

# Have Justice—Will Travel

*Ending the Generational Cycle of Violence*



## NEWS

### FALL 2014

The HJWT staff gathered in Bennington, Vermont for a staff meeting. Back row from left to right: JohnnieMae Doyle, Administrative Manager; John B. Lamson, Staff Attorney-Bennington & Rutland Counties. Front row from left to right: Hannah Elle Myers, Staff Attorney-Northeast Kingdom Area; Wynona I. Ward, Founding Director; E. Robin Goodrum, LEAP Coordinator; and Katie Jahne, Paralegal & Client Services Coordinator, Bennington and Rutland Counties.



## Shining a Light on Domestic Violence

### *Many More in America Become Aware*

After sixteen years of awareness work at Have Justice Will Travel (HJWT) and after decades of work by victim advocacy groups in Vermont and around this country, we are all grateful to see the recent media coverage about members of the National Football League (NFL) and domestic violence appear not only on page one, but above the fold. For weeks it was the first story heard on radio and television news.

Even more important was the outrage expressed at the dismissive attitude originally taken by the NFL toward the criminal actions of their players. It left many with the impression that the NFL did not understand domestic violence or take it seriously as a crime. Domestic violence and child abuse are serious crimes. Crime that has devastating affects on victims that can last a lifetime. Because of the indignation expressed by so many the NFL has now begun to institute policies that consider seriously the violent actions of their players and all staff.

Roger Goodell, the Commissioner of the NFL wrote “My disciplinary decision led the public to question our sincerity, our commitment, and whether we understood the toll that domestic violence inflicts on so many families. I take responsibility both for the decision and for ensuring that our actions in the future properly reflect our values.”

As many of you are aware, HJWT was founded in large part because I grew up in a home where family violence was an accepted way of life where my mother learned quickly to become a submissive woman in order to stay alive. She died at 81 six years ago. I wish she were still alive. I can hear her saying now, “Did you see that on TV—that football player he clocked his girlfriend so hard it knocked her out and then he was dragging her across the floor—just like your father used to do to me. I can hardly believe it.”

To her it would be like she had worn a badge of courage, putting up with the physical and sexual abuse all those years

*continued on page 2...*

and now she could say she was not alone--that not only poor, uneducated women like her put up with abuse from the one they love, so do those who have money and are educated. Of course I had been telling her that for years, she just couldn't believe it actually happened to others until she saw it being recognized and talked about again and again.

In an article on page A6 of the September 16, 2014 Valley News, a local Vermont paper, it was discussed by Tracy-Clark Flory for The Washington Post, that it is the victim's battered face or body that we usually see and that is emphasized in these cases, but this time we actually see the abusers are not a "nameless, faceless villains, but rather the kind of guys we like, the guys we hang out with and cheer on the field."

As for people like my mother, it makes it harder to believe, that the guy next door or a professional player we see on TV and idolize is a batterer. I can tell you from experience just how scary it is watching your mother be punched or strangled and, therefore, how easy it is for us who have seen this turn away and not want to witness it again, but maybe that is what needs to happen to bring attention to the subject that has been so sorely ignored for decades.

As Ms. Clark-Flory wrote, "Still, airing this video has brought a new dimension to the national discussion of domestic violence that could sway the conversation. It's unfortunate when any victim becomes an unwitting martyr for a cause. But our society has turned a blind eye to the perpetrators of domestic violence for too long. For decades, we've been putting faces to the victims of crime. It's past time to put a face to the criminals."

Awareness has always been a large part of the HJWT model: HJWT staff often speak at educational and/or training events about domestic and sexual violence and their work; the work of HJWT has often been featured in local, national, and international media coverage whether it is newspapers, magazines, radio, or television; and HJWT continues to pursue community outreach as a way to get the word out.

Holding batterers accountable for their actions and then providing them with the help they need is essential to stopping the generational cycle of abuse.

*Wynona I. Ward, Esq., Founding Director*

## HJWT Serving the State of Vermont

Have Justice Will Travel (HJWT) has existed for 16 years due to those individuals, foundations, government agencies, and various grant organizations that believe in the work that HJWT does to help families who are suffering from the trauma of violence.

In addition, the HJWT staff is dedicated to their work and to the legal and social services they provide for many whose lives are in danger. These staff members, as pictured on the map of Vermont turn the clients' lives from one of fear and helplessness to an existence that for clients is like heaven.

HJWT is different from many non-profits. It has always been unique in that the organization serves those that have nothing and are unable to go to lawyers who charge for services, and who are under the control of destructive individuals who cause great devastation to them and to their children. HJWT turns their lives around. HJWT offers a full continuum of support from the initial relief from abuse order to self-sufficiency.

