

PFJCI
Monthly

NEWSLETTER



Welcome

Spring is the time of new beginnings, even for survivors of family violence who need new ways of dealing with oppression, difficult circumstances, and changes in every area of their lives. We help our clients break out of cold, raw pain and blossom with hope. It's not as easy as it sounds. Hope doesn't automatically "spring eternal" like the poet suggests. It sometimes needs a helping hand.

Thanks for being that helping hand to those in your community.

News from OVW

Reminder: Access to PFJCI and Other Technical Assistance

As a participant in the President's Family Justice Center Initiative (PFJCI), your community has access to a range of technical assistance opportunities to enhance the success of your family justice center. The San Diego Family Justice Center, the National Network to End Domestic Violence, Safe Havens Interfaith Partnership Against Domestic Violence, the Hennepin County District Attorney's Office and the Julian Center are the only organizations designated as PFJCI technical assistance providers. As a reminder, all requests for on-site technical assistance from any of the above organizations and all requests for technical assistance to be provided by a non-PFJCI consultant/TA provider must be submitted to your OVW Program Specialist using the PFJCI Technical Assistance Request Form. This form can be found on the PFJCI website. Your Program Specialist must approve all on-site technical assistance prior to the planning and delivery of the requested TA.

In addition, from time-to-time you may learn about training or technical assistance events happening outside the context of the PFJCI. Some of the events may be sponsored by OVW under one or more of our grant programs while other events are sponsored by non-OVW supported entities. PFJCI sites are not pre-authorized to use their grant travel funds for any training or technical assistance event outside of those offered under the Initiative. All requests to use grant travel funds to attend a non-PFJCI technical assistance event, including other OVW sponsored trainings, must be approved by your OVW Program Specialist in advance of the event. Please use the PFJCI TA Request Form to make your request.

Your OVW Program Specialist is your single point of contact on all administrative and financial matters pertaining to your PFJCI award. If you have any question or doubt about whether a training or TA event has been authorized, please do not hesitate to contact OVW.

Chaplaincy Funding

On March 10, 2006, the Office on Violence Against Women issued guidance for PFJCI sites in establishing and funding Chaplaincy posi-

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April, 2006

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The San Diego Family Justice Center Foundation's PFJCI TA Team.

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News from PFJCI locations

The Grand Opening of the Erie County Family Justice Center in New York has been set for May 2, 2006. Additional openings with confirmed dates include the Knoxville, Tennessee Family Justice Center on May 19, 2006, and Sitka, Alaska Family Justice Center on June 1. Good luck to these staff and partners as they finalize all the details for their openings.

Site Insight: New York City and Erie County, NY

New York City Family Justice Center

As the first site to open under the President's Family Justice Center Initiative, The New York City Family Justice Center has served over 2,600 clients since opening on July 20, 2005. Many clients return, so the NYCFJC sees about 45 clients per day, according to Executive Director Amy Barasch.

Co-located with the entire Domestic Violence unit of the District Attorney's office, almost 75 percent of these clients already had active cases in criminal court when they came through the door, but the FJC quickly had an impact on the way these matters are being handled. For instance, after every domestic violence arraignment, a letter is usually sent out from the DA's office to potential witnesses, asking them to come speak to a prosecutor. Now, that letter includes a list of the FJC services as well. Other innovations are being explored in the civil/legal area, such as allowing elder abuse victims to draft orders of protection at home with the help of a social worker, or having time-certain court hearings in the morning for elderly victims.

Increasingly, clients come to the FJC through the work of the 18 on-site partners, which range from Urban Justice Center Domestic Violence Project for civil/legal assistance, to the Arab American Family Support Services, Haitian Centers Council, New York Asian Women's Center and Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services. All partners have access to a real-time translation service for more than 170 languages through a telephone line.

"This number of people coming through the door really highlights the demand for these coordinated services. Since we opened, clients coming for services that do not have a criminal case in the court is increasing, indicating that the word is getting out to a broad group of victims in need," said Barasch.

