



RWA MATTERS

**Range Women's Advocates –
A program for battered women.
Sponsor of the Range Intervention Project
Summer 2009**

Our mission is to confront domestic violence and effect social change by addressing the needs of women who are battered, their children, and their families through advocacy, prevention, and education.

THE WATCH REPORT PART II THE IMPACT OF MINNESOTA'S FELONY STRANGULATION LAW MAY 2009

The mission of WATCH is to make the justice system more effective and responsive in handling cases of violence, particularly against women and children, and to create a more informed and involved public.

In 2005, Minnesota became one of just six states with a specific statute making strangulation of a family or household member a felony-level crime. The law went into effect on August 1 at 12:00 a.m., and approximately 10 minutes later, a Stearns County man was arrested and charged under the statute. To date, there have been 3,638 strangulation assaults charged in Minnesota with 664 charged by the Hennepin County Attorney's Office.¹

It is estimated that 23% to 68% of women victims of domestic violence have experienced at least one strangulation assault during their lifetime.² Prior to the enactment of Minnesota's felony strangulation law, many of these assaults were charged as misdemeanors that were in turn frequently reduced to disorderly conduct charges as part of a plea bargain, or simply dismissed altogether. This approach to strangulation cases is not only short sighted, but puts victims at risk. Strangulation has been recognized as an indicator of escalating violence and potential lethality in domestic violence cases for at least 13 years, and the goal of enacting a law that singles out this brutal form of assault

is to save lives. St. Paul Police Chief John Harrington has credited the felony strangulation law as an essential element in bringing about the reduction of domestic homicides in St. Paul in the last two years.³

In January 2007, WATCH published a report on the initial impact of Minnesota's felony strangulation statute that included a review of 59 strangulation cases charged in Hennepin County during the first six months of the law's implementation (August 1, 2005 to January 31, 2006).⁴ Since that time, WATCH has presented locally and nationally on Minnesota's strangulation statute and has assisted other states in pushing for similar legislation. To date, Nebraska, Missouri, Oklahoma, Idaho, North Carolina, Alaska, Oregon, Indiana, and Hawaii have enacted domestic strangulation laws. Such legislation, however, failed in Texas and California, and is pending in Tennessee, Ohio, Washington, and Illinois.

To further assess the ongoing impact of the law, WATCH conducted a comparable study of Hennepin County strangulation cases charged two years after the first review (August 1, 2007 to January 31, 2008).

It is not uncommon for battered women to minimize the violence they experience and for abusive men to deny or minimize the violence they have perpetrated. A review of strangulation cases in San Diego illustrates this minimization. Comments from victims include, "He didn't really choke me, he just

had me in a headlock and I couldn't breathe." Defendants make similar comments such as, "Why are you arresting me? All I did was choke her."¹²

Minnesota's felony strangulation law provides the criminal justice system the opportunity to give a wake-up call to both defendants and victims about the seriousness of a strangulation assault. One victim advocate told WATCH that she attempts to "*educate victims on the fatality of strangulation and how quickly they can die.*" The loss of consciousness can occur within approximately 10 seconds and death within 4 to 5 minutes.¹³

As the earlier WATCH report demonstrated, Minnesota's felony strangulation law has increased victim safety and offender accountability. However, as our 2007 review shows, it is common for the strangulation charge to be dismissed in exchange for a conviction on another charge and when a felony strangulation conviction is obtained, the sentence given is often shorter than allowed under the statute.

Both factors can lead to a minimization of the escalating violence. As one probation officer observed in our earlier review, "*... defendants are frequently given a break. I think people are walking out of here with 60 or 90 days and with lots of denial.*"

Continued on page 2...

Mother's Day Contributors

Range Women's Advocates would like to thank the following for their contributions during our Mother's Day Fundraiser.



Your contribution will make a difference!

