

Happy 20th Anniversary!

Have Justice—Will Travel

Ending the Generational Cycle of Violence



NEWS FALL 2018

Have Justice—Will Travel Celebrates its Twenty-Year Anniversary

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

They said: “Free legal services for victims?” “A legal firm that gives rides to Court?” “A lawyer who makes house calls?” “Attorneys don’t do that,” many said.

Well, I replied, “This attorney does!” So began HJWT in 1998. And most importantly: Here we are still providing all those services and more for our clients.

The idea came about slowly, as I traveled up and down the interstate highways going to and from work and to visit my mother-in-law who was in the ICU at Boston Medical Hospital in Massachusetts.

Those hours gave me plenty of time to reflect on my work as a summer law student intern in the Vermont Attorney General’s office in Montpelier, and think about what my life and career would be like once I graduated from Vermont Law School (VLS) in 1998 and how I could best serve Vermonters.

I had read over 200 affidavits that were written by women requesting protective orders who lived in the same county, some even from the same town where I grew up. These women were being hit, kicked, and strangled the same as my mother had been over forty years before.

It became quite clear to me that these women needed transportation to and from court—many did not have automobiles or driver’s licenses. They needed free lawyers to represent them in the courtroom where their batterers, who controlled the purse



Wynona Ward



JohnnieMae Doyle,
Administrative Manager

strings, could hire a lawyer. They needed a legal advocate who was willing to go to their homes to meet with them where they were comfortable.

These victims needed justice brought to them. Thus, the Have Justice—Will Travel name and model of bringing free legal services, transportation, and in-home consultations to victims and survivors of domestic and sexual violence in Vermont was born.

The HJWT model provides a holistic multi-service approach to help clients. By holistic, I mean that we look at the whole person and look at all her needs, not just her legal needs.

In the past twenty years HJWT has served over 8,000 people. 2,409 of these clients received full representation from attorneys that provided motion writing, witness and hearing preparation, and courtroom representation for various matters including relief from abuse, parentage, divorce, parental rights and responsibilities, parent child contact, and child support.

In Probate Court, attorneys provided representation for

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A Heartfelt Thank You to: Nancy G. Harter

"Without you there would be no HJWT"

Twenty years ago, in the fall of 1998, I was invited to talk about HJWT at a Vermont Law School (VLS) alumni gathering in Washington, D.C. That evening was the moment when plans for HJWT began sprouting and growing for years to come—for that was the evening I met Nancy Harter.



Nancy G. Harter

As Nancy and I visited about my hopes for HJWT, I discovered she was a non-profit consultant and lived part of the year in South Royalton, VT where her husband Phil was a professor at VLS.

We also talked about Bowen's Family Systems Theory, a family systems theory, developed by the late American psychiatrist Dr. Murray Bowen (1913-1990), that "provides a new paradigm for conceptualization of human behavior and treatment of human problems. It is a

theory about relationships. Instead of seeing individuals as an emotional unit of his own, or as a separate entity, and the individual as the basic unit of treatment, Bowen deemed that individual functioning should be understood in the context of his relationships, that each person's emotional functioning is closely interconnected with each other, with reciprocal impact on each other." (Contact E-mail: info@thebowencenter.org)

Nancy was a member of the non-profit Board at the Bowen Center for the Study of the Family in D.C. I had studied Bowen Theory as an undergrad and had applied the Theory to my own immediate and extended family. We talked a lot that evening about how Bowen Theory could help HJWT clients.

A short time later Nancy called me from her home in Vermont and we began a professional mentoring relationship that continues today, as does our friendship. Over the years, Nancy has volunteered hundreds of hours as a Board member for HJWT. She assisted

with beginning the original Board, with establishing HJWT as an approved 501(c) (3), and has served as the Secretary of the Board.

She has been influential with developing Board and personnel policies, with all aspects of fundraising, and funded several training seminars for me. Nancy invited me to her home in D.C. and accompanied me to see the Vermont delegation to congress at that time including Senator Jim Jeffords, Senator Pat Leahy, and Congressman Bernie Sanders.