At the local, state, and national levels of our democracy right now we are experiencing elections and many have been giving greatly towards that. It is also the time HJWT asks for donations to continue our work. Please consider us between now and the New Year for giving so that HJWT can continue to serve those in dire need.

On average HJWT provides services for 1,500 Vermonters each year. HJWT is proud to say that 90% of the women HJWT provides full services for have left their abusers and now lead a safe lives. Some have finished high school, some have gone on to and finished college, and most of them are now working and their children are doing well in school.

Please help HJWT continue to serve so many in order that they can change their lives and their children's lives and stop the abuse generationally in their families. Thank you to each and every one of you for all you have done for HJWT.

*Nancy G. Harter, Secretary, Have Justice—Will Travel Board of Directors  
Wynona I. Ward, Esq., Founding Director*



# Integrated Domestic Violence Docket Project in Windham County

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

After being an important stakeholder in the Integrated Domestic Violence Docket (IDVD) in Bennington for several years, Have Justice—Will Travel (HJWT) is pleased to now be a part of the newly developed IDVD in Windham County. Funded by a grant written and received by the Vermont Court Administrator's Office from the U. S. Department of Justice Office of Violence Against Women (OVW) this project provides a holistic collaborative approach for plaintiffs and defendants who are in family or criminal court rather than using the traditional litigation model.

The Honorable David Suntag who has spent much of his judicial career handling domestic violence cases spearheaded the IDVD in both Bennington and Windham counties. In 2013, Judge Suntag wrote, "After 23 years on the family and criminal court trial bench experiencing the frustration and helplessness of watching the traditional court system deal inadequately with so many of those affected by domestic violence, the IDVD program provided new hope and energy." The IDVD is structured so relief from abuse (RFA), criminal domestic assault misdemeanors, violation of relief from abuse orders, and certain related family cases are all reviewed, discussed and heard the same day in front of one judge.

Legal representation is provided for both plaintiffs and defendants. Jessica A. Smith, Esq., a contract attorney for HJWT represents victims in these cases Wednesdays in Brattleboro. Jessica, who now has her own legal firm in Bennington, was instrumental in implementing the IDVD in Bennington when she was a staff attorney for HJWT from 2003 to 2007. E. Robin Goodrum, a paralegal and the HJWT LEAP Coordinator, assists Jessica each week.

The IDVD planning group included Judge Suntag, the Windham Superior Court Clerk, Regional Program Coordinator, Althea (Thea) Lloyd, Esq., HJWT, professionals from the public defender's and states attorney's offices, representatives from the Vermont Department of Corrections, the manager of the local batterers intervention program, an attorney from Vermont Legal Aid, a victims' advocate from the Women's Freedom Center, representatives from the local mental health agency and the Windham County Sheriff's Department.

By having these professionals involved, the IDVD project strives to resolve cases within one or two weeks of the offense and adheres to the concept that procedural fairness for everyone involved is essential. Immediate mental health and/or substance abuse assessments are available providing early access to appropriate services and community supports. Litigants are separated to assure everyone's safety, arriving at staggered times and are kept on different floors of the courthouse being watched over by deputy sheriffs. Attorneys meet with clients, attempt to negotiate resolutions, and conference with the Judge to discuss and triage the cases. If a contested hearing is needed, both parties have access to attorney representation. When there are



RFAs as well as criminal charges involving the same victim and offender, all the attorneys are encouraged to discuss resolution of all the cases to assure consistent court orders.

Robin shared some wonderful, very positive feedback that she received from a young woman and her three support persons who were at the IDVD on October 1, 2014 for a RFA matter. All three had been through the RFA process

prior to the commencement of the IDVD. -

One had petitioned the court for a RFA order just the week before the IDVD started and had such a traumatic experience she quietly cried throughout her friend's morning at court. The other two were very forthcoming about the differences they were observing between their experiences and their friend's experience.

They felt the protection, understanding, support, information and guidance she was receiving, never mind the opportunity to not have to see her abuser or go into the courtroom, was an unimaginable improvement. All four appreciated that mental health services were available on site as well as the assistance of an attorney and the ability to feel safe while that attorney crafted a protection order. They highlighted how helpful it was to have an attorney willing to answer questions about enforcement of the order and if there were anything she could do after a year if she were still afraid for her safety.