CONTRIBUTOR: IN HONOR OF:

- AAUW of Hibbing
- James & Jonna Arness
- Marion Brakke
- Michele Coldagelli
- Lynn Daniels
- Eisai, Inc.
- Faith Lutheran Sunday School..
- Sharon Gibbs
- Barb & Floyd Gorman
- Celeste Gorman.....
- Susan Haverkamp
- Patricia Jarvela
- Stephanie Jarvela
- Marilyn Kaeli
- Barbara Kern
- Roger & Judy Linden
- Kenneth & Joan Malkovich
- Connie O'Connell
- Kevin & Beth Pietrini
- Sue Swanson
- Lynn Anne Vesper
- Kay & Bill Waite.....
- Marsha & Ed Zottola

All Women

Barbara Ann Gorman

Patricia Waite
Jean Foster

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In one of the 2007 cases reviewed, the monitor made this observation: "The judge told defendant not to let things get out of hand again and that resources are available for help." The judge continued to explain that the charges were amended from strangulation to misdemeanor 5th degree domestic assault because "...while defendant placed his hands on her neck, 'it's apparent that he never impeded her breathing.'

Recommendations

Recommendation #1

• Create a specialized team of prosecutors who would strive to obtain convictions on domestic assault strangulation charges.

Recommendation #2

• Eliminate the use of stay of imposition of sentences in domestic strangulation cases.

Recommendation #3

• Sentence defendants to the maximum sentence allowed under the statute to avoid minimizing the seriousness of a strangulation assault.

Recommendation #4

• Ensure that supervised probation is ordered for all defendants convicted of crimes involving strangulation regardless of the level of the final conviction. Probationary conditions for these defendants should include domestic abuse programming as required by statute, based on risk assessments and pre-sentencing investigations. Anger management should not be recommended by corrections or ordered by a judge in place of participation in a domestic abuse program.

Recommendation #5

• Provide periodic training for criminal justice system personnel throughout Minnesota on investigating and prosecuting strangulation cases under the statute.

Recommendation #6

• Provide a checklist for law enforcement officers who respond to domestic assault strangulation scenes to ensure that all necessary questions are asked of victims and witnesses, injuries are documented and photographed, and appropriate medical treatment is provided.

Recommendation #7

• Encourage the judiciary to standardize probation revocations when defendants who have committed strangulation violate the terms of their probation. Further, encourage the judiciary to emphasize to defendants at sentencing the seriousness with which any violation of a no contact order or order for protection will be met.

To view the full report online:
<http://www.watchmn.org/PDF/strangulation%20report5-26-09.pdf>

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□ Total strangulation	□
□ charges in Minnesota	□
□ from August 2005 –	□
□ December 2008: 3638	□
□ Total in St. Louis County	□
□ during the same time	□
□ period: 250 (third in the	□
□ state) Hennepin and	□
□ Ramsey Counties, 664 and	□
□ 352, respectively).	□
□	□
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Grants . . .

Soroptimists Board Members present \$1,000 check to RWA (L to R: Rene Capra, immediate past president; Kim Culbert, president elect; Barbara Booton, development manager of RWA, and president and advisory board member Sue Beck).

Local Soroptimists support Range Women's Advocates

The mission of Soroptimists is to improve the lives of women and girls, in local communities and throughout the world. Their areas of service include health, education, environment, human rights and the status of women, international good will and understanding, and economic and social development.

PATRICK AND AIMEE BUTLER FAMILY FOUNDATION AWARDS \$33,000

The Patrick and Aimee Butler Family Foundation, St. Paul, Minn., recently awarded a \$33,000 two-year grant to Range Women's Advocates. This funding will be used to empower survivors of domestic violence, and further outreach and education on the issues surrounding domestic violence. The Foundation has a special concern for the condition of women and children in society, particularly those living in poverty. The Foundation also seeks to foster a supportive environment for all families to ensure children's healthy development. The Foundation's priority in funding is distributed among projects or programs which enhance the ability of individuals and families to break dependencies and achieve self-reliance.