All three agreed to write support letters for HJWT as we applied for funding from the US Department of Justice Office of Violence Against Women. These extremely competitive grants that we apply for every three years have funded our Southern Vermont offices since 2001.

Nancy developed the HJWT Women in Transition Life Skills and Mentoring Group (WIT). This program teaches women how to turn the coping skills they used to survive abuse into strengths to improve their lives. WIT was launched to help clients establish themselves after leaving an abusive relationship. WIT provides both the lessons and the tools for a woman to solidify her financial well being, widen her support network, and develop a foundation on which to build a new life. The WIT group works to dissolve existing barriers to self-sufficiency and to stop the abuse cycle in which women become trapped. Bowen's Family Systems Theory is an important part of these sessions.

Nancy realized that participation in the WIT group must begin at that point in women's lives when they had been provided free legal services by HJWT to leave their abuser. This is the point when most services for abused women ended. HJWT knew, however, that ending services at this juncture of a woman's journey left her without resources and skills. There is a healing and growth process that must occur so that women can begin constructing lives where they can sustain themselves and their children.

The WIT program has operated successfully in all the HJWT offices including Central Vermont, Bennington County, Windham County, and in the Northeast Kingdom area for

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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.

Growing by LEAPs and Bounds

By E. Robin Goodrum--*Much More than a Paralegal at HJWT Since 2002*

HJWT first received a grant from the Vermont Bar Foundation (VBF) to help with the delivery of legal services to those who could not afford to hire an attorney in Vermont in 2002. This grant made it possible for HJWT to support the work of newly hired Robin Goodrum, who at that time served as a half-time paralegal working in both the Central Vermont and Windham County offices.

Over the years with the growth of HJWT, the organization has become dependent upon Robin for much more than the specific tasks originally highlighted in the 2002 grant request. Her work has moved from being a half-time paralegal to being the full-time Coordinator of the HJWT Legal Empowerment Assistance Program (LEAP).

Even in 2004, HJWT was receiving hundreds of telephone calls each year from family members who were seeking legal assistance but who HJWT could not represent because of our already heavy caseload. At that time, Robin's work with this portion of our client base brought to light a method for providing more extensive legal help and education to those clients that HJWT could not fully represent.

She developed a "consulting" program for call-in clients that would benefit from on-going contact with HJWT. Robin saw that these "call-ins" required many consultations as opposed to a quick answer or specific direction.

For consulting clients, who required extensive help navigating the legal process, understanding how to respond to court correspondence, and finding out if they are eligible for social services, Robin offered many hours of phone support and one-on-one time. She educated these clients about Court procedures and assisted them in filling out forms and filing parentage, divorce, parental rights and responsibilities, parent child contact, and child support matters.

Robin also provided referrals to appropriate social service agencies and helped transport mothers and children to social service appointments, as well as to court, when necessary. With the continued support and direction of HJWT, these women overcame terrifying challenges in their lives, they discovered inner strength they did not know existed, and persevered through tough legal battles and major life adjustments.

LEAP is a program that evolved in 2005 from the HJWT call-in and consulting work. The program offers long term, on-going support to those disadvantaged Vermonters and *pro se* litigants in Vermont Family and Probate Courts who call looking for legal advice and direction throughout the development of their case.

One key reason LEAP has been so successful in helping

Vermonters is due to our delivery system for services. In the footsteps of the HJWT model, Robin goes to the client.

Over the years in an effort to maximize the use of time and minimize the cost of travel, Robin has worked to develop strong relationships with advocacy agency staff that can help these clients with the initial filing of paperwork after Robin has gleaned the specifics of the legal situation, consulted with Wynona, and has relayed advice from the attorney to them.

The legal advice given is about the person's legal options and possible outcomes, as well as the process. Robin then explains the rights of both parties, the specific laws that will guide a judge in reaching a decision, and the correct paperwork to file to commence the case.

