



Help and Healing for
Victims of Violence

Witness Justice e-Newsletter

July 2008

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**New V-Training
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Poe Knows Teamwork: Congressman Sends Kudos to People Involved with TIC

In a letter delivered to this month's landmark Dare to Transform conference in Washington, D.C., Congressman Ted Poe (R-TX) applauded the hard work of those implementing trauma-informed care. Poe addressed his sentiments "To all Survivors, consumers, organizations, and also to the CMHS' National Center for Trauma-Informed Care who have made the commitment to further this work to promote healing and wellness."

In his letter, he references Congressional bi-partisan recognition of psychological trauma as a public health crisis in the United States and notes that increased awareness about trauma and related concerns has led to a systemic change toward trauma-informed care. The change, he feels, "serves as a basis from which we can hope to lessen and even bring an end to the destructive intergenerational cycles of substance abuse and family violence."

V-Training

[August 25, 2008](#)

Helga West presents "The Effects of Trauma on Trafficking Victims and Challenges to Healing and Recovery"

[November 18, 2008](#)

David Washington presents "Trauma-Informed Interventions for Adolescents in Early Recovery"

[Click here to enroll](#)

California Guitar Trio Benefit Concert

Witness Justice will be presenting a benefit concert by the [California Guitar Trio](#) on Tuesday, October 21, 2008 at 8:00 pm, EST. The concert will be held at All Saints Episcopal Church in Frederick, MD.



Tickets are \$20.00 per person and proceeds will benefit Witness Justice programs and services. For more information and to purchase your tickets [Click Here](#).

Congressman Poe also commended the work of the National Center for Trauma-Informed Care (NCTIC) in its efforts to coordinate the Dare to Transform conference and other initiatives designed to promote a change to the nation's healthcare system, which, he states, "will improve the lives of thousands of Texans and millions of Americans."

WJ's Team Heal Trauma to Participate in 33rd Annual Marine Corps Marathon

Time is Running Out! Register Today!



Marine Corps Marathon slots are still available through [Team Heal Trauma](#), Witness Justice's charity running team that draws attention to the pervasiveness and impact of psychological trauma that stems from violence, abuse, neglect, disaster, terrorism, and war.

The Marine Corps Marathon will be held on Sunday, October 26, 2008 in Washington, D.C. In recognition of Domestic Violence Awareness Month, this year Team Heal Trauma will emphasize its education and outreach on combat trauma with returning veterans and domestic violence prevention.

Join the team as a [marathon or 10K runner](#), a [volunteer](#), or a [sponsor](#). But hurry - runner **registration closes August 1st!** Click here to [register now!](#)

Running for Baeu: Taking and Making Strides for Trauma Survivors

**Start talking about
Trauma-Informed Care
Visit
Dare to Transform
on Ning.com!**

*Revolutionizing Health
and Human Services*

Quick Links

[Witness Justice Home](#)
[Team Heal Trauma](#)
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for details that could help you earn \$1,000 for Witness Justice by window shopping online. The more you use this portal to do your online shopping, the greater your chances are of raising \$1,000 for Witness Justice.

SHOP TODAY FOR WJ!

Like most of the members on Team Heal Trauma, Andrew Shanks will run in this Fall's Marine Corps Marathon for more than just a love of the sport. The 24-year-old triathlete from Virginia Beach, VA, is running "to honor Baeu" - a friend of a friend murdered one day while returning home from Starbucks - a crime possibly motivated by the theft of his iPod.

Shanks, who played Lacrosse on club teams in college, has been running since 2005. While he always wanted to run in a Marine Corps Marathon, he would probably not be participating in this Fall's event if it weren't for Baeu. He's running, Shanks says, to "pay homage to someone who died too young."

Like Shanks, Laura Perez is running for a cause. A participant of last year's Marine Corps Marathon, which she ran for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, Perez wanted to run in another Marine Corps Marathon. "I didn't want to do it just for me," Perez says, "I wanted to do it for a charity."