In 1951, the Patrick and Aimee Butler Family Foundation was established in St. Paul, Minn., by Patrick and Aimee Mott Butler. The Foundation continues as a lasting reminder of their wisdom, generosity, and love. Today, the Butler Family Foundation is governed by the children and grandchildren of its founders, Pat and Aimee Butler. The legacy of the founders continues in the Foundation's priorities of supporting

Cliff's Natural Resources Donates \$2,500

Cleveland Cliffs donated \$2,500 to Range Women's Advocates (RWA). Health and human services contributions from Cleveland Cliffs are directed toward hospital development programs, United Way drives, and agencies serving the less fortunate, again mainly in the Foundation's areas of focus. RWA is funded in part by United Way of Northeastern Minnesota.

United Way of Northeastern Minnesota Awards \$16,223

The United Way of Northeastern Minnesota recently allocated \$16,223 to Range Women's Advocates (RWA). Included in that amount is \$3,213 in donor designations and \$23 in care with exception funds. This funding will be used to provide services to victims of domestic violence in all of the communities on the Iron Range in northern St. Louis County. Range Women's Advocates appreciates the work of many dedicated volunteers who work diligently collecting pledges for United Way agencies in our service area as well as the volunteer efforts of those in our communities who commit their time to review grant applications.

Hibbing Foundation Awards \$2,000 to Range Women's Advocates

The Hibbing Foundation Grantmaking Fund of the Minnesota Community Foundation awarded Range Women's Advocates (RWA), a \$2,000 grant. Funds from the Hibbing Foundation will be used to implement educational strategies to Hibbing schools, healthcare professionals, law enforcement, civic groups, employers, volunteers and community organizations reducing domestic violence and dating abuse in northern St. Louis County. One of the objectives is to bring a national speaker to the Iron Range to inspire youth and community leaders to take action and assist us in our efforts to change attitudes and prevent young people from becoming involved in abusive relationships.

The TEEN SOADA project is an attempt to find a solution to reducing domestic violence in our area and to tap into student leaders to use their status to speak out against rape, battering, sexual harassment, gay-bashing and all forms of sexist abuse and violence. Over the last two years, Range Women's Advocates (RWA) has seen a 34 percent increase in the number of domestic violence victims; the majority of those victims are women. Part of the Teen SOADA project included a billboard created by youth members of the Iron Range Youth in Action (IRYA) organization. The highway billboard was posted on Hwy. 53 north of Virginia for two months

2010 CENSUS: IT'S IN OUR HANDS

The foundation of our American democracy is dependent on fair and equitable representation in Congress. In order to achieve an accurate assessment of the number and location of the people living within the nation's borders, the U.S. Constitution mandates a census of the population every 10 years.

Reaching an Increasingly Diverse Population

The census population totals determine which states gain or lose representation in Congress. *It also determines the amount of state and federal funding communities receive over the course of the decade.* 2010 Census data will directly affect how more than \$3 trillion is allocated to local, state and tribal governments over the next 10 years. In order for this funding allocation to be accomplished fairly and accurately, the goal of the decennial census is to count everybody, count them only once, and count them in the right place. The facts gathered in the census also help shape decisions for the rest of the decade about public health, neighborhood improvements, transportation, education, senior services and much more.

Recruiting Census Workers

By 2010, there will be an estimated 310 million people residing in the United States. Counting each person is one of the

largest operations the federal government undertakes. For example, the Census Bureau will recruit nearly 3.8 million applicants for 2010 Census field operations. Of these applicants, the Census Bureau will hire about 1.4 million temporary employees. Some of these employees will be using GPS-equipped hand-held computers to update maps and ensure there is an accurate address list for the mailing of the census questionnaires.

10 Questions, 10 Minutes to Complete

With one of the shortest questionnaires in history, the 2010 Census asks for name, gender, age, race, ethnicity, relationship, and whether you own or rent your home. It takes only about 10 minutes for the average household to complete. Questions about *how* we live as a nation—our diversity, education, housing, jobs and more—are now covered in the American Community Survey, which is conducted every year throughout the decade and replaces the Census 2000 long-form questionnaire.

