Have Justice–Will Travel

Ending the Generational Cycle of Violence



NEWS Fall 2012

An Award Winning Model *Two Attorneys Receive Awards for Their Work at HJWT*



Attorney John B. Lamson holding the Vermont Bar Association Pro Bono Service Award for 2012

Each year the Vermont Bar Association (VBA) gives the VBA Pro Bono Service Award to an attorney in the state who exemplifies an outstanding commitment to pro bono service. The award winner must go above and beyond the state's model rules on pro bono activity and provide an example for the Bar at large. In 2012 the award was given to Have Justice—Will Travel's own, John Lamson.

A Vermont native, John grew up in a Quaker family in South Royalton where social justice for everyone and volunteerism were emphasized. After high school, John graduated from New York University in New York City where he tried acting as a career for a short time, but then returned to Vermont to attend Vermont Law School (VLS).

John first came to Have Justice—Will Travel (HJWT) as a VLS summer student intern and after graduation in 2006 went to work as a part-time legal intern and then attorney for the Northeast Kingdom (NEK) area in Vermont under the supervision of Attorney Wynona I. Ward, the founder and director of HJWT. In 2007, John transferred to the Bennington County office as a full-time attorney under the US Department of Justice (DOJ) Office of Violence Against Women grant.



During the last week in October, Wynona traveled to Orlando, Florida where she accepted an award from The Caring Institute, a Washington, D.C. organization with a mission to promote "the values of caring, integrity and public service since 1985. . . . The Institute celebrates heroic people for their selfless service, especially to the dying,

Attorney Wynona I. Ward holding the Caring Institute Angel Award.

disabled, and disadvantaged. The dedication of these unselfish people to public service uplifts us all and ennobles the human race. It is committed to spreading the caring credo: you can do well by doing good. ... our belief [is] that one person, with the heart and will, can make a positive difference in the world."

In addition to the award, Wynona will be inducted into the Caring Hall of Fame at the Frederick Douglas Museum on Capital Hill where a photo and profile of her accomplishments will be on display.

While at the Caring Awards Celebration Wynona told the audience which included Senator Tom Daschle, the Honorable Mel Levine and many who were present for the National Association of Home Health and Hospice Conference that, "It is really humbling for me to receive such a prestigious award for it *continued on page 4...*

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Wynona is Recognized by Vermont Law School Alumni Association



During the Vermont Law School Alumni Association (VLSAA) reunion held on September 15, 2012 on the VLS campus, Wynona was honored to receive the Second Annual VLSAA Distinguished Alumni Award. On a sunny cool day with autumn colors just beginning to appear in South Royalton, Wynona was welcomed to the VLS campus by the new

Wynona holding the VLSAA Distinguished Alumni Association Award.

President and Dean Marc Mihaly, to receive her award.

In accepting the award Wynona made the following remarks to the gathered alumni and guests:

"It is always wonderful and truly special to be among those who appreciate VLS and the wonderful legal education we received here and that is still being provided on this campus for students today.

It was here that my legal education and the remarkable professors who gave me that education helped me formulate my idea and desire to found Have Justice-Will Travel (HJWT), a Vermont non-profit that provides legal and social services for low-income battered women and children who are victims of family violence.

Especially influential for me was the time I spent as a clinician at the South Royalton Legal Clinic where I worked with professors and lawyers including Jim May, Alex Banks, Maryann Zavez and Art Edersheim who showed me how to help clients and how to serve disadvantaged Vermonters who cannot afford to hire an attorney.

As a child growing up in the 1950's in poverty on a rural back road in Vermont less than 25 miles from the VLS campus, when the neighbors heard screaming coming from our home-they turned their heads. And frankly, when we heard screaming coming from their home, we turned our heads--family violence was an accepted way of life.

When my mother asked the Minister for help he reminded her that marriage was for better or worse 'til death do you part.' The local doctor treated her black and blues and other injuries, but didn't ask where they came from.

If my mother had chosen to use the legal system, she would have been told that a man's home was his castle, we do not interfere there, but little did they know that castle was like a prison for my mother and her children. Spouse abuse, child abuse, & alcoholism were things no one in the community discussed, but for me it was an always-looming family secret.

There have been major changes in society from when I was an abused child. It is now acceptable to talk about family violence. If teachers, social workers, doctors, nurses, and others who work with children encounter a child who they believe has been abused, the law requires that they report this abuse to child protective services.

In today's world there are women's shelters, housing assistance, food stamps, free medical insurance, fuel assistance, help with tuition for college education, and a few lawyers who will provided representation for relief from abuse hearings without pay.