The defendant never appeared in court that morning, however, he texted the woman many times while she waited for her order to be signed by the Judge. Since the defendant's texting constituted a violation of the temporary order she was very upset, frightened and worried that he would be waiting for her outside the courthouse. A court's deputy officer offered to escort her to the police department across the street where she was able to file a complaint regarding violations of the order; the state then filed charges. Needless to say she was very relieved to have the deputy's escort; the defendant was arrested later that day.

Wynona notes that, "HJWT is proud to be a part of this model that is making such a difference in the lives of domestic violence victims." We sincerely expect that the Windham County Integrated Domestic Violence Docket will serve as a positive example so that the IDVD can be instituted throughout Vermont.

# A Tribute to Professor Cheryl Hanna



Professor Cheryl Hanna who worked at Vermont Law School (VLS) died suddenly in July—she was an absolute joy and inspiration to know, to learn from, and with whom to work. She was an illuminating star in a vast panorama where there are far too few lights to guide one along the way. Cheryl was truly a one of a kind person who touched everyone with whom she came in contact.

All at Have Justice—Will Travel, Inc. (HJWT) are extremely saddened by her death. The existence of HJWT is in part due to Cheryl's keen observation that women and girls in Vermont who are victims of domestic and sexual violence desperately need free legal and social services. She provided continuous encouragement for Wynona (VLS '98) to follow her dream of helping victims and provided even more positive persistent advice when that dream was disrupted because Wynona had difficulties passing the Bar Exam.

Cheryl greatly influenced each attorney that graduated from VLS and eventually came to work for HJWT. Staff Attorney John Lamson (VLS '06) was honored to collaborate with Cheryl on the VLS' V-Day celebrations. In addition, John was one of few men privileged to take Cheryl's Women and the Law elective class. Cheryl eventually became John's advisor and helped to connect him with HJWT for a summer internship. John has now worked for HJWT and Vermont victims for eight years.

For Hannah Elle Myers (VLS '13) Cheryl provided support, mentorship and inspiration. Cheryl encouraged Hannah to pursue her dream of developing a career helping victims of violence, offered support to make that possible, and motivated Hannah with her tireless advocacy and dedication to women and victims of violence. Cheryl provided a shining example of the kind of compassion, confidence, fierceness, and dedication that we all hope to achieve.

Everyone at HJWT greatly misses her. May our work be inspired by and carry on her memory. We all know that those we serve are also served by her.

*Wynona Ward, John Lamson, Hannah Myers*

## 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



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# Bennington-Rutland Office Receives Continued Funding

by Kathleen A. Jahne, Paralegal and Client Services Coordinator, Bennington and Rutland Counties

Since 2001, U.S. Senator Patrick Leahy (D) has worked assisting Have Justice Will Travel (HJWT) in receiving seven grants from the U.S. Department of Justice's Office on Violence Against Women (OVW). The HJWT's Southern Vermont office was delighted to hear in early August from Senator Leahy that its 2014 grant request had been approved through September 2017. Under the new grant guidelines the office will be able to provide representation in any legal matter and will no longer be limited to protective order cases.

HJWT is pleased to offer this increase in services as it falls more in line with HJWT's holistic model, which is known throughout the United States as the most comprehensive nonprofit service for abused women and children. HJWT feels it is essential to provide comprehensive legal services to defend against the manipulation of the legal system by batterers. The Bennington-Rutland office has received many congratulations from our community partners and we look forward to making a difference in many victims' lives over the next three years.

## Just Rural Conference in Nashville, Tennessee

In December of 2013, HJWT Attorney Wynona Ward and Paralegal Katie Jahne, as well as Linda Campbell, Executive Director of Project Against Violent Encounters and Sara Pratt a Victim Advocate with the Rutland County Women's Network and Shelter attended the Just Rural! Conference in Nashville, Tennessee. The opening plenary explored children as people and children's rights and set the course for participants to learn as much as possible at the conference. Workshops attended by participants included Victim, Survivor, Thriver: Working with Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse; The Backbone Zone: Supporting Comprehensive Bystander Programming Through Innovative Social Marketing Practices; The Expressive Arts as a Mode of Healing; Media and Messages: Ethics in Media Coverage of CSA; Working with Youth in Residential Settings; Mandatory Reporting: Challenges, Complexities, and Other Considerations for OVW Grantees; Rural Outreach 2.0; Knowledge Roundup Breakouts; Self-Care for Staff Working with Survivors: Sharing Practices, Resources and Support Systems. Participants left the conference with valuable tools to utilize when working with survivors of childhood sexual assault.

