

**ARKANSAS VICTIM ASSISTANCE ACADEMY  
NEWSLETTER VOLUME I  
OCTOBER 2008**

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**Congratulations to the first AVAA graduates!**

**October 2008**

Looking back on that week in July, I can't help but feel warm admiration for all of our graduates. They sat in typically uncomfortable conference chairs for what turned out to be slightly more than 40 training hours, slogged up and down a hill through the heat and humidity, were obliged to ramble around the campus for evening events, and were occasionally in danger of air conditioning frostbite. Every one of them, without exception, handled it like a trouper. The most telling moments came on that last morning when everyone was anticipating graduation but had to sit through the last two modules of training to get those certificates. There was a smile on every face! I could see the exhaustion and overload in their eyes, but there was satisfaction and pride as well – they made it! The week was tough, but they could take it and come out smiling.

**This is truly the strong heart of an advocate!**

**AVAA Website**

**[ualr.edu/avaa](http://ualr.edu/avaa)**

Our AVAA website has undergone the first in a series of updates. You can now view a five minute slide show video of the Inaugural Academy as well as selected materials from the first Training Manual. There are also a number of useful links to organizations and informational websites. AVAA Newsletters will be archived online and legislative updates and links will be added to the wealth of information that you will soon find at **[ualr.edu/avaa](http://ualr.edu/avaa)**.

Our intent is that the website will become a clearing house of news and information relevant to our alumni, current participants, and all victim advocates and service providers throughout the State of Arkansas. As we move through our sustainability and long-range planning, the website will become an integral part of the future of the Arkansas Victim Assistance Academy. You are welcome to browse the site and even post relevant messages!

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## Steering Committee Update

The AVAA Planning & Steering Committee has undergone a couple of important changes over the past month. We say goodbye to Det. Chris Gann of the North Little Rock Police Department who made the difficult but admirable decision to return to the streets. We all wish Detective Gann the best and thank him for his service on the Steering Committee these last two years.

Taking Det. Gann's place is Detective Denise Canterbury of the North Little Rock Police Department. Terri Berger from the Arkansas Coalition against Domestic Violence and Kendra Simpson from the Arkansas Commission on Child Abuse, Rape, and Domestic Violence have also be joined the Steering Committee.

At the last Steering Committee meeting on 5 September, two very important subcommittees were formed; the Logistics Subcommittee and the Sustainability Subcommittee.

The Logistics Subcommittee, chaired by Beth Lenox, will begin curriculum revisions right away. Every year the AVAA endeavors to deliver its promised cutting edge comprehensive curriculum by continuously evaluating and making changes as needed.

The Sustainability Subcommittee, chaired by Dr. Mary Parker, is tasked with the immediate goal of securing Academy funding for the next two years. After that, they will morph into the Strategic Planning Subcommittee tasked with long-term (10+ years) funding. There job is basically to make certain that we have the financial means to bring the AVAA vision to life every year.

Logistics  
Subcommittee

Beth Lenox  
Terri Berger  
Elaine Colclasure  
Kandi Hause  
Laurie Miller  
Roberta Sick  
Kendra Simpson

Sustainability  
Subcommittee

Mary Parker  
Sandra Cook  
Charlene James  
Ginger Kimes  
Max Snowden  
Kenny Wilkerson

## Many Thanks...

Our fist Academy was a success beyond our dreams and the future looks even better. One individual who has contributed so much of herself to the mission of the AVAA is **Representative Dawn Creekmore**. The week of the Academy Rep. Creekmore volunteered all her time enthusiastically and without hesitation. Thank you, Rep. Creekmore.



To **Dr. Jennifer Schulenberg** for setting the tone of our inaugural academy this summer. She reminds us why we do what we do. Her message of hope keeps us focused when we can't see the forest for the trees. She inspires us to look for the spark in everyone we meet – are we the match that encourages them to burn brightly?



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To the **Crime Victims Assistance Association of Arkansas (CVAAA)** and its unwavering support in our shared vision. Now in its sixth year of existence, the Crime Victims Assistance Association of Arkansas is a proud supporter of the Arkansas Victim Assistance Academy. Victim assistance professionals work hard to improve the lives of victims of crime and help them cope with their victimization. Whether you are a community-based victim advocate, a prosecutor-based victim assistance coordinator, a criminal justice professional, a healthcare or mental health provider, an educator or a professional who serves victims through a governmental agency, your work helps people help themselves by providing useful information and a wide range of victim-related resources to victims of crime. The CVAAA provides this diverse group of victim services professionals a network for addressing victim-related issues and fighting for victims' rights. For information about the benefits of CVAAA membership, contact Kenny Wilkerson at 340-8081 or [kennyw@dist6pa.org](mailto:kennyw@dist6pa.org).



CVAAA President, Kenny Wilkerson

## FYI

Watch for **AVAA Alumni Association** announcements on this website in the next few weeks. This is a terrific way to maintain and build on the networking you began during your week of training, and all AVAA graduates are eligible for membership.

## Links... new stuff on the list!

Click on **links** on the homepage to access some great resources, including these new additions:

We have added a link on this website to the Government Printing Office. There is a wealth of information contained on their site, including full-text, official Federal legislation.

We have also added a downloadable pdf of the CVAAA membership application.

There is now a link to Compassion Books. We recommend Dr. Janice Harris Lord's, *I'll Never Forget Those Words; A Practical Guide to Death Notification*. Some of you may know Dr. Lord from her many OVC trainings and seminars over the years. "*I'll Never Forget Those Words* details best practices on how to deliver notifications in a range of scenarios such as a vehicular crash scene, at a hospital, or at the home of the survivors. It addresses long-distance deaths and includes how to notify and support children. In addition, acknowledging the stressful nature of death notification, the authors discuss important strategies in depth for self-care and enhancing resiliency in death notifiers."

We are including lots of information about degrees offered by the Criminal Justice Department at UALR. There is now an online Master of Science in Criminal Justice (MSCJ) for people who, for whatever reason, cannot or do not want to attend classes on campus. There is also a Master of Arts in Criminal Justice, as well as a Bachelor's Degree. You can also contact Sandy Hanson at (501)683-7508 or [shanson@ualr.edu](mailto:shanson@ualr.edu).