



Working to create a world free of violence & abuse



Co-Executive Directors' Report

SHELTER

May was a wonderful, hopeful month at shelter. **Care Coordinator Aaron Epling** and **Housing Care Manager Emmeline Stroman** took the children to the zoo. Many times in shelter, the focus can be on the parents. We realize the little ones may need a break and to have some fun. Our zoo trip was so much fun and the kids loved it, though it was very hot outside. After the zoo, we took the children to get ice cream and relax before heading back to shelter.

We are looking forward to planning more field trips and fun activities for shelter this summer. For Memorial Day, we had all of the traditional picnic foods and ice cream, along with cookies for the children to decorate!

Shelter leadership is happy to announce that we have filled the care coordinator supervisor and shelter administrator positions. Both individuals will be starting these roles in June!

PREVENTION & EDUCATION

With the support of Major League Baseball funding, the Engaging Men team has begun training coaches from the **Good Life Foundation** in the Coaching Boys Into Men program (CBIM). CBIM is a violence prevention program for athletic coaches designed to inspire them to teach their young male athletes about the importance of respect for themselves and others, particularly women and girls. Vera House will also use the funding to train students through the Men of Strength Clubs.

Project Coordinator/Men's Outreach **George Kilpatrick** presented to the **New York State Department of Health** in a conversation on what faith congregations need to know about the dynamics and intersection of domestic violence and HIV. It was a powerful reminder that survivors may not always present the multiple traumas they may be experiencing at first glance, and that as community advocates we must be aware through our screening.

Our Raise the Bar initiative is excited to announce that it has been granted \$7,500 from Kristin's Fund to overcome the financial barrier that nightlife establishments are faced with to partner in our program. This funding will allow us to provide stipends for the staff of nightlife establishments to participate in the Safer Bars training and start partnerships together! Please contact Heather Masters at hmasters@verahouse.org if you are interested in hearing more or you have a way to connect us with an establishment in the Downtown Syracuse area!

OUTREACH & ADVOCACY

The Advocacy Department has spent time focusing on resiliency building for team members. During its May 26 meeting, the team met at Onondaga Lake Park. Team members had the opportunity to take a walk together, sit by the water and spend quality time together connecting. Advocacy Department members will also be participating in a free fitness class sponsored by **Orange Theory Fitness** on June 11, which was organized by Associate Director of Advocacy **Olivia Stroman**. June is a very busy month for training within the Advocacy Department.

Senior Advocate **Wyatt Mack** facilitated a support line training for new volunteers and staff on June 3. Sexual assault advocate training will also be facilitated the evenings of June 14, 17, 21 and 24 for new volunteers and new and current staff. This training will provide staff and volunteers with the needed training requirement to be New York State Department of Health Rape Crisis-certified. It will also help staff after-hours sexual assault response coverage to Upstate University Hospital, Crouse Hospital, St. Joseph's Hospital Health Center and Upstate Community Hospital.

Advocate **Juliana Vega** will be leaving Vera House after five years in her victim advocate role. Juliana will be missed by the team and we wish her well.

ABUSE IN LATER LIFE

The Abuse in Later Life Team is pleased to report that we are fully staffed! In May, we welcomed our new Outreach Coordinator **Loren Ulrich**. She joins us after completing her internship with the Vera House Prevention Education program. Be sure to look for the Evergreen Newsletter that she will be sending out every month. It will feature upcoming trainings, community events and general information pertaining to issues of elder abuse and neglect.

The **CNY Enhanced Multi-Disciplinary Team Hub** has hired **Kortney Wloch** to be our new co-coordinator. She started on June 1 and will be facilitating the Hub's seven teams with our current Coordinator **Jill Rutledge**.

May was recognized as Older Americans Month and the **Elder Justice Coalition** was fortunate to have **JoAnne Spoto-Decker**, the deputy commissioner of the Onondaga County Department of Adult and Long Term Care Services, speak about the programs and services available to older adults in our community. She also shared the terrific job the department did to meet the needs of our community during the pandemic.

The **24th Annual Elder Abuse Conference** will be held virtually on June 15-30. The event is *free* and the webinars will be available for viewing after the conference if you are unable to attend a particular session. This year, we are honored to feature **Judge Janice Martin** from Louisville, Kentucky, who is the first elected African American female judge in Kentucky. She will explore the topic of aging, ageism and how ageist assumptions can have a harmful impact on older adults.

[Register for the Elder Abuse Conference](#)

ALTERNATIVES/STEPS

The Alternatives and STEPS Program has been steadily growing as the pandemic improves. The program is holding classes in person, but the numbers are still reduced in the classroom setting. Over the last several months, the program offered Zoom classes for participants who felt more comfortable not being in a classroom setting. The Zoom classes have been a huge success.

In May, there were 32 new participants and 89 existing participants. Twelve individuals completed the program in May. That number has been steadily growing now that COVID restrictions have eased.

The program is utilizing more visual tools for client learning (e.g., internet resources, DV videos, learning tools, etc.). During the pandemic, domestic violence has been on a rise and we are exploring these issues online.

