

Have Justice—Will Travel

Ending the Generational Cycle of Violence



NEWS

FALL 2016

Providing Legal Services for the Elderly in Vermont Even Grandmas and Grandpas Can be Victims of Abuse

By Wynona I. Ward, Esq., Founding Director, HJWT

Vermont, according to 2012 statistics, was home to approximately 626,000 people; of those 132,000 or 21.1 % were over 60; 62,000 or 9.9 % were over 70; and 26,000 or 4.1 % were over 80 years old. The number of those who are 60 or older is growing more rapidly than any other component of the Vermont population. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that by 2030 the elderly will make up 40% of Vermont's population.¹

Abuse of the elderly includes physical, emotional, and sexual abuse; abandonment, neglect, confinement, and financial exploitation. Most often if an elderly person is living in the home the perpetrators can be either male or female and 90% are children, grandchildren, or other family members. Two thirds of perpetrators are adult children or spouses.²

Approximately 1 in 10 American citizens over the age of 60 have experienced some form of elder abuse. Estimates range as high as 5 million elders who are abused each year and one study estimated that only 1 in 14 cases of elder abuse are reported to authorities. Social isolation and mental impairment are two factors that contribute to abuse--nearly half of those with dementia experienced abuse or neglect. Elders who have been abused have a 300% higher risk of death when compared to those who have not been mistreated. While likely underreported, elder financial abuse costs older Americans \$2.9 billion per year.³



From left to right: E. Elaine Griffith, HJWT Client; Wynona I. Ward, Esq., Founding Director; E. Robin Goodrum, Coordinator of LEAP; and JohnnieMae Doyle, Administrative Manager.

If an older adult, or anyone for that matter, is in immediate, life-threatening danger, call 911. You can reach the Eldercare Locator by telephone at 1-800-677-1116 from any state in this country. Specially trained operators will refer you to a local agency for help.⁴

In Vermont, you can call 1-800-564-1612, you do not have to prove or be certain that a vulnerable adult has been abused, exploited or neglected in order to make a report; you only need to have reason to believe that abuse may have occurred or is still occurring. In Vermont, Adult Protective Services (APS) is a public safety program within the Division of Licensing and Protection (DLP), Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living. APS is tasked with receiving and investigating allegations of abuse, neglect and exploitation of vulnerable elderly and disabled adults in Vermont.⁵

Have Justice—Will Travel (HJWT) has provided legal representation in the courtroom for elder victims of abuse in a variety of ways including relief from abuse orders filed against spouses and children. It has represented elderly clients in divorce matters, stalking orders, landlord/tenant cases, creditor issues, and for cases

¹ [www.aoa.gov/AoA_Programs/Vermont--US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Aging](http://www.aoa.gov/AoA_Programs/Vermont--US_Department_of_Health_and_Human_Services,_Administration_on_Aging).

² www.ncoa.org National Council on Aging—Elder Abuse Facts.

³ Id.

⁴ www.aoa.hhs.gov National Center on Elder Abuse/suspect abuse.

⁵ www.dlp.vermont.gov/protection

of financial exploitation. Legal services provided have included initial client interviews, pretrial motions, drafting deeds, wills, living wills, and other civil legal issues. HJWT attorneys have accompanied victims during criminal trials where it is necessary for them to testify. This is especially important when the victim is a vulnerable adult.

As you saw in the page 1 photo, E. Elaine Griffith has been a client of HJWT's since 2007. Elaine, age 74, is a lifelong Vermonter who came to HJWT first for assistance with a protective order against her then husband who had been extremely abusive to her since they were married when she was eighteen years old. That relief from abuse order specified that he was to vacate the house and stay 300 feet from her.

HJWT also filed divorce on the grounds of intolerable severity, but before the divorce was finalized, the abusive husband came to house in the middle of the night, broke in, and then shot himself in the head in front of her. Since the abuser's death, HJWT has assisted Elaine with a case of financial exploitation, drafted and finalized a will for her, plus helped her draw up and file a living will. Every few weeks, HJWT enjoys having Elaine visit our office for tea or lunch.

By taking care of herself, Elaine has shown how an elderly person can best protect herself from abuse. Every elderly person needs to take care of her/his health, learn about domestic violence and her/his legal rights, make sure she/he has a will and a living will that states what her/his health care wishes are, post and open their own mail, have their own telephone, but never give out personal information over the phone, drive to appointments, and use direct deposit for all checks. Elaine is active in her community, loves going to yard sales and church bazars, and enjoys her beautiful flower garden. Perhaps most importantly, in order to not be isolated, she stays connected with friends and family.