"When you work in the field of DV, you have to become a generalist because your clients are dealing with a myriad of issues. Advocates deal with housing, public assistance, and many other agencies," said Barasch. "With co-location, however, we've been able to do a lot of cross-training. We encourage our partners to become more informed about related fields."

Communicating with the partners is one of the most important aspects of an executive director position, and the NYCFJC has come up with some creative and effective ways to keep information flowing in both directions. There is a weekly newsletter that is shared with each partner and is, in turn, shared with their home offices. One side is a calendar and the other outlines important FJC office updates. Each one includes a client success story, in general terms, that inspires and creates a bond in the partners. In addition, they just launched an intranet site where calendar, policy, and protocol information is available to all community-based partners located in the building. Reminders in the form of pop up of messages are used to highlight meetings or other important information.

"We have also initiated what I call a 'Pink Alert,'" said Barasch. "All the partners have to come through the same door and if there is vital,

New York City SpeedReader

- DA sends FJC information out with mailing
- Working on policy to allow elders to file orders of protection with a social worker from their homes
- Weekly calendar and weekly partner meetings
- Intranet site for shared partner information
- "Pink Alert" flyers for emergency announcements



Amy Barasch, Executive Director
New York City Family Justice Center

Site Insight, continued

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emergency information that I absolutely want everyone to know, there'll be a pink flyer on the door. Now that we are online, we also have an alert at the 'door' to the intranet."

Nothing beats face to face interaction, still, to keep partners motivated and involved. Most weeks NYCFJC holds a partner meeting.

"Coffee & Cookies is held monthly — I think Bettina Richardson in San Antonio calls it 'Chat & Chew'," said Barasch. "This Friday, we had 'Donuts at 11'. Whatever you call it, it's a time to just get together and the partners really seem to look forward to it."

Other innovations include a confidential expected visitor's list, so that intake personnel know who is expected to be in the building and can track walk-ins.

According to Barasch, the FJC model in the largest city in America works in the same way that it does in rural areas.

"Brooklyn is much more of a small town than you would imagine," said Barasch. We have a larger scope, no question -- more partners, more languages and cultures -- but it is remarkable how it can seem like a small town. We still have issues of confidentiality that include the possibility that a new client might know someone on site."

The one difference that she does note in being an urban site is the critical need for housing for DV victims. According to Barasch, the FJC has added a facilitated process for submitting housing applications from its office.

One the most interesting experiences of being part of the President's Initiative for Barash has been discovering commonalities in the fight for DV victims across the nation.

"The Learning Exchanges were hard to attend because we are all so busy, but what I found exciting was not only meeting these incredible DV advocates from across the country, but discovering that we have the same struggles and the same perception barriers to overcome," said Barasch. "We all have the same goal."

Erie County Family Justice Center

Unlike their urban neighbors in Brooklyn, the population of Erie County, New York is just under one million. The City of Buffalo, where the Erie County Family Justice Center plans to open on May 2, 2006, has a population of 300,000, but accounts for 80 percent of the 5,600 arrests out of the 14,000 reported DV cases in 2002. According to FJC Executive Director, Nathan Cook, the area is eagerly awaiting the co-located services of the FJC.

"We had to work hard to get the synergy of our 32 partners going in the same direction. I think this community has done a better job of it than most," said Cook.

Much of this effort can be attributed to our steering committee of 9-10 people, made up of law enforcement, advocates, attorneys, strategic planners, and county workers. They paved the way for partnerships to form.

Cook and other leaders have since recruited a full board of 14 members, plus three ad hoc members, with the first meeting held in March, 2006. On the agenda was the history of the FJC effort and the current status of the grantee. The three ad hoc board members made a presentation on the history and development of the FJC and another on the different roles and expectations of board members. Cook helped the board create board committees for auditing, sustainability, and public relations. An ad hoc committee was formed to work on the upcoming Grand Opening.

Erie County's FJC now has 13 co-located partners. Many of them moved into the building in March, bringing clients with them and creating a "soft" opening that has allowed them to test their protocols and work flow.

