) 685-7809; toll free (877) 496-8100.

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## Services Expand in Southern Vermont

### Have Justice – Will Travel, Inc.

#### *Legal Services*

Representation in court for:  
Relief from Abuse hearings  
Child support needs  
Divorce and Parentage issues  
Custody and Visitation hearings

#### *Social Services*

Safety planning/Shelter referrals  
Financial advice/Creditor plans  
Assess financial needs of family  
Referral for continued education  
Referral for driver's license  
Agency referrals/Support services  
Assist/Obtain subsidized housing

#### *In-home consultations*

#### *Transportation to:*

Court hearings  
Social Service appointments  
Supervised visits  
Doctor's appointments  
Women's group

#### *National toll free phone line*

#### *Women in Transition*

Women's Support Group  
Life skills mentoring  
Job and Parenting skills  
Child Care Ideas/Assistance  
Psychological support  
Education about Violence

#### *Supervised Visitation*

Referrals for Supervised Visits  
Exchanges  
Parenting classes  
Counseling arrangements

In October 2003, Have Justice – Will Travel received a second grant from the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) Rural Domestic Violence and Child Victimization Program. This two-year funding has allowed HJWT to expand the free legal and social services it has been providing for victims of domestic violence in Bennington and Windham counties in southern Vermont.

These grant funds are being used to help Have Justice – Will Travel increase cooperative efforts with law enforcement, victims, prosecutors, and advocates, while increasing regional awareness of domestic violence.

Vermont Senator Patrick Leahy, the ranking Democrat on the Judiciary Committee, noted, "Wynona Ward and the entire HJWT staff have helped many Vermonters escape and avoid difficult and dangerous situations. Domestic violence is an epidemic, and Have Justice – Will Travel has done an incredible job fighting that epidemic where few rural VT communities are able to offer suitable legal counseling."

HJWT's first DOJ grant (2001-2003) provided funds for one attorney for the two southern Vermont counties. The new grant has allowed HJWT to devote two attorneys and two half-time legal assistants to needy women in this part of the state.

Jessica A. McManus and Mary B. Claassen are busy serving dozens of

clients in their respective Bennington and Windham county offices. Both attorneys are 2001 graduates of Vermont Law School and, like Wynona, are veterans of VLS's South Royalton Legal Clinic. In addition, both are former New Hampshire Legal Services staff members with multi-state experience in domestic violence law.

Jessica was nationally recognized as the 2000 Outstanding Law Student of the Year, by Who's Who: American Law Students. She most recently worked for a private law firm in Bennington, VT.

Jessica's legal assistant, Donna Bushika, formerly served as an administrative assistant for the Vermont Department of Corrections. Donna is helping Jessica administer the HJWT Women in Transition Life Skills and Mentoring Group, in addition to her administrative and secretarial duties. Mary's legal assistant, Diana Lischer-Goodband, is a graduate of Vermont College with experience as a legal secretary, paralegal, and law clerk in Vermont.

Downtown office locations provide easy access to county courthouses, and Jessica and Mary both travel to clients' homes when needed. By helping clients with safety and self-reliance, the attorneys guide victims of domestic violence to achieve greater independence.

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The mission of *Have Justice – Will Travel, Inc. (HJWT)* is to end the generational cycle of abuse in rural families by bridging the legal, cultural, geographical, psychological, and economic gaps that exist for victims of domestic abuse. *HJWT* provides legal and supportive services for battered, low-income women and their children. Wynona I. Ward, Esq., the founder and director of *HJWT*, created an innovative, mobile, multi-service program that **assists victims of domestic abuse through the legal process, from the initial interview and relief from abuse order through self-sufficiency and independence.** This holistic, multi-service approach to assisting rural victims often is the key to women first escaping the abuse and then moving forward to improving the quality of their lives and their children's lives. Since 1998, *HJWT* has been serving women in the State of Vermont and is expanding to assist women who live in rural areas throughout the United States.

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almost nothing – had chosen to use the legal system to report the beatings she received from her husband or to report her husband’s alcoholism, she would have been told that “a man’s home is his castle and we don’t interfere there.” But that castle was like a prison for Wynona, her siblings, and her mother, and its foundation was not secure.

The HJWT multi-service model works. It helps abused women and their children escape abusive relationships and keeps them from going back.

HJWT has grown by leaps and bounds and we now have our own permanent building and office space. After years of occupying the first floor of the Ward’s home to save overhead expenses, HJWT is now literally and figuratively on its own firm foundation.

In 2004, a home once owned by Harold Ward’s grandparents and by his Aunt Helen came up for sale after Helen’s death. Helen, a teacher, had always approved of and praised Wynona for her work on behalf of battered women and their children. HJWT has made Helen’s three bedroom, ranch style home into a wonderful workplace for our staff, clients, and the community.

This summer, Wynona received a

\$10,000 award from the Foundation for the Improvement of Justice (p. 5). These funds are being applied to initial mortgage payments and some essential upgrades. The electrical system was modernized and Harold completed many other renovations himself.

A networked telephone system that greatly improves office efficiency was generously donated, as was its installation by a local technician. Computer lines were also installed in preparation for networked office computers (we are hoping to raise funds to update one iMac computer soon and then would use one of our older computers as a server).

On Labor Day weekend we moved in desks, files, and all other equipment. Harold and Wynona share an administrative office; Kate Kennedy, our Washington and Lamoille county attorney, and Robin Goodrum, our paralegal, share an office; and our volunteer attorney, Janet Babcock, and Sarah MacAskill, the new Kids Place Direct Services Coordinator, share a third office.