## Actual Cases from Bennington-Rutland Offices

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

Margaret had a difficult and contentious divorce with her abusive ex-spouse. He continues to use the Courts to abuse and manipulate Margaret. When she finally attempted to enforce payment of back child support the abuse came to surface again and her ex-spouse threatened Margaret, their daughter and Margaret through their daughter who is 14 years old. With the assistance of HJWT an attorney and guardian were appointed for the child. The child and her representative believed it to be empowering for her to testify in Court about her abuse. The judge granted protective orders for both Margaret and her daughter until the daughter is 18 years old.

Sue was referred to HJWT by a partner advocacy agency (Rutland County Women's Network and Shelter) for legal advice regarding her rights relative to divorce, custody, visitation and abuse prevention order. Sue had fled abuse in "Springfield" with her young son. Sue was returning to Vermont where she has family and friends who are able to support her through the recovery process after years of physical, emotional, verbal and significant sexual abuse. Sue had not established residency for purposes of a divorce case in Vermont, but with HJWT's help she was able to obtain an emergency protective order, which granted her temporary custody pending a custody case in the appropriate jurisdiction. Meanwhile, in an attempt to manipulate the court system, Sue's husband/abuser filed paperwork in Springfield and convinced a Judge to issue an emergency order for Sue to return her son to Springfield. Of course, the husband/abuser purposefully failed to mention that emergency custody had already been addressed by the Vermont Court. HJWT assisted Sue in obtaining an Attorney in Springfield who was able to present all the facts to the Springfield court which then rescheduled the matter for a normal hearing at which Sue will undoubtedly prevail given the significant abuse.



# Spotlight on College Campus Sexual Assault

by John B. Lamson, Esq., Staff Attorney, Bennington and Rutland Counties.

In 1999 a federally funded comprehensive study of sexual assault found that up to one in five young women experiences rape during college. This is particularly shocking when compared to women who did not attend college who reported a lower incidence of sexual violence. Recently reports of campus sexual assault have gained national attention as well as the flawed disciplinary system used by colleges. Momentum has built in response to these findings and cases and recently major changes in public and private policy have been enacted. However, as has been the case with domestic violence, change is slow to come and identifying the extent of the problem is one of the first steps in addressing it.

Have Justice Will Travel (HJWT) has always provided legal services to victims of sexual assault as well as victims of domestic violence. Unfortunately it is not uncommon for us to see cases of intimate partner sexual violence (i.e. consensual sexual relationships in which a non-consensual act(s) has occurred). The Bennington-Rutland office of HJWT under its federal Office on Violence Against Women funding specifically dedicates a portion of its resources to this issue. Attorney Lamson, of the Bennington office, now has over seven years of experience in dealing with sexual violence cases. Mr. Lamson has recently attended conferences specifically focused on sexual assault and campus sexual assault and the implementation of college policies and procedures. The Bennington-Rutland office is ensuring that HJWT has the most up to date research and legal strategies to combat this problem. HJWT is also looking into partnering with colleges in the communities it serves to develop a comprehensive response.

In response to public outcry over sexual assaults taking place on college campuses, President Obama announced on September 19, 2014 a nationwide public service campaign entitled “It’s on Us.” This campaign is targeted at the millennial generation and features celebrity and corporate pledges that users can join. This shift in emphasis towards engagement rather than enforcement attempts to increase reporting as well as promoting bystander intervention. More information on this initiative can be found at [www.itsonus.org](http://www.itsonus.org).

Updates to the Clery Act were signed into law with the renewal of the Violence Against Women Act in March of 2014. These updates entitled: Campus SaVE Act include increased requirements on colleges for both how and what they report in their annual campus safety report as well as requirements on how to handle disciplinary proceedings. The Campus SaVE act includes requirements that the standard of proof used uniformly be a preponderance of the evidence standard and that both parties are entitled to an advocate of their choice in the proceedings. HJWT will work with both colleges and victims to determine if it is appropriate for a HJWT lawyer to act as an advocate for a victim in a disciplinary proceeding should the victim so choose. To learn more about the Clery Act please visit [www.cleryact.info](http://www.cleryact.info).

<sup>1</sup> Fisher, B.S., F.T. Cullen, and M.G. Turner, “Extent and Nature of the Sexual Victimization of College Women: A National-Level Analysis,” final report to the National Institute of Justice, December 1999, NCJ 179977.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> See Center for Public Integrity Series on Campus Assault: <http://www.publicintegrity.org/accountability/education/sexual-assault-campus>

See New York Times Article on disciplinary proceedings: [http://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/13/us/how-one-college-handled-a-sexual-assault-complaint.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/13/us/how-one-college-handled-a-sexual-assault-complaint.html?_r=0)

Vermont Public Radio reports increase in sexual assault reports: <http://digital.vpr.net/post/campus-crime-report-increase-sexual-assaults-some-area-colleges>

<sup>4</sup> See article on renewed OVW funding.

