



LAKESHORE ALLIANCE AGAINST DOMESTIC & SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Summer, 2010
visit our website at
www.laadsv.org
E-mail: info@laadsv.org

New Legal Help is Available

by Hon. Jon Van Allsburg

There has been a significant increase in recent years in the number of court cases involving self-represented persons (those who don't hire a lawyer), but that should not diminish any person's legitimate expectation for a fair process and just result in every case. For this reason, Ottawa County is fortunate to have a Legal Self-Help Center in the new Ottawa County Courthouse in Grand Haven. The county has provided space and overhead for the Center, and it is located on the second floor of the courthouse across from the Friend of the Court offices. The Center has also been partly funded by a grant from the Zenko Family and Sherwood Family Funds of the Grand Haven Area Community Foundation.

The Legal Self-Help Center is generally open from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm (except that it is open until 8 pm on Monday, and closes at 12:30 pm on Friday). It is free to use, although there is a charge for some forms to cover copy costs. The Center offers help in a variety of cases, including family law matters (such as divorce, custody, paternity, child support and parenting time matters), district court matters (landlord/tenant, small claims, and garnishments), and probate court matters (guardianships and conservatorships, estates, and mental health proceedings).

The Self-Help Center is staffed by volunteer local attorneys and law students from Cooley Law School. They are able to give general information and assistance with identifying and completing the many standardized court forms that are available. However, because state law prohibits non-attorneys from engaging in the "unauthorized practice of law,"

the center's volunteers do not give specific legal advice in individual cases (court clerks are also prohibited from giving legal advice).

The law is a little different with respect to Personal Protection Orders (PPOs). State law contains an exception to the "unauthorized practice of law" statute for domestic violence (DV) victim advocates, who may assist DV victims in "obtaining, serving, modifying, or rescinding" a PPO. The primary agency providing DV victim advocate services in Ottawa County is the Center for Women in Transition. DV victim advocates sometimes attend court hearings with a person requesting a PPO, although the advocate cannot represent or advocate for the DV victim during a court hearing. In addition to DV advocate assistance, the Ottawa County Clerk's office provides PPO forms and instructions, as well as information on how to prepare a Safety Plan, at its office on the third floor of the courthouse.

The Hon. Jon Van Allsburg is a circuit court judge assigned to the Family Division of the 20th Circuit Court in Ottawa County, Michigan, and is an Executive Committee member of the Lakeshore Alliance Against Domestic and Sexual Violence (LAADSV).



Mission Statement

To prevent and reduce the incidence of domestic and sexual violence. To promote safety for victims and families and to hold abusers and perpetrators accountable.

This will be accomplished through coordinated community response, program development, community education, and collaborative activities.

These efforts are to be monitored through continual communication, research, and evaluation.

Join LAADSV

Any individual or agency may join LAADSV. Members benefit from training, agency collaboration, and domestic and sexual violence information. Annual membership dues are \$40. For more information on becoming a member or attending our trainings please contact Jo Ann Wassenaar at wassenaj@gvsu.edu or 616-331-2748. Membership applications are available online at www.laadsv.org.

Meeting Schedule

In 2010, LAADSV meets at 7:30 a.m. at Center for Women in Transition, 411 Butternut Drive in Holland on the third Tuesday of every other month:

July 20
September 21
November 16

Newsletter Submissions

Submit articles, agency news, upcoming events, and campus awareness activities to the LAADSV E-Newsletter to share with the community.

Email: LesleyC@aplaceforwomen.org



Teens Preventing Dating Violence

Sixteen high school students in the Hope College TRiO Upward Bound summer program are participating in a six-week *Teens Preventing Dating Violence (TPDV)* class. The students have learned about dating violence and have practiced positive bystander skills for stepping in to help and address harmful attitudes. Each student researched and presented on a different topic including sexting, sexual coercion, human trafficking, and different forms of dating violence. Students toured Center for Women in Transition, learned about agency services, and decorated shirts with positive prevention messages for the agency's travelling Clothesline Project display. Students hosted a car wash and volunteered their time as a service project for Center for Women in Transition. In July, the TPDV students will present on healthy dating relationships to 7th and 8th graders participating in a College PREP program sponsored by Perrigo through the Hope College Office of Multicultural Education. Additionally, the students will present dating violence information to parents and peers at the UB LIVE performance on July 22. Visit the DELTA Project website at <http://delta.aplaceforwomen.org> for more information on dating violence and prevention efforts.



Teens Preventing Dating Violence students organize a car wash for Center for Women in Transition (clockwise): Jessica Coleman, Julio Almanza, Viridiana Soto, Roberto Lopez Jr. and Clarissa Torres.



Update on PPO Legislation and Case Law

By Hon. Jon Van Allsburg

The legislature amended the personal protection order (PPO) statutes by the enactment of Public Act 19 of 2010, effective March 25, 2010. The primary reason for the change in the law was to deal with the distinctions between domestic PPOs and non-domestic (stalking) PPOs as they affect sexual assault cases.