For Perez, this year's race will take place close to home. The race - a 26.2 mile trek through Arlington, VA, and Washington, DC - will pass through many landmarks familiar to the native of Woodbridge, VA. Perez also knows the cause. She is a survivor of domestic violence, and for over a decade, she has been involved with domestic abuse survivors, first as a parole officer and then as corrections officer. She currently serves as the director of the Arlington Victim Witness Program - a part of the Arlington Commonwealth Attorney's Office - as a victim's specialist. Running for Team Heal Trauma is one way she can help to make people aware of trauma-related issues. "That is my whole goal," Perez says of her participation in the upcoming marathon.

Shanks and Perez will be joined by others whose motivation to participate in Team Heal Trauma goes beyond the desire for a workout or to win a medal. The Team consists of volunteer runners who come from different backgrounds but are united by one common goal: to build awareness and understanding of the nature and impact of trauma. Together, they will participate in the 2008 Marine Corps Marathon, scheduled for October 28. The money generated by the Team's efforts will support Witness Justice advocacy efforts related to psychological trauma.

The Marine Corps Marathon, which some call "the People's Marathon," will host several events this Fall. The popular marathon portion of the event filled-up in five days. Team Heal Trauma members will participate in both the traditional marathon as well as a 10K run.

For more information about Team Heal Trauma, interested readers may visit the [Team's website](#), which includes information about the team, its sponsors, and its overall efforts. The team also has an [active.com](#) page where participants and volunteers can go to register, and donors can make a contribution. The list of inspirational quotations from Team member's family and loved ones suggests that Team Heal Trauma members aren't just taking strides, they're making

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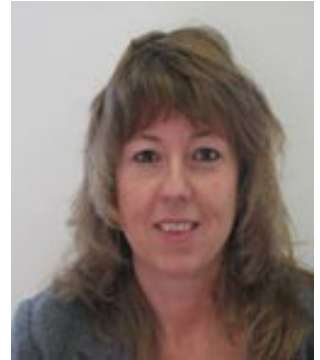
them...for trauma survivors.

Board Member Profile of the Month

Andree Mattix - The Builder

Andree Mattix is a builder, but not the type one might think. She doesn't build strip malls or skyscrapers; she helps reconstruct something much more important to a community - she rebuilds what trauma has knocked down.

As a recent survivor of Hurricane Katrina and an adult survivor of child abuse, Andree has a strong personal appreciation and sense of understanding for the work of Witness Justice. She has endured the devastating psychological trauma that natural disaster and abuse can cast on a life - regardless of age or experience - and the destructive repercussions that so often follow survival of a traumatic experience.



After having successfully rebuilt her own home with her husband and two young children, she turned her attention to rebuilding New Orleans, not only for her friends and family, but for the community that she lost in the storm.

As a member of the Witness Justice Board of Directors and the Board Secretary, Andree also plays an integral role in the reconstruction of lives shattered by various forms of trauma - a role to which she brings a wealth of experience.

Andree is currently the Clinical Supervisor of Court Intervention Services with the [State of Louisiana Orleans Parish Criminal District Court](#). With over 16 years of experience in the criminal justice system, Andree assists in the development of programs that enhance the lives of those who, like herself, have endured trauma, but who are also in the Criminal Justice System. In addition to serving on the WJ Board, Andree also serves on the New Orleans Criminal Justice Leadership Alliance, the New Orleans Supervised Visitation Steering Committee, and the Family Justice Center Steering Committee. Her leadership and dedication in victim advocacy and in pursuing justice is a gift not only to the communities shattered by Hurricane Katrina but also to individuals whose lives have been shattered by trauma.

The Best Offense -

- sometimes, is a good defense. And in Michigan, authorities have provided the citizen with a good defense against offenders and potential repeat offenders. His name is OTIS.

He's not a person but a database that is one of the tools provided by the State to keep its populace informed about offenders.

[The Offender \(O\) Tracking \(T\) and Informational \(I\) System \(S\)](#), or OTIS for short, contains a wealth of information about offenders and their criminal history. The system includes information on active offenders as well as parolees. When a name is submitted, a list of matching records appears. Each record contains a current photograph and information, such as earliest release date, which allows interested citizens to follow the offender's tracks.

OTIS is easy-to-use, free-of-charge, and just one database provided by Michigan authorities to keep its citizens informed about criminal matters. Another database has been a source of debate, both in and out of the courts, since its inception. OTIS' visitors will find a hyperlink at the bottom of the page to his brother database, the "Sex Offender Registry."