Physical abuse permeates every socio-economic level. You don't have to be poor to experience domestic violence. Plenty of middle-class women, and some men, are beaten and humiliated by their partners. An economic downturn does not cause violence in itself, but it can create the conditions that make these times ripe for it -- environments where a sudden change in circumstances, acute financial problems, or loss of self-esteem often come into play.

As is often stated by victim advocacy agencies abuse knows no bounds, knows no social class, and affects victims from birth to death.

When You Fall--Get Back Up and Get Back to Work!

The tale of a broken leg and a thank you for everyone's kindness.

By Wynona I. Ward, Esq., Founding Director, HJWT



A HJWT client, E. Elaine Griffith sitting next to Wynona in her wheelchair.

On Saturday, September 24, 2016, I was happy to be trucking once again, although it was with a three-quarter ton truck, not an 18-wheeler. I was returning recyclable cans and bottles, which is considered a civic duty in Vermont, and in addition one is rewarded with a nickel for each returnable item. This day began, for me and for many others

around me, a journey that will more than likely stretch into spring.

Shortly after I arrived I began preparing to unload. Since the pickup body is three feet off the ground, I set up a stepladder to climb up into the back. The next thing I knew I had lost my balance and the stepladder and I were lying on the ground! Someone shouted, "Are you alright?" I looked down at my right leg and saw that a bone was broken, had pierced the skin, was bleeding, and my foot was pointing sideways. Needless to say, I decided I was not okay. I did not lose consciousness, but I knew I was in a lot of pain.

The recycling center employees called 911 for the Upper Valley Ambulance then handed me the telephone so I could speak to the dispatcher who wanted to know my condition and then connected me to my home, but Harold was outside and didn't hear the telephone. I then called my 'right hand woman,' JohnnieMae Doyle, who did answer.

I quickly "ordered" her to go to Vershire, drive Harold to Bradford to get his pick up, and explained that I would be at Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon, NH. The ambulance crewmembers were two very knowledgeable and compassionate women. I am grateful to them and to the two male fire fighters who were called to load me in the ambulance. One EMT

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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.

Work Continues in Bennington and Rutland Counties

By John B. Lamson, Esq. and Katie Jayne, Client Coordinator and Office Administrator



John B. Lamson, Esq., Staff Attorney, Bennington and Rutland Counties and Katie Jahne, Coordinator of Client Services standing in front of a Bennington County courthouse.

The Southern Vermont office has been hard at work continuing the important work of assisting victims and survivors in Bennington and Rutland Counties. The office is currently working under the final year of a three-year grant that was awarded in 2014 from the U.S. Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women (OVW).

In October 2016, HJWT was pleased to be able to send two staff members, as well as two members of our community coordinated response team, to a legal training in Washington, DC. This opportunity was made available under the OVW grant. John Lamson, Staff Attorney for Bennington and Rutland Counties, as well as Katie Jane, Client Coordinator and Office Administrator, completed two days of intensive legal training provided by leading professionals in the field of domestic violence legal services.

In addition, Rutland County State's Attorney (RCSA), Rose Kennedy, and a victims' advocate for the RCSA, Kelsey McDonald were able to join John and Katie. HJWT was so pleased that State's Attorney Kennedy was able to join the team in DC. This shows not only the strong bond between HJWT and Rutland's law enforcement community, but also the State Attorney's commitment to issues of domestic and sexual violence.

Roberta Valente, Chief Officer for Government Affairs at the National Domestic Violence Hotline, opened the DC event outlining the history of legal assistance for victims. Since its passage in 1994, the Violence Against Women Act contemplated access to legal services as an important need. Funding, however, was not

allocated until 2000. Since then, the funding has increased as has the recognition of need in this essential area. "Representation by counsel is critically important — studies have shown that represented victims of domestic violence have a much higher likelihood of securing an appropriate order of protection than those that appear on their own behalf." *Lawyers' Manual on Domestic Violence*, Supreme Court of the State of New York, Appellate Division, First Department, The New York State Judicial Committee on Women in the Courts, p. 87.