"We recently had two focus groups of domestic violence survivors come to the FJC," said Cook.

Erie County SpeedReader

- Opening set for May 2, 2006
- 13 partners co-located, 32 total
- First board meeting held, committees formed
- Donated outfitting for "living rooms" and children's room
- Staff hired
- 501(c)3 status awarded

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Site Insight, continued

(Continued from page 3)

"One reviewed security and confidentiality and the other looked at policies and practices. It was encouraging to find out that many of their suggestions were already put into place."

"I think, for the end-user, the FJC is a no-brainer," said Cook. "We have the information they may want and the services they may need. You talk them out of a threatening situation and empower them to take care of themselves. The system was so fragmented before, now victims have a better understanding of what's available to them."

According to Cook, the turnaround for the Erie County FJC opening came with the finalization of the facility. The building was identified by some of the partners and the landlord quickly got on board.

"The landlord has been wonderful," said Cook. "The floor is beautiful, the colors are warm and we have offered sponsorships of our "living room" interview offices. Fisher-Price donated a truckload of toys, and Wegman's, a local grocery chain, outfitted the children's room.

"Wegman's grocery store has a 'W Kids' waiting area in each store, so they are putting one in the Family Justice Center. It looks great," said Cook. In addition, Cook was able to purchase equipment from the business moving out of the building, including six computers half a year old for \$200 each.

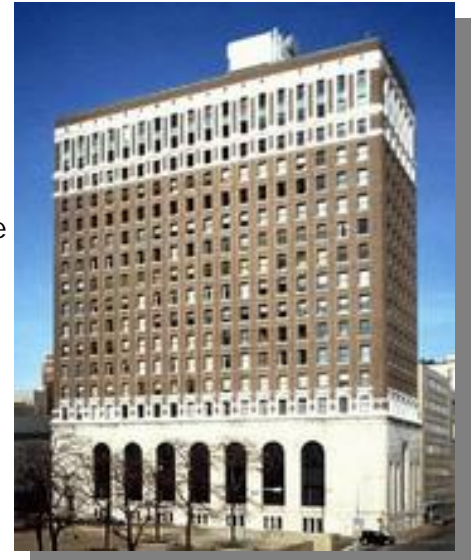
One of the biggest challenges is not knowing, exactly, what to expect, yet making sure there are enough advocates and personnel in place. Some staff are on board now, including a facilities manager, an administrative assistance and a program coordinator who will handle the day-to-day client load and relationship with onsite partners. A receptionist is hired and a volunteer coordinator is also in place.

With the recent awarding of the 501(c)3 designation, all that remains is the finalization of the facility, and the move-in of the rest of the partners. Plus a hundred details and unexpected matters to attend to before the Grand Opening.

"It's exciting," said Cook. "There are days you want to throw your hands up. But having the victims come through in the focus groups and hearing their comments really energized me. I heard of lot of them say, 'I wish this had been in place when I went through my case.'"



Above, Nathan Cook, Executive Director Erie County Family Justice Center. Below, Erie County FJC building.



News from OVW, cont.

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tions and clarified many of the practices surrounding the role and funding of chaplains for OVW grantees. The guidelines are based on the Department of Justice Equal Treatment regulation, 28, CFR Part 38, which provides for the equal treatment of faith-based organizations. A copy of the memo can be found in the PFJCI website Library Section under Official documents, in both OVW and Interfaith Chaplaincy sections.

www.familyjusticecenter.org/pfjci
User name: PFJCI Password: safe

PFJCI sites are asked to refer their budget questions or funding concerns regarding PFJCI chaplains to their individual OVW Program Specialists. All TA related questions regarding PFJCI chaplains should be directed to Rev. Dr. Anne Marie Hunter at Safe Havens Interfaith Partnership Against Domestic Violence at amhunter@interfaithpartners.org.

Get involved!

If you have news items for the Monthly Bulletin, please submit them to Jennifer Bodine by the 10th of each month at

Jennifer@sdfjc.org

and we will include them in the next bulletin, subject to OVW final approval.