HJWT is a pioneer in what it has done to further services, especially for indigent women and their children. Once a client of HJWT, a woman is given all legal services and connected to the social services that empower her to free herself from the abuse, educate herself, raise her self-esteem, and help her become independent and on her own.

The mission of HJWT is to stop the generational cycle of abuse in rural families. HJWT institutes a unique and innovative way of bridging the legal, cultural, geographical, economic, and psychological gaps that exist for victims of family violence. We use a holistic, multi-service approach to help clients. By holistic, I mean that we look at the person as a whole and look at all her needs, not just her legal needs.

HJWT provides in-home consultations and transportation to and from court for rural clients. Over the past 14 years HJWT has provided services for thousands of women who have been able to leave abusive situations and go on to become strong and independent, not only for themselves, but for their children.

The outcome of this multi-service model has been that 90% of the women we work with do not return to or go on to other abusive situations. What this means is that children learn that it is not okay for one parent to hit the other parent. We have begun to stop the generational cycle of abuse.

We have begun to convey the importance of what Dr. Albert Schweitzer called Reverence for Life, his philosophy of respecting all life and everything that lives. At VLS I became a NH/VT Schweitzer Fellow—a program that is still strongly supported by VLS.

VLS is certainly fortunate to have such dedicated professors, mentors, administrators, staff and alumni who turn out wonderful lawyers who bring much needed legal services into our communities. I would like to thank each and every one of you here today for supporting such important work, work that improves and betters the lives of people locally, regionally, nationally and around the world. Thank you."

LEAP Makes Strides Ahead During the Past Year

by E. Robin Goodrum, Legal Intern

The Have Justice - Will Travel (HJWT) Legal Empowerment Assistance Program (LEAP) made great strides over the past year in addressing the challenges that face the large number of Vermonters who are unable to afford legal representation. Along with fielding new call-ins, Robin Goodrum, the Coordinator of LEAP, continued to offer on-going legal services to LEAP clients and also collaborated effectively with agencies that assist our clients in various capacities.

Over the last year HJWT received 1,086 new calls and 88 LEAP calls from confused and sometimes desperate Vermonters either reacting to paperwork from the court that they do not understand or trying to respond to difficult, sometimes dangerous, situations in their life that they realize they cannot live with anymore. The callers' requests ranged from assistance with relief from abuse issues to landlord/tenant cases and everything in between.

As the economic climate in the country becomes increasingly strained, HJWT has seen a marked increase in the variety of legal issues being referred to HJWT by courts, attorneys, and other professionals. It has driven home a clear and disturbing understanding of the increasing lack of free or affordable legal services available for disadvantaged Vermonters.

In response, Robin has worked diligently with Wynona Ward to guide these individuals to the appropriate legal resource even when their legal problems fell outside the realm of HJWT expertise. She managed this while maintaining a prompt response to new call-ins with family law issues and continuing to deliver direct services to the HJWT LEAP clients as their cases moved forward through the court process. Robin improved availability of services to these unrepresented Vermonters when they were most needed.

HJWT successfully utilized the use of a new rule that allows attorneys to now enter a "limited notice of appearance." Robin reached out to various attorneys in the state to enter a LEAP client's case at the final hearing or at a crucial point such as for a child support hearing. It became apparent with several cases, after the person had prepared their case with the help of LEAP services, that the client was unable to face the opposing party and/or the opposing party's attorney without some help.

In three of these cases Attorney Ward supervised Robin so she could represent the client in court. For other cases, HJWT



Robin spends many hours each day on the telephone with LEAP clients.

has hired Kathryn A.C. Kennedy, Esq., who was a lawyer with HJWT for ten years and now has her own law practice in Randolph, to represent clients on a low bono basis (low bono means at a reduced rate).

HJWT also developed and delivered training for staff at those agencies where shared clientele most likely would have sought some level of assistance before being referred to HJWT. As Robin assessed the call-in activity from prior years, it became evident that many of the issues the call-in clients presented could have been alleviated or at least lessened if they had known what legal opportunities were available to them earlier on in the development of their current legal problem.

HJWT offered training that educated the appropriate staff at various women's advocacy centers and supervised visitation centers about the Vermont statues and court forms that specifically concern their clientele's particular family issues. The trainings were well received and appreciated and have lead to an increased level of cooperative collaboration as well as referral to HJWT when actual legal advice and hands on services are necessary.

Looking back on the past year, HJWT is pleased with the progress LEAP continues to make in addressing disadvantaged Vermonter's search for legal services. We want to extend our sincere thanks to LEAP's funders: the Vermont Bar Foundation, Lintilhac Foundation, and Mill Foundation.