Champions of Civil Legal Assistance were recognized in:

- Senator/Vice President Joe Biden
- Senator Ted Kennedy
- Senator Patrick Leahy
- Senator Mike Crapo
- Congressman Hal Rogers

Workshop topics included: Rights of Survivors to Protection from Eviction and Access to Law Enforcement Assistance; A Practical Approach to Recognizing, Evaluating, and Responding to Domestic Violence in Child Custody Disputes; Promoting Protection of Survivors and Their Children Through Civil Processes and Building Community Collaboration to Address the Legal Needs of Human Trafficking Survivors; and Trauma-Informed, Victim-Defined: Practice Issues for Lawyers.

A representative from the Vice President Joe Biden's office, Kristina Rose, thanked all the attendees for their dedicated efforts.

Below are actual cases from the Bennington-Rutland office files (names and places have been altered to protect anonymity):

One client was referred to HJWT from a campus advocate at a local college. The defendant boyfriend lived in her hometown, but visited her at college frequently and often unannounced. Our client reported that he wanted to make sure she was not seeing anyone else while at college. He sent non-stop messages and made dozens of phone calls in the span of a couple hours. Our client blocked his number, but he would use an app to get around that or use a different phone. The defendant would watch her at work to see if any other men were talking to her. He had several depressive episodes and would often take out his feelings on our client.

On one occasion the parties had been drinking when the defendant made several remarks about our client seeing other men. At that point, she had had enough and said: "Yes, I like someone else," at which point the defendant punched her in the head twice. On another occasion she was crying and the defendant tried to get her to stop by strangling her. At one point, the defendant told her he had recently purchased a firearm. He drove over two hours one night just to "talk to her." When he arrived, however, he threatened that he would kill himself in front of her. The defendant had already told

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our client that he would leave a note stating she was the reason he killed himself if he ever was to go through with it.

With help of victim advocate she reported these incidents to police and campus safety officer and criminal charges were filed.

The defendant obtained counsel and initially rejected any settlement. After negotiation and review, however, Defendant eventually agreed to a strict no contact order and did not compel the client to testify in court. This was a good resolution for the young (19 years-old) client who was extremely nervous about being in court for the first time. Through HJWT's connections with local advocates and the advocate on campus we were able to have the campus security officer provide support and documentation as well as testify if necessary. This is an example of how HJWT is using its long-standing relationships in the community to further our clients' needs.

Another HJWT Client was victim of an abusive man who has serious anger and control issues culminating in an incident where he brandished a loaded handgun in front of the victim who was holding their two-month old child on the couch. The defendant threatened to kill himself and then threw the gun onto the couch next to the victim and told her to do it. This extremely reckless behavior was just one incident among many that got out of control and dangerous.

After our client filed a Relief From Abuse Order and Divorce, criminal charges were filed by the State. It soon became clear that the defendant was highly vindictive and blamed everything on the mother. In addition he was not ready to accept any responsibility for his actions or that they may have placed the child at risk.

The defendant refused to attend supervised visitation and in fact was rejected from the program because he had a mental breakdown during a routine interview. The program allowed that if he could provide them with proof that he had attended regular counseling, they would reconsider his eligibility for the supervised contact, but the defendant refused arguing to the court that supervision was unfair and unnecessary.

The father continued his abuse of our client by manipulating the divorce proceedings by lying and to try to convince the court to give him unsupervised visitation without following through on any of the therapeutic conditions required.

The defendant also claimed that he was now unable to work because he had gone to jail over the incident with the gun. In fact, he continued to face the charges but was released on conditions and was not at that time convicted. Ever since the incident, however, the father claims he is unable to work and continues to argue that he is unable to pay any amount of child support and has not been found to be disabled in any way. The defendant has not submitted any evidence of work searches and claims there is no work available, but can provide no employers that he has contacted about a job.

HJWT is essential to clients who are trying to navigate difficult and complex legal proceedings. Not only are some clients compromised due to serious PTSD as a result of abusive relationships but the legal issues can also be difficult for some under the best of circumstances. Laws are often written with a presumption that both parents are loving and fit. When abuse is present in a relationship it is often paramount that the abuse be laid clearly out so the judge can keep the mother and child safe in subsequent custody orders.

Often, when clients face these custody hearings on their own they often downplay the abuse or the Judge simply does not think to inquire about that issue. As a result the path of least resistance is taken, which is exactly how the abuser has manipulated the situation throughout the relationship, which can allow the abuse of the mother and child to continue.