If you would like to subscribe directly to the Monthly Bulletin, please email

Jennifer@sdfjc.org and write

"Monthly

Bulletin Subscription" in the subject line.

Spotlight On: Corinne Dominguez

PFJCI faculty

Each issue of the Monthly Bulletin will highlight a PFCJI faculty member.

Corinne Dominguez currently serves as the Director of the Community-based Services Division of the New Mexico Behavioral Health Institute for the Tri-County area. The Division provides numerous services, including behavioral health, developmentally delayed case management, and medically fragile. It provides programs such as Residential Services, Occupational Restorative Therapies and Foster Grandparents/Senior Companion Programs to over 25 counties in rural Northern New Mexico. In addition, Dominguez serves as chairperson of the Domestic Violence Alliance Organization for San Miguel County. She joined the National Faculty for the President's Family Justice Center Initiative in 2004. Dominguez received her Bachelor of Arts degree in 1991 from New Mexico Highlands University in Social Work and is a licensed social worker. She is a survivor of domestic violence, one of five women chosen to present her story in Washington, D.C. on the 10th Anniversary of the Violence Against Women Act.



In my era, wives were supposed to become Mrs. Cleaver in *Leave It To Beaver*. I was married to my husband just under a year and had to contend with drugs, alcohol, and beatings. Thinking about getting away was scary. Priests weren't supportive and it was difficult and embarrassing to tell your parents. It was a crazy time. Many women paved the way for other women to understand that it was not their fault.

In a rural area, domestic violence is acknowledged but there is still the feeling of, "It's their problem, it's their business." I have a friend who recently needed help and it was amazing to see the lack of compassion, lack of confidentiality, and lack of support. There was not even a room or office for her to sit in while filing for a restraining order. Confidentiality is seldom upheld in a small town because everyone knows about everyone else. You go to the grocery store and it appears as if everyone already knows your story. At times you can even feel as if it is your fault, because the perpetrator may be related to lots of people in your town. Even a state policeman said to me, "You wouldn't believe the caliber of the women who are being abused, including 'professional women,' and "women with financial means.'" It still surprises me when we, as a society, still believe that domestic violence only happens to the less fortunate. In reality, domestic violence happens behind closed doors and it can happen to anyone.

I am truly excited to be involved in the Tri-County Family Justice Center of Northeastern New Mexico, which will open soon. Prior to the grant, we had a strong, community, grassroots collaboration with a goal of opening a shelter in Las Vegas, New Mexico. We had begun to do fund-raising and one of our first events was a banquet. Our First Lady, Barbara Richardson, was the keynote speaker and she was the one who told us about the President's Initiative grant. Somas Familia, a local non-profit organization, took the lead on the grant at first, but the community organization held strong and there are now many partners in this plan to reduce domestic violence within the three counties. Through my organization, therapists, social workers, psychiatrists and other mental health professionals have been trained to identify DV as well as to provide support to the FJC.

We recently hired Chris Sanchez as our Chief Executive Officer, a brilliant and extremely knowledgeable man who has already proven to be the best man for the job. Many of us have felt very protective towards our FJC, as if we had given birth to a baby and now are turning it over to Chris to raise and nurture into the future Tri-County Family Justice Center. The last few months have given all of us the feeling that everything will be great and the FJC will grow up successfully.

I think the FJC is a great concept. It would be nice to have more funding for sustainability purposes and I would hate to see these Centers have to shut down, given all of the work that has gone into them. Once again, it is a powerful concept and we have been given the power to network among each other. My hope is that, if a situation should arise where a woman in rural New Mexico can leave the state, she can go to another FJC and get a new start. I think that we have all bonded and need to continue to share our successes.

New Mexico has a high Hispanic population with a strong faith-based tradition, which makes having our faith-based component in the FJC great for our state. A huge faith-based conference is being held in April with the goal of exposing domestic violence. The organizers have put together something spectacular and are training lay counselors in DV issues, and incest and more, with 700 people expected. We know this will have an impact on our Family Justice Center, which will open shortly afterward, so we are looking forward to being ready and serving the community.