She next guides the client and or the advocate to the paperwork on the judicial website or emails it to the client and after it is printed out goes over it with the client to help her fill it out. Many times advocacy agencies are members of the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence.

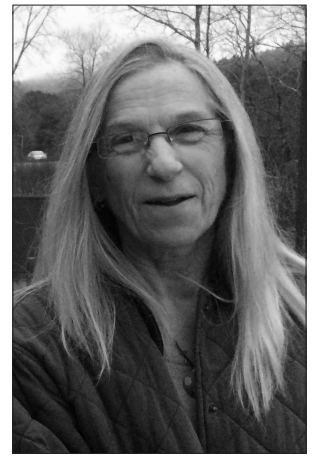
It proves to be extremely helpful to have an advocate sitting with the client. It is reassuring and comforting for the client to have someone physically there with you, hearing all the same information you are hearing because a lot of information is given and it can seem foreign and confusing.

The advocate serves an important role by being there after the call to review what was discussed and answer any questions. The advocate has often already been working with the client and therefore already has a trusted, supportive relationship with the client.

If a motion, affidavit or letter must be written, Robin will do that with the client then fax or email it to the advocacy agency for filing.

These very specific tasks, when done appropriately, can lead to a client having a positive first experience with the court, rather than one where they must return over and over to the Court in order to file a complete petition.

After the initial filing, over the process of their case, Robin continues to explain to the client and or the advocate what the next steps are. She assists them one step at a time, preparing



By E. Robin Goodrum,
Coordinator of the Legal
Empowerment Assistance
Program.

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Beginning My Career as an Attorney at HJWT

By Laura Savall, Juris Doctor, VLS '18



Laura Savall, JD VLS'18 is serving clients in the HJWT Bennington office.

I started working for Have Justice -- Will Travel (HJWT) in early September 2018 after graduating from Vermont Law School (VLS) in May. I have always been passionate about helping survivors of intimate partner violence.

Throughout my undergraduate career I was a member of Alpha Chi Omega who's dedicated philanthropy was fighting domestic violence. Specifically, we worked with the Christine Anne House in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. We would volunteer at the shelter along with raising funds to help provide services for women and children going through some of the most difficult times of their lives.

As a **Schweitzer Fellow at VLS**, I worked with incarcerated women at Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility. Each week I helped empower women by teaching critical thinking, public speaking, and debate skills. While working with these women I soon learned that many of them had violent encounters before ending up in prison. Many did not have the resources to have an advocate help them.

In law school I spent a summer working with Vermont Legal Aid as their Joan Bauer Domestic Violence Fellow. This opportunity sparked my interest in practicing family law, especially working with survivors of domestic and sexual violence. I quickly learned that the domestic violence community is a force to be reckoned with and I am still astonished by the amount of perseverance each and every client exemplifies.

My main project with Vermont Legal Aid consisted of traveling to all the Family Courts in Vermont on Relief From Abuse Hearing Day to observe the safety procedures that had been instituted by Court staff and the Sheriff's security staff. It was interesting to note the wide range of protocols varying from county to county.

The starkest comparison came with our southern counties who previously participated in the Integrated Domestic Violence Docket courts. These courts had varied time arrivals for plaintiffs and defendants, different waiting areas for litigants, and keeping victims and abusers separated until they were to appear in front of the judge in the courtroom. I hope to continue advocating for better security on RFA hearing days in Vermont.

I have enjoyed getting to know the Bennington and Rutland area. They

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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

Bennington – Rutland Update: *It has been a year of change.*

By Katie Jahne, Paralegal, Client Services Coordinator, and Office Administrator



Katie Jahne, Paralegal, Client Services Coordinator, and Office Administrator of our Bennington County office.

The Southern Vermont office is entering year two of its three year grant renewal from the Department of Justice's Office on Violence Against Women (OVW).