Responses to the 2010 Census questionnaire are required by law. All responses are used for statistical purposes only, and all are strictly confidential.

For more information, visit the 2010 Census Web site at <http://www.census.gov/2010>

What is the Census?

- The census is a count of everyone living in the United States every 10 years.
- The census is mandated by the U.S. Constitution.
- The next census is in 2010.
- Your participation in the census is required by law.
- It takes less than 10 minutes to complete.
- Federal law protects the personal information you share during the census.
- Census data are used to distribute Congressional seats to states, to make decisions about what community services to provide, and to distribute \$300 billion in federal funds to local, state, and tribal governments each year.

Outward Bound Wilderness sponsors

BUCA trip for staff and survivors

Women's Service Coordinator Sasha Anderson has been a key player in finalizing a once-in-a-lifetime wilderness canoe trip sponsored by Outward Bound Wilderness of Golden Colorado. The outdoor adventure is scheduled to take place the last week of August in Minnesota's Boundary Water Canoe Area. Outward Bound is providing all of the equipment, camping gear, food and guides—at no cost to the participants. Daycare assistance will be provided to survivors who choose to participate. The trip is limited to 14 staff and survivors, with two guides per each group of seven. A former board member from Ely recommended RWA be the recipient of the scholarship-funded trip, which would usually cost \$900 per person.

Participants will learn the art of paddling a canoe in a variety of water conditions as well as portaging, map and compass reading, navigation, expedition planning, and no-trace wilderness living. Participants will build effective partnerships with each paddling companion, coordinating bow and stern paddling strokes, how to travel between

lakes or around challenging rapids, working together as a team to carry packs and canoes over trails. Portage trails will vary from 10 yards to one-half mile or longer.

Although guides are provided, they are instructors and this is not a "guided" trip. All group members will pitch in to do camp chores, including cooking, washing pots, setting up tents, and hanging food bags (to keep them safe from critters).

For over 30 years, Outward Bound has been running expeditions specifically designed for survivors of sexual assault, incest and domestic violence. During these transformational wilderness adventures, participants have hands-on opportunities to challenge themselves both physically and emotionally. With the help of Outward Bound staff, a participating volunteer therapist, advocates and course mates, survivors work to strengthen trust, improve self-confidence and look for ways to transfer newfound insights back into their daily lives. As a community of survivors, this is a unique opportunity to work together to overcome obstacles, conquer fears and gain support from those who have also had to cope with violence.

RWA Staff and Local GTEA Task Force Attend Anatomy of Strangulation Training in Deerwood



More than 133 law enforcement from the state and six RWA staff attended one of three regional trainings on the Anatomy of Strangulation, which was held at Rutger's Resort in Deerwood on April 21. The training was sponsored by the MN Sheriff's Association, the MN Chief's of Police Association, the MN County Attorney's Association, the MN Office of Justice Programs, and the MN Coalition for Battered Women.

Dr. Mary Carr, Regions Hospital, St. Paul, explained the medical signs and symptoms of strangulation. She also presented before the 2005 MN Legislature on "Strangulation in Victims of Domestic Violence." Lieutenant Scott Jenkins, Duluth Police Department, presented law enforcement initial response, documentation, evidence gathering and report writing. Jenkins has trained throughout the U.S. and internationally. Most recently, he has trained throughout the U.S. with the EMERGE program out of Boston, Massachusetts, regarding lethality assessment and documenting risk and dangerousness within intimate relationships. Janelle Kendall, Stearns County Attorney, presented information on the charging and prosecuting of strangulation cases. In April 2008, Kendall was instrumental in bringing the first Felony Domestic Violence Court in Minnesota to Stearns County. Sergeant Paul Schnell, St. Paul Police Department, discussed the risk assessment of strangulation homicide. Schnell is a pioneer in the use of conferencing for serious offenses and is now actively promoting the use of informal restorative practices in many areas of policing.