[The Michigan Public \(P\) Sex \(S\) Offender \(O\) Registry \(R\)](#) was conceived, according to the PSOR's website, "with the intent to better assist the public in preventing and protecting against the commission of future criminal sexual acts by convicted sex offenders." With a "means to monitor those persons who pose such a potential danger," the Michigan Citizen can go about his / her daily life armed with information about potential threats to the community.

After agreeing to a disclaimer, the visitor can search, free-of-charge, by offender name or geographic location, including city, zip code, county, or school district / campus. A simple search of a zip code for a small community in West Michigan, for instance, results in an alphabetized list of offenders complete with color photographs, addresses, and offenses. It is shocking to say the least to discover that no fewer than 33 individuals on the registry live within walking distance of this single zip code.

This database arms the citizen with information, but does it become an offensive rather than a defensive weapon? Michigianians have debated this question since the birth of the PSOR. The database includes individuals whose offenses range the entire spectrum of "sexual offenses," from indecent exposure to aggravated rape.

The database provides specific information about the offense in each case (for example, fourth degree criminal sexual conduct) and a hyperlink to the part of the Michigan Penal Code that identifies the offense (for example what behavior constitutes fourth degree CSC), but some worry that the availability of the information poses a violation of the offender's rights.

Many who view the information, the opponents argue, will not differentiate between classes of conduct but instead lump all individuals appearing in the

registry into some broadly defined category of the worst conduct imaginable, making some appear guilty of crimes worse than they actually committed. And, opponents allege, since many of those on the registry have completed sentences for their crimes, the registry creates a stigma that in essence extends the offender's sentence beyond the time served.

Despite these objections, its proponents argue, the database provides a vital resource for among others, concerned parents who want to keep their children safe. This creates somewhat of a Catch-22 for Michigan authorities: possibly violate an offender's rights or keep the public informed.

At least for now, they have decided to protect the public over any possible rights violations.

After all, the best offense is a good defense.

Where We've Been...

July 11-12 - WJ Board Members Mildred Muhammad, Maria Rodman, and Helga West presented at "Dare to Transform," hosted by CMHS' National Center for Trauma-Informed Care

July 12 - WJ Board Member David Washington, with his colleagues, accepted the State TIC Leadership Award at the "Dare to Transform" H.O.P.E. Award Ceremony for the State of Maryland

July 17 - WJ Board Member Mildred Muhammad was presented with Special Commendation by the Department of Justice in recognition of her extraordinary contributions to the prevention of domestic violence and in appreciation for her commitment to the mission of the Office on Violence Against Woman, U.S. Department of Justice

National Sexual Violence Resource Center - WJ's Helga West was acknowledged in the NSVRC publication [Sexual Violence in Disasters: A Planning Guide for Prevention and Response](#)

Calendar of Events

August 25 - V-training session on "The Effects of Trauma on Trafficking Victims and Challenges to Healing and Recovery" presented by Helga West, President & CEO of Witness Justice

<http://www.witnessjustice.org/news/hwtraining.pdf>

October 21 - California Guitar Trio concert to benefit Witness Justice in Frederick, MD

<http://allsaintsmd.org/cgt/index/php>

October 26 - Team Heal Trauma runs the 33rd Annual Marine Corps Marathon in Washington, DC

<http://www.witnessjustice.org/THT/index.cfm>

November 13-15 - International Study for Traumatic Stress Studies meeting on "Terror in the Aftermath" meeting at The Palmer House Hilton - Chicago, IL

<http://www.istss.org/meetings/index.cfm>

November 18 - V-training session on "Trauma-informed Interventions for Adolescents in Early Recovery" presented by David Washington, LGSW, LCADC, AD/PC Sup

<http://www.witnessjustice.org/news/hwtraining.pdf>

Witness Justice is a national, grassroots, nonprofit organization created by survivors for survivors. Our mission is to offer advocacy and support to victims of violence and trauma. Witness Justice offers support regardless of where a victim lives, when or where the crime occurred, or whether the crime was ever reported. For more information, visit www.WitnessJustice.org.

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