In June we bid a fond farewell to Attorney John Lamson, who was with HJWT for 12 years. John first served as a Legal Intern and then as the Staff Attorney for the Northeast Kingdom area of Vermont. For the past 8 years John has been the Staff Attorney for the Bennington-Rutland Office.

John has now accepted a position as the Pre-Law Coordinator/Instructor for the Southwestern Vermont Career Development Center in Bennington, Vermont. This two-year program, introduces high school students to the American Legal System and to the major areas of law, including: criminal law, torts, family law, property, contracts and American Constitutional Law. Students participate in off campus learning activities in local courts, agencies, and local law firms. The program ends with a mock trial where students actively participate in direct and cross-examination and in opening and closing statements before a live jury (www.svcdc.org).

We all know John will be a wonderful teacher who will start students on a career that may bring them to HJWT someday! Everyone at HJWT wishes John the best in his new career.

Wynona states that it was during this transition with John moving on and Wynona being the sole practicing lawyer at HJWT, that Katie Jahne proved to be one of HJWT's most valuable employees. Her paralegal skills are honed to perfection and it was spectacular when with one phone call, Wynona could ask Katie to file certain motions with the Court, call a client to calm her down, or research a tough legal question.

Wynona further states that Katie single handedly kept the Bennington office operating smoothly. In addition to answering the telephone, conducting intakes for all who call looking for legal representation, as the client service coordinator, she ensured that client issues were identified and they were referred to the proper resource within the many community partners with whom HJWT works.

After John left, Wynona stepped up, not only to handle her cases through the central office, but also came to Bennington and Rutland several times per week for hearings and to meet

with clients. Also during this time she interviewed for the open staff attorney position.

In August we were delighted to learn that Laura Savall, a 2018 Vermont Law School graduate had accepted the position of Staff Attorney. We welcomed Laura aboard September 1, 2018 and she has wasted no time in jumping right in. Laura has already successfully represented several clients in Relief From Abuse hearings in both Bennington and Rutland. Laura will sit for the Bar exam in February. We wish her the best of the luck with the exam.

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

HJWT assisted a client in establishing parental rights in Vermont. The father had been abusive to the mother during the relationship. A child support order was established in another State without a schedule of contact. Shortly after the order was put into place the mother moved back home to Vermont to raise her infant son.

After two and a half years of no contact, the father filed for contact in the state where he was living. HJWT assisted the mother in filing for Parental Rights in Vermont, requesting that the matter in the other state be dismissed. The case was moved to Vermont and the Court established a contact schedule with appropriate restrictions. Interstate matters are always complicated; HJWT is able to provide clients with professional guidance to overcome these difficult challenges.

Attorney Lamson assisted a client in establishing paternity, parent-child contact and child support. The client was in a relationship with a veteran who suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The father had refused treatment for his trauma and insisted that he was not at fault and he was being discriminated against. He was verbally abusive during contested hearings on several occasions to the mother, attorneys, and to the Court. With the assistance of HJWT the mother was able to obtain sole custody. The Court ordered that the father's visits be supervised, but he has not chosen to have those visits. This mother and child are now living free of abuse and rebuilding their lives.

HJWT has served Bennington County victims and survivors since 2001(17 years) and over those years has worked closely with Project Against Violent Encounters (PAVE), the Bennington County victim advocacy group. HJWT has worked closely with the Rutland County Victim advocacy group, NEW STORY, for the past 8 years. It has been wonderful to have these community partners support the work that we do. ♦

Thank You to Nancy G. Harter, continued from page 2

several years. Today, because of the lack of funding and personnel the WIT program has been put on hold. Hopefully, that will change soon, as our fundraising efforts continue.

Fundraising and development are areas where Nancy excelled for HJWT. She realized the importance of connections and public relations. She often either wrote or assisted with writing our annual funding request and helped with our yearly newsletter. She also guided many of the application and grant requests made by HJWT and had many suggestions for the HJWT Strategic Plan.