## 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](http://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.

# Beyond the Court Order: LEAP Improves and Changes Vermont Lives

by E. Robin Goodrum, Coordinator, HJWT Legal Empowerment Assistance Program

Thanks to the understanding and generosity of the Vermont Bar Foundation, the Mill Foundation and Have Justice—Will Travel's (HJWT) many wonderful donors, the HJWT Legal Empowerment Assistance Program (LEAP) extends a long arm of free legal services to Vermonters around the state.

Of the 1,211 calls HJWT received last year, 155 Vermont families received extensive legal services from LEAP that improved their lives. Like a supportive and comforting arm, LEAP reaches out and wraps important legal services around frightened and confused pro se litigants who call desperate for help. These legal services give hope and encourage personal strength for Vermonters facing the legal system. The end result for these families is a home without violence.

Like ripples on a pond when a stone is thrown, even one change trickles out into their Vermont communities in the form of productive and involved parents contributing positively to society, and less aggressive and distracted children able to engage in their educational and extra-curricular opportunities impacting far more than just the family in court.

When families are able to access the legal tools necessary to stay safe, they can move beyond the crippling effects of fear and all the fighting, they are able to begin to heal and function as a healthy unit. That translates into healthier neighborhoods, classrooms, and sports activities. Studies show domestic abuse effects children's physical and emotional development, which impacts their social interactions and learning abilities. Children are more likely to be inattentive in class and have behavioral problems, and are more likely to lack appropriate coping skills when frustrated and/or angry when their model has been explosive power and control. Creating violence free homes for children, coupled



It's a Dog Day Afternoon at HJWT: Robin and Remy, JohnnieMae and Jasper, and Hannah and Jack.

with appropriate social services opens the door to future success for those children and their contributions to society.

One such LEAP case involved a young mother of two children with two different fathers. The mother lived with the father of the youngest child and was regularly physically abused, often in front of the children. The other father was under investigation for sexual abuse of his child.

At the time this woman called HJWT, she had received notice of three hearings in two counties, both family and criminal. She was confused, terrified and worried about the children as they had been removed from her care. LEAP helped her respond to the allegations against her: write a motion to continue; understand and gather evidence important for her case; subpoena witnesses; and prepare testimony.

After several hearings this mom now has the protection of a relief from abuse order for herself and her children, the custody of both children, an order for supervised contact between the children and their fathers, and a divorce case and a parentage case before the courts to grant her and her children long-term safety and stability. Mom is now employed and all three are receiving counseling and moving toward enjoying healthy productive lives.

Your dollars make a lasting difference in families and children: our future, THANK YOU!

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## Have Justice—Will Travel

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One in every four women will experience domestic violence in her lifetime. Most cases of domestic violence are never reported to the police. The cost of intimate partner violence exceeds \$5.8 billion each year in this country, \$4.1 billion is for direct medical and mental health services. Witnessing violence between one's parents or caretakers is the strongest risk factor of transmitting violent behavior from one generation to the next.

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

## HJWT to Hire a Development Director!

*by Wynona I. Ward, Founding Director, HJWT*



Have Justice—Will Travel (HJWT) received wonderful news in October from the Ben & Jerry's Foundation of South Burlington, Vermont. For the first time ever HJWT will receive a grant of \$25,000 to hire a part-time Development Director. The HJWT Board of Directors has recognized this need since the HJWT Strategic Plan was developed in 2007.

As Marilyn S. Blackwell of the Schultz Blackwell Trust, who has generously supported HJWT since 2005, told the Ben & Jerry's Grant Committee in August; "HJWT is at a crucial point in its history. With committed leadership, an innovative and efficient program, and a proven track record of service to the community, it needs to move to the next level of development for long-term sustainability."

These funds will bring extremely important expertise to HJWT and will free me up to spend more time in the legal field in addition to working with an expert in development. HJWT has already begun a search for the right person to fill this position and will keep our supporters up-to-date through e-mail.

The HJWT mission of ending the generational cycle of abuse in rural American families fits with the mission of the Ben & Jerry's Foundation which is "to engage Ben & Jerry's employees in philanthropy and social change work; to give back to our Vermont communities; and to support grassroots activism and community organizing for social and environmental justice around the country."