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 Mentoring 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

Starr Strong, PA Joins the HJWT Board

By Wynona I. Ward



Starr Strong, PA (Retired-Chelsea Health Center) The new HJWT Board member.

Center for over twenty years and during her career referred many clients to HJWT.

Starr studied eastern religion and traveled in India and Nepal during her college years. Once she returned to this country she found herself drawn to a relatively new career – that of a physician assistant. She trained to be a physicians’ assistant at Wake Forest University in North Carolina beginning in 1979. Starr worked for Vermont Planned Parenthood in Barre, Vermont, but she persisted in her desire to work in a medical center. Starr was eventually hired by the Chelsea Health Center and Dr. Brewster Martin, who had doctored in Chelsea his entire life, was her mentor.

“Chelsea’s an old time family community and people are fiercely independent and have a lot of pride. If they don’t have anything, it doesn’t matter. It’s down to earth,” Starr said. For a woman loathe to “lipstick and high heels,” it was just perfect. And like with Martin, she formed relationships. “Medicine is not just a science. Medicine is an art and it’s about relationships and it’s about developing relationships with people,” she said. (Quotes are from the Gifford Health Center website.)

Although Starr was raised in Connecticut, she visited the Strong family farm homestead in Brookfield, Vermont with her family several times a year. Starr is the sixth generation to own that Brookfield property, where she still lives with husband John Button.

Wynona agrees completely with Starr’s comments about medicine being an art and about relationships. Wynona describes practicing family law, too, as an art that is about developing relationships. All HJWT Board members look forward to working with Starr, especially since she is familiar with our Vermont clientele. We know that she will add a new perspective to our Board.

The Have Justice—Will Travel (HJWT) Board of Directors is very excited to welcome retired Physicians Assistant Starr Strong as its newest member. Starr was the first physicians’ assistant ever hired by Gifford Medical Center in Randolph, Vermont. Now physicians’ assistants play an important role in providing medical care for people throughout Vermont. She worked for Gifford at the Chelsea, Vermont Health

Center for over twenty years and during her career referred many clients to HJWT.

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Starr doing what she enjoys most—serving a new patient.

When You Fall--Get Back Up, continued from page 2

worked quickly to put an IV in my arm, the other EMT, who was a Dartmouth College student in-training, drove us to the hospital.

Harold and JohnnieMae arrived at the emergency room the same time I did. The emergency room staff, nurses, and doctors were all efficient, each one handling their jobs not only to make me more comfortable, but also to prepare me for surgery. When the orthopedic surgeon arrived he told me in no uncertain terms that this was an extremely serious break. He explained that I had broken both bones in my leg plus damaged my ankle, that I needed to worry about possible blood clots, which could lead to possible amputation; and that I would not be able to bear any weight on the leg for three months. He apologized for being abrupt, but I thanked him knowing I needed to hear the reality of the situation.

I woke up in the recovery room with 4 stainless steel pins and 3 rods necessary to hold the broken bones together and in line, protruding from a very swollen leg. I received wonderful care from the nurses on duty. Much to everyone’s surprise, I was quickly able to use a walker to get out of bed and move around. Monday evening Harold brought me home.

I had a second surgery on October 3, 2016 once the swelling decreased, have returned for one x-ray, had stitches removed, and will return again on November 29, 2016 for my next follow-up x-ray and check up.



Harold Ward with ‘Boris’ a recently rescued feral kitten.

Words cannot describe how thoughtful, patient, and considerate Harold has been with me. He is truly a wonderful caregiver—he set up a daybed for me in our sitting room area, brought me lots of pillows to keep my leg elevated, had a walker and wheelchair

ready, and built a port-a-potty for me. During the first two weeks, he waited on me each and every day; bringing me a variety of beverages and cooking great meals. Now he transports me for hospital appointments, meetings with clients, and court hearings.

After approximately two weeks of recovery I returned to work part-time from home. The next week, JohnnieMae, made all the arrangements for me to work full time from my home office. A booster was installed so my i-Phone has service; the dining room table is now a working desk with a laptop and printer, and necessary client files, as well as office supplies. She still mans the telephone at the office and handles the accounting including: payroll, payroll tax filing, all bookkeeping and the business checking account. She does all this while also taking calls from me and making several trips daily between the HJWT office and my home office. She also often cooks scrumptious meals for Harold and me.