The living room doubles as a reception area and a conference room for board and staff meetings. The kitchen, now fully equipped with donated kitchen equipment, serves as a

meeting and dining place for staff and is also a comfortable place to meet with clients when they prefer to come to us (rather than having attorneys come to them). The attic houses the files of our many successfully finished cases, while the basement serves as dry equipment storage. The entire building is in use.

Most importantly, not only does our new office offer all the things described above, it offers privacy for staff to work and consult with clients, while allowing meetings to take place simultaneously in the adjacent conference space.

Now that we are settled into the office, we are setting up the second floor of a storage building on the property, where HJWT clients can choose donated clothes, furniture, dishes, linens, and other living necessities.

Dreams do come true, with the help of frugality, hard work, strategic planning, and the generosity of those who understand the importance of helping women to help themselves and their children.

We invite you to visit HJWT’s new headquarters and view the firm foundation we have created for our clients. We thank all who have donated funds, labor, professional skills, and support. Because of you, women are living fuller and more peaceful lives.

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discussed how we could work together to implement the HJWT model on the WEIR, once funding is found.

The visit ended on a heart-warming note. Lisa and Juanita had brought gifts of mazon (rice) and hominy, which is grown for the White Earth Land Recovery Project. The mazon had an amazing texture and flavor and was tremendously filling, and HJWT was pleased to share Vermont Ben & Jerry’s ice cream for dessert. In addition, Lisa and Juanita presented us with beautiful beaded medicine bags and baskets made from birch woods, and HJWT sent them home with Vermont maple syrup and honey to share with the tribe.



*Have Justice - Will Travel's four attorneys (L-R): Mary Claason, Wynona Ward, Jessica McManus, and Kate Kennedy.*

## Wynona Receives Two Very Special Awards in 2004

In March, Harold and Wynona Ward enjoyed an exciting and fun evening sponsored by the regional chapter of the American Red Cross. "The Central Vermont Salute to Hometown Heroes" honored individuals in Washington and Orange counties who have shown exceptional courage and kindness.

The event, inspired by the September 11 attacks, honors those who respond to emergencies every day. Among the dozens of nominations were many describing personal hardship

and inspirational heroism.

Five finalists were nominated for the highest honor, "The Community

Impact Award." After a suspenseful evening, Wynona was astonished to receive this award for helping families plagued by domestic violence. She was thrilled to be met on stage by U.S. Senator Patrick Leahy and then congratulated by both Senator and Mrs. Leahy during the event's closing.

The second exhilarating evening took place in September in Atlanta. The Foundation for the Improvement of Justice gave its Paul H. Chapman Award to Wynona for her numerous significant contributions.

The foundation was established and endowed in 1984 by

the contribution of a major portion of Judson and Zena Chapman estate, which continued its history of philanthropy by donating multimedia stock during a major growth period.

The awards program is similar to the Nobel Peace Prize and was the vision of the Chapman's son, the late Paul H. Chapman, who served as foundation chairman for 15 years. Each year, awards are given to only eight people and/or organizations from across the nation. Winners receive \$10,000, which enabled HJWT to move into permanent office space in September.



"Hometown Hero" Wynona Ward received the prestigious "Community Impact Award" for her work against domestic violence. (L-R) Harold Ward, Windsor County Senator Mark McDonald, Wynona, Mrs. Leahy, Rosina Wallace, Sen. Patrick Leahy

In its coverage of the "Hometown Heroes" event, the Barre-Montpelier *Times Argus*, wrote:

*Combine the experience of surviving family violence, 15 years of long-distance trucking and a law degree and you've got yourself an eclectic resume. But add the heart, creativity and dedication of a committed woman and you've got a unique organization called Have Justice - Will Travel.*

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## Native Americans From Minnesota See HJWT As a Potential Model

Have Justice – Will Travel was honored to have Lisa Brunner and Juanita Lindsay from the Community Resource Alliance Tribal Coalition (CRA) visit in September 2004. The CRA, a federally recognized, non-profit organization, was formed in 2001 to find innovative and effective ways to combat the injustices that affect Native American and Alaska Native women living within and adjacent to the White Earth Indian Reservation (WEIR) in northwest Minnesota. The CRA is a grassroots coalition comprised of members from women's shelters, crisis centers, tribal elders, county and tribal social service agencies, schools, law enforcement, legal and judicial personnel, and others.

Lisa had heard about HJWT and then met some of our staff in April, while attending a three-day domestic violence training in San Diego sponsored by Praxis International and the U.S.

Department of Justice. Lisa and Juanita then obtained funding to travel to Vermont to confirm that the HJWT model could make a difference for women and children on the WEIR.

The WEIR is an extremely poor reservation with more than 50% of the inhabitants living below the poverty threshold. This high incidence of poverty has been the root of socio-economic problems such as alcoholism, addiction to drugs, high teen pregnancy rates, domestic abuse and sexual violence, and as a result, self-esteem is very low – almost to the point of being nonexistent. There are no shelters, no safe homes, and no supervised visitation or safe exchange facilities, and legal services are desperately needed for both protective orders and for divorce cases.

Lisa and Juanita spent a day at our new headquarters learning about the HJWT model with the central Vermont

staff, who then in turn learned about CRA agency relationships, legal services available for Natives, and about the tribal, state, and federal laws that affect Native families. Although the geography of Vermont and the reservation are different (Lisa and Juanita were amazed by the isolation caused by Vermont's densely forested hills), it was eye-opening to discover the similarities faced by abused women and children from both areas.

The next day the women observed how Jessica McManus has implemented the HJWT model in southwest Vermont. They also met with people from the state's attorney's office and with the local victim advocacy group, PAVE, and they attended a Domestic Violence Task Force meeting.

Lisa and Juanita believe that the HJWT model would be very helpful for Native victims of domestic violence. We

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