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Under John's direction HJWT became an integral part of the Bennington Integrated Domestic Violence Docket (IDVD) Court. The ongoing IDVD project addresses domestic violence by allowing one Judge to hear abuse prevention order cases as well as criminal cases that may have resulted from the same set of circumstances.

The program seeks to show that if all of the parties and agencies can work together from the outset that a more closely tailored and comprehensive resolution can be reached. Victims are more likely to stay on-board with a prosecution if they feel their needs are being respected, and offenders are more likely to accept responsibility if a settlement addresses domestic needs in addition to the basic jail or probation conditions. For example, if the victim feels supervised visitation is safe and in the children's best interests, the prosecutor's office may include this in the plea bargaining process. This promotes a resolution that is more likely to work because it meets the needs of the litigants and it also conserves judicial resources.

In May 2011 when HJWT was forced to have John go on unpaid temporary leave because of lack of funds to pay him, he continued appearing in the Bennington Court to represent victims each week for relief from abuse hearings and often traveled to Rutland County to help victims. It wasn't until October when the DOJ grant was renewed that John began once again receiving pay for his work. The current DOJ grant covers John's work in both Bennington and Rutland counties and provides a half-time paralegal, Katie Jahne, who came to work for HJWT in February 2012.

In addition to his work for HJWT, John is a member of the Bennington County Bar and has served as their secretary, vice-president, and president. He also helps coordinate the Bennington County Legal Assistance Project where attorneys are paid a reduced fee to help low-income clients. He is a member of both the Bennington and Rutland Domestic Violence Task Forces.

In a Vermont Bar Journal article published in Summer 2012, John is described as empathetic toward clients and believing that legal assistance on critical issues is a basic human right. He states that he is "committed to Have Justice—Will Travel" and he predicts that, "as long as there's funding, I'll still be there."¹ Wynona, the HJWT Board of Directors, and all the staff are proud to be working with John.

¹"Bennington Attorney John Lamson Honored with VBA Pro Bono Service Award," Vermont Bar Journal, Summer 2012, p. 34.

An Award Winning Model, continued from page 1

is truly rewarding to do the work that I do and I am grateful for all the support I receive from the staff and Board of Directors at HJWT."

She continued by saying, "This award is also personally meaningful to me and to my sisters because as the three of us gave our mother 24-hour care during the last year of her life, it was Hospice who was there for her and for us during those last weeks of her life, it was Hospice who we called to help us make those last hours of her life comfortable. And, it was Hospice who answered all our questions about what to expect and to be assured that we were doing the right things so that she could pass peacefully. It was my mother's life, after all, that was so influential in beginning HJWT."

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

Traveling Made Easier for Wynona and HJWT Staff by JohnnieMae Doyle



Wynona and Administrative Manager, JohnnieMae Doyle enjoy driving the HJWT Prius

One of the founding principles of HJWT is to provide transportation for clients. This is an essential part of not only in-home consultations, but also of getting to and from court hearings, and traveling to training seminars and teaching engagements.

With the ever-escalating cost of gasoline, HJWT was ecstatic in January 2012 to have a 2004 Toyota Prius donated by the classical musician, Margot Dilmaghani. In addition, \$1,000.00 was provided to pay for the 100,000 mile checkup and for any other repair costs. She has contributed to HJWT with her music activism since she heard about us from the Bill Moyers' PBS program. Margot's CD "Wings" and her live music programs continue to raise funds for HJWT. If you know of a store or an individual interested in supporting HJWT through the sale of her CDs, take a look at her link on our website for contact and order information.

Given Vermont winters, Wynona has decided to continue using her 2000 Ford Explorer for winter storm days and muddy spring back roads. However, this gift will cut the HJWT budget for gas in half during the rest of the year. The Prius averages 45 miles per gallon, but Wynona loves seeing the car get 100 miles per gallon when she leaves the Vershire office or is going down hill on interstate highways.

Thank you, Margot Dilmaghani!

Update on the HJWT Southern Vermont Office

by John B. Lamson, Esq.



John and Katie working on a case in the HJWT Bennington Office.

HJWT is proud to welcome Katie Jahne to our staff at the Bennington office. Hired under the federal Domestic and Sexual Violence Rural Grant, Ms. Jahne has extensive paralegal experience and is excited to be working in the field of domestic and sexual violence prevention. Ms. Jahne holds a degree from Russell Sage College and paralegal certification from Hudson Valley Community College. Ms. Jahne worked for a private practice law firm in Bennington for eight years before joining HJWT.