I cannot say how grateful I am to have such wonderful people surrounding me to watch over me through all of this. I have come to realize that this is truly a treasure in life that many people do not have. With all their help, I have been able to “get back up and go back to work” serving HJWT clients.

Have Justice – Will Travel’s (HJWT) Legal Empowerment Assistance Program (LEAP)

It has been another demanding, at times challenging, but very rewarding year.

By E. Robin Goodrum, Paralegal and Coordinator of LEAP



E. Robin Goodrum, Paralegal and Coordinator of LEAP preparing to leave the office to go see a client.

In May 2016 we saw the Integrated Domestic Violence Docket (IDVD) in Windham County for which HJWT provided an attorney and LEAP services since it began in September, 2014 come to an end. The IDVD was a pilot project designed to bring the criminal and civil court cases together on the same day in front of one judge in an effort to prevent numerous hearings and conflicting orders. Robin Goodrum assisted Jessica A. Smith, Esq., the attorney HJWT provided on the day of IDVD court. HJWT also provided continued information,

support and important hands on assistance with further court filings such as a parentage, divorce, child support, modification, enforcement, and other civil legal issues. Most importantly though, and extremely helpful to these IDVD clients, was the continued relationship and provision of legal assistance and understanding they received from Robin through LEAP.

Wynona I. Ward, Esq., the Founding Director of HJWT, notes that although federal funding for this project, which was gained through the Vermont Judiciary, stopped in May, it is hoped that more funding will be available in the future. This pilot project proved to be very successful not only for plaintiffs, but for the defendants. It reduced the recidivism rates of this type of crime significantly.

We adjusted to the loss of Hannah Elle Myers, Esq., a valuable member of the HJWT team who was a tremendous asset for delivery of LEAP services in the Northeast Kingdom. She provided Robin with solid consistent legal advice that Robin then employed to offer hands on legal assistance to HJWT’s Northeast Kingdom LEAP clients. Hannah became aware of an employment opportunity she felt better suited her passion to effect change and went after it. We are delighted to report that she was offered the position, accepted the offer and is enthusiastically applying her knowledge, skills and talents as, Executive Staff Assistant, with the Vermont Commission on Women.

As for LEAP, Wynona I. Ward, Esq. and E. Robin Goodrum worked very closely and thoroughly with Hannah before her departure to ensure all of HJWT’s Northeast Kingdom clients, those fully represented as well as LEAP, were effectively transitioned. Wynona and Robin work as team to continue meeting the on-going legal needs of those existing clients, and to address the constant new referrals as they come into the office.

We managed a voluminous number of cases throughout the State of Vermont, some of which were new case types for HJWT and required quite a rigorous but stimulating learning curve. A client was referred to HJWT by their caseworker due to what he felt was an early and inappropriate graduation from high school. Although our approach was to address the issue within the confines of a special education team meeting, it was not to be. The end result was weeks of educating ourselves with the help of the Disability Law Project, Vermont Family Network, other attorneys, and extensive research. In the end our client was granted the right to file for relief again in the future. It is fair to say that HJWT’s interest and concern with respect to the rights of special education students and the fulfilment of those rights has been peaked. As a result of this case HJWT is hoping to participate soon in a special education law training offered by the Disability Law Project of Vermont.

We rejoiced in September with news that LEAP, after a re-evaluation, has been identified by the Vermont Bar Foundation as a non-competitive grantee. Although HJWT will continue to submit a grant proposal each year as in the past, the new status guarantees LEAP will receive a portion of the funds available for allocation each year.

Wynona wishes to congratulate Robin for all the hard work she does for HJWT and especially for LEAP clients. Robin is an exceptional worker. She is diligent and well organized. She has a wonderful rapport with clients, whether adults or children. HJWT has been fortunate to have Robin as an employee for over fifteen years.

Have Justice–Will Travel, Inc.

is a nonprofit organization that operates exclusively on grants, fellowships, and private contributions. If you wish to make a tax-deductible donation, you can use your credit card on our website, www.havejusticewilltravel.org, or please make your check payable to: **Have Justice–Will Travel, Inc.** • 9580 VT Route 113, Vershire, VT 05079

My Experience as a Student Legal Intern at Have Justice – Will Travel

There is a light at the end of the tunnel for abuse victims.