The strangulation training was one of three areas being addressed through the federal Grant to Encourage Arrest as local and state taskforces work to create a safer environment for battered women in the State of Minnesota. The two local sites, Someplace Safe in West Central Minnesota, and Range Women's Advocates, are conducting in-depth assessments of law enforcement and prosecution policies and practices, identifying barriers, and making recommendations for changes to local policies to the statewide taskforce.

Throughout the next two years of the project, there will be additional regional trainings as well as the development and dissemination of training tools for use in local communities. In the Fall of 2009, there will be a training on stalking, and in the Spring of 2010, training on enforcement of No Contact Orders.

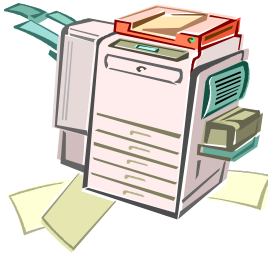
RWA partners with the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy and The Grantmaking for Community Impact Project



As a partner with the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy and the Grantmaking for Community Impact Project, Range Women's Advocates will be featured in a report documenting the impacts of advocacy, organizing and civic engagement. RWA will also be invited to participate in a forum with other community groups and foundations to present and discuss the report's findings.

The goals of this project are to produce informative reports that document the impacts of community organizing, advocacy and civic engagement; engage community and foundation leaders in a dialogue about how these strategies can advance organizations' missions and achieve community-wide benefits; and motivate funders to initiate or increase philanthropic resources for advocacy and organizing.

Gita Gulati-Partee, Project Consultant, OpenSource Leadership Strategies, Inc., Durham, North Carolina, visited with staff last month to glean a better understanding about the services we provide, the resources that are available and challenges we face as a nonprofit in the State of Minnesota.



Guilt

*One more shot of whiskey,
One more glass of wine,
He slams his money down
And glances for the time.*

*She sets her glass down gently,
As she stares up at the clock
Trying to think how she can
Finally block
....his heavy blows
She takes another sip as he come
storming.*

*That's when all the fighting starts to
begin.*

*She's "a tramp!"
A good for slumming nothing!"
She just stands there quiet.
"Answer me," he screams!
As she's trying not to cry
"You're worthless to me
And to any other guy"*

*One hit now and it just busted her lip.
Two hits now and it cracked her rib!
"No more!"*

*She finally screams.
To him, it sounded like her final plea.
She's laying there now lifeless,
Her body is not going to stir
The blood is on his hands as
He digs up some dirt
I'll bury the body in a quick ditch
No one will ever find her!
No one cared for the bitch.
Time goes on.*

*Days go by.
The guilt eats at him as he begins to cry.
What was I thinking?
What have I done?
I killed someone that I did love.*

*He goes to the cabinet,
Takes out a gun.
What he did can't be undone.
Stands over her grave and begins to sob.
The last sound around was his gun going
off.*

A survivor

Anonymous Donor Provides New Copier to RWA

In recent months, "Old Faithful," RWA's 20-year-old used copier was working hard to keep up with its heavy workload. For those of you who don't know, the copier is a "must-have" tool at our office, generating more than 100,000 copies a year—producing not only victim packets, volunteer training manuals, support group curriculum materials and abuser education manuals, but hundreds of court forms and court orders as well.

After several failed attempts at securing grant funding to purchase a high-speed, multi-function digital copier, RWA staff sent a plea to United Way of Northeastern Minnesota to assist in finding us a "gently used" copier. Their prompt response to this plea—the staff at United Way sent out 1,000 email messages from their regional database—brought a generous response to the forefront. The donor, who prefers to remain anonymous, gave RWA an almost new multi-function digital copier. The "gently used" copier was installed in July and has been networked to all nine computers which means staff members can generate unlimited copies immediately from their individual desktops.

RWA JUST EARNED \$28 FOR PURCHASING TWO COMPUTERS THROUGH DELL AT GOODSHOP.COM!