Since HJWT's Rural Grant was renewed last October, the southwestern Vermont office covering Bennington and Rutland Counties has been humming. Rutland has had the highest level of Abuse Prevention Order proceedings and, as a result, HJWT has seen its largest increase in new cases in the history of this office. Rutland has seen over 350 new petitions for Abuse Prevention Orders and Bennington (a smaller county by half) over 140 in the first six months of 2012. Attorney Lamson has represented or advised 121 new clients

in that same time period. That means that HJWT represented or provided assistance to 25% of all victims that ask the court for relief from abuse in southwestern Vermont! We are very proud of this statistic. And, keep in mind, not all victims asking for assistance even appear at court. Many litigants do not pursue a final order for personal or other reasons and never attend the final hearing. Others do not request services, preferring to represent themselves. HJWT works closely with the Rutland County Women's Network and Shelter to make sure that all victims are listened to and supported when they appear for Abuse Prevention Order proceedings.

While HJWT is proud of its ability to address this apparent increase in domestic violence, we are faced with challenges in these difficult economic times. Like all agencies HJWT is being asked to do more with less. Sister organizations and collaborators with HJWT have seen reduction and elimination of grants that have been renewed for years. The Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence has informed us that they no longer have federal grant funding to support attorney representation in custody matters which involve domestic or sexual violence. In addition, Bennington's Advocacy Agency Project Against Violent Encounters (PAVE) announced recently that it lost grant funding for two advocate positions that had been key to law enforcement and corrections coordination. We at HJWT are committed to continue to work together with these agencies to fill the gaps in service and keep our communities safe.

A Northeast Kingdom Client Gives Back To HJWT

CORRESPONDENCE THROUGH EMAIL:

Hi Wynona: I hope this email finds you well. I think of you often. When you are next in the NEK area and have some free time I would love to get together for coffee! The kids and I are well. We have just moved into a new home, everyone has their own rooms, and we all watched a movie together last night in the big living room!

The reason for my email is that I wondered if Have Justice Will Travel (HJWT) would want and accept donations of household items, mostly small kitchen items like a coffee grinder, misc. pots, pans, and dishes, perhaps a kitchen table and a couple of chairs, and some other things. I don't want to burden you with anything you can't use, but when I moved out I was grateful for the items received from HJWT, and wanted to offer them to you before I gave them away to someone else, or sold them. (See related article on page 7.) Also I plan to make a financial donation to HJWT soon, and wondered how to go about that?

I am so grateful for your help and support during my divorce. I couldn't have done it without you. I hope you and Harold are well! Thanks, Stephanie

Hi Stephanie: I am so happy to hear you are in your new home, especially after living in cramped quarters for so long. I am glad that the children are settled in and I hope your job is going well.

Yes, HJWT appreciates any household donations you are able to give, which we then pass on to other clients. This past summer we were able to furnish an apartment from past household donations that HJWT was given for a client who had very little for herself and her four children. As we do with all those who donate to HJWT, we will provide you with a receipt for your donations, which can be used as a deduction for tax purposes. The easiest way to make a cash donation is to send a check directly to HJWT. Your donation will go directly to helping other women and children.

Thank you and Congratulations for moving forward in your life. Wynona



K. Eve Lindys looks forward to providing legal services for victims in the Northeast Kingdom area.

LATE BREAKING NEWS: Wynona is pleased to announce that with funding from the Serena Foundation and the Schultz Blackwell Trust, HJWT has been able to hire a part-time attorney who will serve the Northeast Kingdom area. Beginning in November 2012, Kellien Eve Lindys, a 2012 graduate of Vermont Law School who served as a summer legal intern in 2011 will begin work at HJWT.

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 Web site, www.havejusticewilltravel.org, or please make your check payable to: *Have Justice–Will Travel, Inc.* • 9580 VT Route 113, Vershire, VT 05079

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.

The Impact of Domestic Violence on Children by Wynona I. Ward, Esq.

The nine-year old girl danced around excitedly as she showed me her new bedroom, the first time in almost a year she had her own room since her three siblings and her mother all had been sharing one room at their grandparent's home. A disgruntled landlord had forced them out after their father was arrested for domestic assault and mom could no longer pay the rent.

"I have my own room," she exclaimed as she stood in the small bedroom, which was empty except for a bare, sunken mattress lying on the floor. "It's okay my little sister got the new bed you brought," she continued. "I just need to be careful 'cause sometimes a spring sticks up through this one and pricks me in the back."

It is difficult to explain the rush of empathy I felt for this child who was so happy to be in her new home with her own bedroom, even though the only mattress her mother could provide belonged in the dump. My heart went out to her as I explained that we only had room to bring the living room furniture and two beds today, but tomorrow we would bring her a new bed and bureau for her room.