The program has two facilitators who help to educate men and women on domestic violence and healthy relationships. The program is in the midst of interviewing for a part-time facilitator. We are hoping to have that position filled by the end of June.

NEW DIRECTIONS

During May, the New Directions clinical program saw a total of 272 clients: 171 adult clients and 98 child clients. The clinical team provided a total of 536 sessions. These sessions occurred over Zoom, over the phone or in-person. The LGBTQ+ Survivor Group will continue through June.

We said goodbye to three of our clinical interns this month. **Cait McCrone** (Social Work), **Danielle Lippman** (Marriage and Family Therapy) and **Khoi Le** (Marriage and Family Therapy) all successfully completed their internships as part of their programs at Syracuse University and have graduated! Thank you, Cait, Danielle and Khoi for your time with us and our clients. Congratulations!

We also welcomed **Jennith Lucas**, **Erica Kokoszka**, **Phoebe Yang** and **Raquel Wu** to our team. They are all students in Syracuse University's Marriage and Family Therapy program. Welcome Jennith, Erica, Phoebe and Raquel!

Mission story: A 26-year-old woman began therapy about five months ago to heal from abuse she experienced as a child and teen. While in therapy, we reflected on the abuse and she began to identify unhealthy patterns in her current partnership. She actively and intentionally set boundaries and expectations, which were not met, and ultimately the relationship ended. She shared sadness and loss associated with the future she had seen for herself. When this former partner attempted to get back together, she was able to recognize the unhealthy behaviors that had hurt her. She was not interested or willing to accept behaviors he had not changed. She has identified the people in her life where she can be most herself. She has described herself as being the happiest she has ever been while focusing on herself.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

In May, we had five volunteers apply to serve with us. Twenty-five volunteers supported the Advocacy Program and our client services with a total of over 452 hours:

- Sexual assault advocates completing 170 hours on calls
- Support line assistance totaled over 99 hours
- Family court order of protection volunteers contributed over 17 hours
- Web chat resource volunteers contributed over 164 hours
- Training new support line volunteers contributed over 13 hours with three volunteers

Additionally, agency orientation volunteers contributed over 47 hours of training.

DEVELOPMENT

Director of Development **Cindy Britz** and a number of foundation trustees attended a planned giving workshop with the **Central New York Community**

Foundation. Planned gifts will be an important piece to building the foundation's assets to support the work of Vera House into the future.

Our annual summer appeal letter will be in mailboxes this month. These unrestricted dollars allow us to be flexible and cover expenses like client emergency assistance and interpreter services.

Welcome to **Erin Chambers!** Erin is a nursing student at Cedarville University and will be with us for the summer through the SRC internship program. She will be working with the finance and development departments, as well as helping with crisis calls.

Donate to Our Summer Appeal

EVENTS

Our virtual **Recognition Celebration** will go live the week of June 21, so keep your eyes on our social media to help us honor **Solon Quinn, Kayley Korkus** and **Monique Wright-Williams!**

We are thrilled to announce that this year's "**New Beginnings**" **Gala** honorary chairs will be **John and Kim Huhtala!** We are excited to work with and honor them in December. This year's event will be in a hybrid format on Saturday, December 4: a limited in-person event and alternate virtual event. More details will be shared as they are decided, but be sure to mark your calendars!

GRANTS & AWARDS

- RBC Wealth Management - \$10,000 – Interpreter services – Pending
- Snow Foundation - \$8,950 – technology & supplies for shelter – Pending
- Eastwood Rotary - \$5,000 - Interpreter services – Awarded \$1,500
- DoVES Fund - \$5,000 - Interpreter services - Pending
- Gorman Foundation - \$10,000 - Interpreter services - Pending
- Kristin's Fund - \$7,500 - Raise the Bar program - Awarded

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

Vera House staff were recently featured on UrbanTsyrr's **Woke Wednesday!** UrbanTsyrr creator **Latisia Hall-Cannon** interviewed Co-Executive Director **Randi Bregman**, Director of Shelter Services **Cynthia Griffin-Harris**, Alternatives/STEPS Program Coordinator **Desiree Williams** and Prevention Educator and Abuse in Later Life Project Coordinator **Eli Pivan-Franke**. Check out the conversation on UrbanTsyrr's [Facebook page](#).

The Marketing and Communications (MARCOM) Department held a meeting on June 3 with board, foundation and staff members to review a draft messaging framework. The group provided great feedback that will be incorporated into the messaging draft and inform a brand identity refresh. MARCOM Workgroup Chair **Rebecca Ortiz** and MARCOM Director **Virgie Townsend** are setting up conversations with graphic designers and brand strategists to determine budget and identify potential collaborators.

The MARCOM Department is also in the process of designing Vera House's annual report. This year's report will explore how the pandemic impacted our work, share experiences from donors and those we serve and provide statistics from our services. The annual report is slated to ship in mid-July.

Watch the Interview



Vera House, Inc. | 723 James St, Syracuse, NY 13203

[Unsubscribe {recipient's email}](#)

[Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)

Sent by vtownsend@verahouse.org powered by



Try email marketing for free today!