After retiring from their careers, Nancy and Phil sold their homes in Washington, D.C. and Missouri and now live half of the year near their grandchildren in Atlanta, Georgia and the other half of the year at their farmhouse in Vermont. Although still an active member of the HJWT Board, with retirement, Nancy has begun to limit her involvement with HJWT. She instead spends more of her time with family and working in the splendid flower gardens that she has designed. Under her green thumb, they flourish each year in both Vermont and Georgia.

With her style of mentorship, Nancy encouraged me to develop my own skills, strategies and capability so I am able to confront the next boulder that is thrown in my path. Having Nancy's guidance, encouragement and support as a trusted and experienced mentor have provided me with a broad range of personal and professional benefits, which have lead to me being a better leader for HJWT.

I am truly lucky to have had Nancy as an extraordinary mentor in my life. She is that special person who has inspired and encouraged me to be the best version of myself; to take risks where important, not only for myself, but for HJWT, and to not be afraid to chase success. The success of HJWT has improved the lives of thousands of survivors of domestic and sexual violence throughout Vermont.

So, thank you Nancy for being you, for sticking with me for over twenty years. Without you there would be no Have Justice—Will Travel.



Growing by LEAPs and Bounds, continued from page 3

them for their first case managers conference, status hearing, any contested hearings, and for the finalization of their case.

The importance of this method is its ability to build knowledge and confidence with the goal of empowering the client to represent her/himself in the courtroom. That LEAP is a long-term, on-going relationship and process of assistance is the magic of the program.

Wynona notes that another key reason LEAP is successful is because Robin is a perfectionist in her work. She insists that with

Beginning My Career as an Attorney, continued from page 4

are diverse areas of Vermont with rich cultures and strong communities. I have felt extremely welcome by my coworkers, courthouse staff, community partners, and clients.

I am most thankful for Katie Jahne, the HJWT Bennington paralegal, client services coordinator, and office administrator for helping me with the transition and helping with clients while I'm still learning the ropes. Wynona Ward has also been a magnificent mentor while juggling countless clients all over the state.

My favorite part of the job is going into court on Thursdays and Fridays. Thursdays is the Relief From Abuse (RFA) docket day in Bennington County and Friday in Rutland County. Each week we have a plethora of new clients who present new challenges. I enjoy the ever-changing cases and legal problems--no two days are the same. We reach so many clients and our services are greatly appreciated by those we help. Helping clients get RFAs and empowering them against their abusers is the most rewarding part of the job.

From there, we may help clients with more long term issues which cannot be solved during their RFA hearings. I have taken on a few parentage cases and helped with divorce paperwork. I enjoy negotiating parent contact schedules; coming to a solution where all parties work together and ultimately benefit the most innocent who are involved, the children.

I also look forward to getting involved with the DV counsel and DV task forces in the area. This is a very welcoming community and I'm excited to get to know more advocates and lawyers helping fight domestic violence. We recently attended the *pro bono* Conference sponsored by the Vermont Bar Association in Montpelier where I learned about assisting clients with disabilities and got further training on trauma informed work. These seminars are invaluable to my training and to our future clients.

I am honored and humbled to join Have Justice -- Will Travel in their 20th year and I cannot wait to contribute further to the mission of ending the generational cycle of abuse. ♦

each call, each step in the legal process, and when each client receives advice it is the best advice that they must have in order to represent themselves successfully in Court. She has the patience of a saint and is willing to repeat instructions and advice over and over until she is sure the caller understands what she is saying.

Robin is a precious gem to HJWT. Her work has assisted many family members, women, men and children to have their legal rights recognized by the judicial system. Not only that, in addition, many times she has saved lives. ♦

Twenty-Year Anniversary, continued from page 1

guardianships for children and as well as adults.

In addition to clients served, 5,189 children have benefited from HJWT services. Attorneys have provided direct legal services for dozens of children and have also served as Guardians ad litem. Robin Goodrum alone has served as a Guardian ad litem for over 150 children. Wynona has provided attorney services for 76 children and Guardian ad Litem services for 14 children.