What if Range Women's Advocates received a donation every time you searched the Internet? Or how about if a percentage of every purchase you made online went to support our cause? Well, now it can!

Literally, hundreds of stores you shop at are now listed on GoodShop.com. Well known retailers donate a percentage of your purchases to the organization you designate on the website. Be sure to enter Range Womens Advocates and Click Verify before you make your purchase.

GoodShop.com is a new online shopping mall which donates up to 37 percent of each purchase to your favorite cause! Hundreds of great stores including Amazon, Target, Dell, Home Depot, PetSmart, Land's End, Kohls, Overstock.com, Gap, Best Buy, ebay, Macy's and Barnes & Noble have teamed up with GoodShop and every time you place an order, you earn money for Range Women's Advocates. Be sure to Verify who you want to GoodShop for...it does not cost you a dime, just a click on the website!

GoodShop.com can also be found at GoodSearch.com., which is a Yahoo-powered search engine that donates half its advertising revenue, about a penny per search, to the charities its users designate. Use GoodSearch.com just as you would any search engine (such as Google), and get quality search results from Yahoo, and watch the donations add up! **If 100 supporters do two searches a day, 365 days a year, they would earn \$730 a year for RWA!**

Just go to www.goodsearch.com and be sure to enter Range Women's Advocates as the charity you want to support. To always use GoodSearch.com, make it your home page... and be sure to spread the word! ***To date, RWA has earned \$118.82. In 2008, we have received more than \$40!***

WOMEN'S SUPPORT GROUPS

RWA support groups offer a safe place to talk about our fear, frustration, and confusion. We focus on battering issues and how they effect us and our children. Participants are expected to keep the location and content of groups confidential Each week facilitators will cover a new topic, followed by time to share, problem solve, and give support to each other. For confidential locations or to talk to an advocates please call **(218) 749-5054 or (218) 254-3377** at any time.

VIRGINIA		HIBBING
Meets Monday evenings – 6:30 p.m. Call RWA office for location – 749-5054 Facilitator: Deborah		Meets Thursday evenings – 6:30 p.m. Call RWA office for location – 254-3377 Facilitators: Lisa & Suzy
Virginia	Hibbing	Topics
<u>July</u> 27	<u>July 30</u> 30	WHY WOMEN STAY - What makes it difficult to leave?
<u>August</u> 3	<u>August</u> 6	GRIEVING LOSSES - Letting unrealistic hope die; grieving the loss
10	13	WHY DO I FEEL CRAZY? - Video and discussion
17	20	VIDEO NIGHT & MUNCHIES
24	27	EFFECTS OF VIOLENCE ON CHILDREN - Video: “The Children Are Watching”
31	<u>September</u> 3	PARENTING – Some things you can do as a parent.
<u>September</u> 7	10	Virginia—NO MEETING—HOLIDAY Hibbing—Open Sharing
14	17	GUILT & BLAMING – How we blame ourselves, take responsibility to make the relationship better, and how society reinforces it.
21	24	WOMEN'S USE OF VIOLENCE – Definition of battering, self-defense, and discussion following.
28	<u>October</u> 1	WHAT IS A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP? – Examine our expectations, awareness of “red flags,” dating? boundaries?
<u>October</u> 5	8	AFFIRMATIONS OF SELF – Looking at strengths, defining support systems, unlearning helplessness.
12	15	TECHNOLOGY & SAFETY – Cell phone precaution and safety planning
19	22	INDEPENDENCE IS OKAY – Giving yourself permission to take care of <u>your</u> needs at least part of the time.
26	29	WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE? – Community resources, evaluate continuing needs, evaluation forms, and a celebration
<u>November</u> 2	<u>November</u> 5	WHY ARE WE HERE? - Look at personal expectations of groups; identify needs; review guidelines; discuss confidentiality; explain
9	12	CONTROL WHEEL - Help women name their experiences
16	19	WHY DO MEN BATTER? - Cultural/societal supports; personal belief on why he batters.