By Natasha V. Patel, VLS '17, Student Legal Intern



Natasha V. Patel, Vermont Law School student legal intern, Summer 2016

I first met Wynona when she came to my Family Law class at Vermont Law School during Fall 2015. We watched a video that explained her background, the turning point which encouraged her to attend law school and what Have Justice-Will Travel (HJWT) deals with on a daily basis. I knew that I had to intern with her because I wanted to pursue family law. I emailed Wynona my cover letter, resume and writing sample in hopes of landing an internship during the Summer of 2016.

When I arrived for my face-to-face meeting with Wynona, I quickly realized that HJWT is not only a legal organization but it is a tight-knit family of courageous, smart and independent women who are willing to help victims of abuse navigate the legal process. When I arrived for my first day of the internship, Wynona asked me to look through a case file about an individual who owed her ex-husband money that he knowingly overpaid to the Office of Child Support. After reviewing the entire file, my first thought was, “Wow! This man made sure he delivered the last blow.” This case reinforced my desire to help victims of abuse navigate the legal process but also to help these women come out empowered.

During my summer at HJWT, I learned a lot of practical legal skills that are not taught in law school classes. I learned how to draft motions, orders and responses for the court, how the court operates, how to identify legal issues and finally how to interact with clients who are facing a long road ahead. I also

learned to be patient and actively listen during client intakes because sometimes a person just needs someone to hear their story. I will be taking these learning moments to help further my career as an attorney.

One particular case that stood out for me and ended in our favor dealt with education. A former special education high school student was in need of more services to help him become a functional member of society. Instead of allowing him to stay in school and receive those services, the school decided to graduate him thereby cutting all services. When I reviewed the client’s file I quickly concluded that this individual needed our help. I had to research cases dealing with this particular issue in education. There were moments that I became frustrated because of the issues involved but I refused to give up. Many memos and briefs were exchanged between us and the opposing party that added to my frustration with this case. However, in the end, the hearing officer decided in our favor and we were able to move forward with the case. When I was told of this victory, I was beyond proud of all the work Robin and myself put into this case. I felt accomplished and unstoppable.

In the face of sadness and gut-wrenching stories, Wynona, Robin and Johnnie made sure to put a smile on my face. They reminded me that it was okay if I stepped away from the current client file and thought of happier moments before I went down a dark road and was unable to help these clients. I always came back with a renewed vigor to help clients. Also, if it were not for Johnnie’s Scottie dog, Jasper, I am sure I could have succumbed to a breakdown. As I look back on my experiences at HJWT, I realize that with assistance from the HJWT staff there is a light at the end of the tunnel for HJWT clients.

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Have Justice—Will Travel

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Vermonters in the 50-64 age group were more likely than those in the 65 and older group to report frequent mental distress: 10.6% in the 50-64 group and 6.8% in the 65 and older group. The rate of suicide among Vermonters age 55 and older has varied from a low of 13.3% per 100,000 in 2005 to a high of 20.2% in 2008.

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Queen Gertrude or "Gertie" as we call her, appeared at HJWT in 2008. She is a Maine Coon Cat and the official HJWT mascot.

Being Thankful For What Has Been Gained—Realizing There is a Lot More Work to Do.

by Wynona I. Ward, Founding Director, HJWT

Everyone at Have Justice—Will Travel, Inc. (HJWT) including our Board of Directors, attorneys, legal and administrative staff, volunteers, and especially the clients we serve are extremely grateful to those who have supported us over the years. Without our donors, there would be no HJWT.

Especially at this time in this country when transitions in our local, state, and federal governments will be taking place it is important for everyone to come together and be thankful for all that we have. HJWT has been fortunate over the last 18 years to have the financial support of sustainable grants and donors who have clearly seen that a victim's needs sometimes seem insurmountable, especially when she/he is trying to get away from the abuse and the abuser keeps getting more and more aggressive.

HJWT vows to continue our work to end the generational cycle of abuse in rural families and assure that disadvantaged Vermonters have access to our justice system. Every year we find ourselves representing clients who live in poverty, who are unaware of their legal rights, who are taken advantage of by shysters, and who do not know how to protect their children. It is these families and children that HJWT strives to assist so that they have a fair chance in life.

Again, I want to thank each and every one of you for the wonderful support you have provided. I look forward to hearing from you in the future and to keeping you informed about the work of HJWT.