Every year since 2005, the HJWT Legal Empowerment Assistance Program (LEAP) has averaged over 1,000 calls each year from women and men who need legal assistance. The program offers legal services for disadvantaged Vermonters and *pro se* litigants who call looking for legal advice and direction throughout the development of their case.

Ninety five percent of HJWT clients are women. However, we do accept referrals and provide services for men, especially for dads who are trying to protect their children. Over twenty years HJWT has served 7,613 women and 215 men.

At one time when there was ample funding HJWT had 6 attorneys and 4 paralegals that worked out of 5 offices across the state.

JohnnieMae Doyle has been our Administrative Manager since 2001. She is the heart, the center, of HJWT. When no one else has an answer, JohnnieMae will know. We all appreciate the wonderful baked creations she makes for staff and Board meetings!

Over the years we have had dozens of undergraduate, graduate, and law student volunteer interns including students from Dartmouth College, Colby-Sawyer, UVM, Lyndon State, VLS, UNH Law School, and Georgetown Law School.

Although today HJWT has just 2 offices, we still provide coverage for 6 counties in Vermont. HJWT's LEAP program provides telephone and some one-on-one services throughout the State.

I often say that we have a "patchwork quilt" of funding. Since 2001, our Southern Vermont offices have been funded by a federal grant from the US Department of Justice Office of Violence Against Women.

In the past three years, we have received a grant from the

VT Center for Crime Victims Services, which helps provide services in the Northeast Kingdom area of VT. Also for the NEK area, the most isolated and rural area of VT, we are fortunate to receive grants from: The Blackwell Fund, The Serena Foundation, and The Mill Foundation.

For over 10 years, the Ann L. Bronfman Foundation funded the services provided by Kathryn A.C. Kennedy, Esq. including the HJWT office and paralegal in Randolph, VT. Kate has had her own practice since 2011 and in the midterms was elected as Probate Judge in Orange County.

The VT Bar Foundation contributes toward HJWT's LEAP, as does the Mascoma Bank Foundation.

We have one-time contributors and we have sustainable donors who have given for twenty years. The list is too long to include here, but each spring we send out a thank you that includes a list of donors including foundations, businesses, and faith based organizations.

By far our most important source of funding has been our individual donors who faithfully give year after year. Like all who give, these wonderful donors realize how important our work is for Vermonters.

With the help of many, HJWT has grown from an idea to a model that for twenty years has made tremendous changes in lives and, even more importantly, has helped save lives.

I want to thank, most sincerely, each and every one of you for believing in me, for believing in my idea, and for believing I could make it work. ♦

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

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Have Justice–Will Travel

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I dream of a day when no

child watches her mother being beaten by her father, when no child needs to cover her ears to block out the screams. I look forward to a day when no woman is forced to return to her abuser because she can't put food on the table or shoes on her children's feet.

(802) 685-7809 or Toll Free (877) 496-8100 www.havejusticewilltravel.org E-mail: Wynona.hjw@t@gmail.com.

Vermont Domestic Violence Statistics Between 1994 and 2017 – 23 Years

(From the 2018 Domestic Violence Fatality Review Commission Report)

Between 1994 and 2017, **50%** of all Vermont homicides were domestic violence related.

80% of Vermont's domestic violence-related fatalities were committed by males.

53% of the decedents in domestic violence-related fatalities were females.

55% of Vermont's adult domestic violence-related homicides were committed with firearms.

77% of the suicides associated with the homicides (i.e. murder/suicides) were committed with firearms.

Of the seventeen (17) homicides in Vermont in 2017, eleven (11) (**65%**) were domestic violence related.

Of the 11 domestic violence-related homicides, 6 were intimate partners.

Of those 6 intimate partners, 3 were current partners and 3 were recently separated.

One had a relief from abuse order in effect at the time she was murdered.

Of the 11 domestic violence-related homicides, 3 involved the use of a firearm.

2 responsible parties died by suicide, 1 by firearm and 1 by intentional overdose.