Domestic violence impacts children in many ways—poverty adds significantly to that impact. An important part of the HJWT model is providing in-home consultations so we can assess what the family needs and then do our best to provide what is needed. When a single mom with four children between the ages of five and twelve is homeless she needs everything. It is in a case such as this where HJWT is thankful for local donors who give tables, chairs, couches, beds, linens, and household goods so that we can deliver such contributions to our needy clients. (See related article on page 6.)

It is difficult for these children to understand what a triumph it was for their mother to get a job, find an apartment, and pay the rent after their father beat her for over a decade. She had absolutely no money left to furnish the apartment. There is no question, however, these children knew what it was like to live in an abusive home. Children of all ages are affected by family violence.

Babies become jumpy, cry a lot, have problems nursing, and sleep erratically. Toddlers become withdrawn, have regressive behaviors, or act out violently. Elementary school age children have difficulty in school, run away, or become caretakers of their younger siblings. Teenagers may turn to drugs or alcohol--some become overachievers--others may commit suicide.

Physical effects on children can include developmental delays, stress related illnesses, eating disturbances, and physical injury. Emotional effects on children may include feelings of fear, insecurity, powerlessness, guilt, shame, low self-esteem, withdrawal, and depression. Cognitive effects on children include learning delays and learning to equate love with abuse. Social effects include difficulty trusting others, isolation, or blurred social boundaries.

How do we help children exposed to domestic violence heal? We provide them with a safe home where they can have a strong bond with the non-offending parent. We encourage counseling, structure, and predictability in their daily lives. We let them know it is not their responsibility to care for the adults in their lives and we give them clear social messages about responsibility for violence. We encourage children to have strong loving relationships with their siblings. I have realized for years



This framed poster of a first class stamp designed by the US Postal Service was presented to HJWT by Vershire Postmaster Robin Tabor. It has hung in the HJWT conference room since 2006.

that what helped me as I grew up in a home full of violence was the bond I had with my sisters and brother.

A few days after the family I talk about above had settled into their new home, one child sat studying at the kitchen table. He looked up at mom as she was preparing dinner and said, "You know mom—this is really beginning to feel like home."

On behalf of our clients everyone at HJWT sends a heartfelt thank you to everyone who gives to HJWT. Whether in the form of cash, clothing, or furniture, whatever you give is greatly appreciated by all we serve. (See related story on page 6.)

At least 3.3 million children in the U.S. are exposed to domestic violence each year.

Men who as children witnessed family violence are twice as likely to abuse their own wives as are sons who were raised in nonviolent homes.

One third of women who are physically abused by a husband or boyfriend grew up in a household where their mother was also abused.



Playing Hide n' Seek!



Sisters are great pals and lots of fun!



9580 Vermont Route 113 Vershire, VT 05079

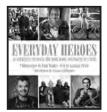
In Vermont a child is abused or neglected every 13 hours and a child dies before his or her first birthday every 13 days. 16.7% of children in Vermont live in poverty and 7.2% live in extreme poverty. Each year 30,000 children in Vermont receive foods stamps and 55,000 receive free or reduced price lunch. Your gifts to HJWT help women and children live better lives. We are truly appreciative that you support the work we do.

(802) 685-7809 or Toll Free (877) 496-8100

www.havejusticewilltravel.org

E-mail: hjwt@together.net

GOOGLE THIS BOOK: "Everyday Heroes: 50 Americans Changing the World, One Nonprofit at a Time"



Wynona Ward and 49 other Americans are celebrated for helping change the lives of millions, "very often one life at a time" in Everyday Heroes written by Katrina Fried, with photography by Paul Mobley. This is a book that profiles Americans who are among America's greatest social entrepreneurs. They are activists and leaders in their field of work who are working to improve the lives of hundreds.

After receiving this book that includes inspiring stories and spectacular photos, Wynona wrote, "It is truly humbling to be included in this beautiful book that surely will bring joy to all who read it. When Dr.

Albert Schweitzer, a Nobel Peace Prize recipient, was asked about his decision to go to Africa, he said, 'I decided to make my life my argument.' It is clear that all the Everyday Heroes are making their lives their argument."

On the pages describing Wynona and HJWT, Fried writes, "When most of us think of Vermont, we picture the abundance of nature: the snow-covered pines, the rolling hills of farmland, the leaf strewn winding roads, the charming red barns and B&Bs. Wynona Ward knows a very different Vermont, one that is littered with dark secrets, often kept for generations."

Please contribute to HJWT so that Wynona can continue her legal and social work that frees Vermont women and children from the cycle of abuse.

¹ Published in 2012 by Welcome Books, New York, NY