The law permits a domestic PPO (one in which the parties have a child together, or were either married, had lived together, or had a dating relationship) to be obtained where there has been one or more incidents of assault, threat of violence, or conduct which interferes with one's personal freedom, causing one to feel threatened, harassed, frightened, or molested. Non-domestic PPOs, however, require two or more acts of this kind of unconsented contact. In the case of a single sexual assault, however, this produced the unjustifiable result of permitting a PPO to be issued where there is an existing or former domestic relationship between the perpetrator and the victim, but denying a PPO to a victim of sexual assault where the perpetrator did not have a prior relationship with the victim.

The new law changes this, and allows a victim of sexual assault, or someone threatened with or placed in reasonable apprehension of a sexual assault, to obtain a non-domestic PPO without having to show two separate acts. In addition, the legislature with this amendment took the opportunity to expand PPO protection to those victimized by cyberstalking activity, and to allow a PPO to be issued against a person convicted of furnishing obscene material to a minor.

In addition to the legislative amendments, the court of appeals decided a case which helps to clarify the scope of evidence the court may hear in a PPO hearing. In *Roesner v Hutchings*, decided May 6, 2010 (Docket No. 289187), the court decided that subsection 4 of the domestic PPO statute permits a court to hear all testimony and evidence offered in a PPO hearing, even if it goes beyond the specific incidents listed in the PPO petition. Although this was an unpublished opinion (and therefore not binding on the circuit court), a judge is free to adopt the reasoning of the case if the court considers it persuasive. This may be good news for those petitioners who are poor writers, or have difficulty with the English language, and whose petitions may be incomplete or unclear when filed.

12th Annual Potluck in the Park

Alliance for Cultural and Ethnic Harmony
Sunday, August 8
1:00-4:00 p.m.

Invite family, friends, neighbors, co-workers.
Everyone is welcome!

Bring a dish to pass from your own ethnic
background. ACEH provides beverages and
table service. Entertainment & activities.

At Ransom Park, on Ransom Street north
of Quincy and south of New Holland St.,
between 160th and 168th,
north side of Holland.

Le Style de Vie 2010

Save the date
September 11

Downtown Holland behind
Butch's on 8th Street with an
open house at The Globe

Wine Tasting, Music, Fashion,
Auction

Proceeds benefit the Center for
Women in Transition

Sponsored by Butch's, The Globe
and Studio K.

2009 Ottawa County Youth Assessment Survey

The 2009 Ottawa County Youth Assessment
Survey is available on the Ottawa County web-
site. Thank you to the Ottawa County Health
Department, Ottawa Area Intermediate School
District, Greater Ottawa County United Way,
Lakeshore Coordinating Council, and Pathways,
MI for all of your efforts in preparing this survey
and sharing it with the community.

Link: [http://www.miottawa.org/HealthComm/
Health/reports/2009.htm](http://www.miottawa.org/HealthComm/Health/reports/2009.htm)

Alliance Against Domestic and Sexual Violence

S P E A K E R S E R I E S

*The Lakeshore Alliance Against Domestic and Sexual
Violence and the GVSU Women's Center presents the fol-
lowing speaker series:*

Upstream 2010: Promoting Healthy Communication & Respect in Relationships

Date: Wednesday, October 6th

Time: 12 – 1:30pm

**Location: GVSU Meijer Campus (located @ 515 S. Waverly
Road/Holland)**

Participants will engage in an interactive workshop exploring
healthy and respectful relationships. Lesley A. Coghill, DELTA
Project Coordinator for Ottawa County will lead the discussion
which will center on a deeper understanding of dating violence
and domestic violence, gaining practical ideas for promoting
awareness about dating violence and domestic violence in
faith communities, and learning prevention tools that can be
shared with leadership teams and others. Participants will re-
ceive a training packet, prevention toolkit, and tangible ideas
to use in faith communities and at home. This workshop is
open to all faith-based leadership, parents/guardians and com-
munity members.

Protecting All Students from Harassment: What Students and Parents Can Do!

Date: Friday, November 19th

Time: 12-1:30pm

**Location: GVSU Meijer Campus (located @ 515 S. Waverly
Road/Holland)**

Jennifer L. Martin, Ph.D. of Oakland University will provide an
overview of different forms of harassment and bullying, its ef-
fect on victims, and what parents and schools can do in order
to promote a safer, more equitable learning environment for all
students. The legal responsibilities of schools and the legal
rights of parents and student will be addressed. Title IX case
law will be discussed which protects students from sexual har-
assment. Participants will be encouraged to share experiences
and discuss potential solutions.

The series is free. For social workers needing CEU's for licensing requirements this
will be available for \$15. **Please call 616-331-2748 or email womenctr@gvsu.edu**
and reserve a space for you and your staff members. Participants are encour-
aged to bring their lunches. **For individuals requiring special accommodations**
please call the Women's Center at 616-331-2748 or email at:
womenctr@gvsu.edu.