



4<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit Family Violence Coordinating Council  
Educational Services Division, ROE #3  
1830 W. Fletcher, Suite B  
Vandalia, IL 62471

October 15, 2008

Dear News Director/News Editor:

Please find enclosed a press/media release concerning:

- ◆ the *Office for Violence Against Women Rural Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking Federal Grant* recently awarded to Regional Office of Education #3 and the 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit Family Violence Coordinating Council through the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority.

We hope that you will provide coverage on this important topic for your community. Feel free to attend any of our meetings, trainings, or workshops for interviews, photos, etc. For more information, please contact me at 618/283-1763, Regional Office of Education #3, Educational Services Division.

Sincerely,

Brenda Benton, Local Coordinator  
4<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit Family Violence Coordinating Council/Media Coordinator, ROE #3

Cc: Hon. S. Gene Schwarm, Chief Judge, 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit  
Mark Drone, Regional Superintendent, ROE #3  
Ann M. Schwarm, Educational Services Director, ROE #3  
Ron Reichgelt, Victim Services Program Administrator, ICJIA  
Cristin Evans, Communications Manager, ICJIA  
Vernie Beorkrem, Director, Illinois Family Violence Coordinating Councils

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MEDIA AND PRESS RELEASE

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Brenda Benton, Local FVCC Coordinator  
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1830 W. Fletcher, Suite B  
Vandalia, IL 62471

CONTACT:

Brenda Benton, Local FVCC Coordinator, Educational Services Division, ROE #3, (618)283-1763

*FOR IMMEDIATE PRESS RELEASE*

**“4<sup>th</sup> JUDICIAL CIRCUIT FAMILY VIOLENCE COORDINATING COUNCIL & REGIONAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION #3 WIN NEW FEDERAL GRANT”**

Vandalia, IL

The 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit Family Violence Coordinating Council and Regional Office of Education #3 was awarded \$565,000 in federal *Office for Violence Against Women Rural Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking Grant* funding for regional domestic violence protocol development and training. Administered by the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, this funding will be used to create a comprehensive training manual for police, prosecutors, judges, probation officers, and court personnel in the 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit on how to effectively and successfully respond to domestic violence cases.

“I am thrilled that the 4<sup>th</sup> Circuit has been awarded this grant. The grant will be a great help to address domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking in each of our nine counties within the circuit,” said Hon. S. Gene Schwarm, 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit Chief Judge and Chair of the Family Violence Coordinating Council (FVCC).

FVCC members will collaborate on the manual development and adaptation of domestic violence, domestic violence by a law enforcement officer, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking protocols to be distributed and used throughout the region. Local law enforcement departments, prosecutors, court personnel, and state’s attorneys will receive training and a comprehensive training manual on how the use of these protocols and resources will assist them in their response to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking.

"With this grant award, we continue our support of criminal justice efforts across Illinois to collaborate on cases involving domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking," said Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority Executive Director Lori G. Levin.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit includes Clay, Clinton, Christian, Effingham, Fayette, Jasper, Marion, Montgomery, and Shelby counties. Grant funding for the project will be available Jan. 1, 2009 and will expire on Dec. 31, 2010. Local coordinator for the 4<sup>th</sup> Circuit FVCC is Brenda Benton. Regional Office of Education #3 will provide the local coordinator, technical assistance, and resources during the OVW Grant Project.

"The 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit has had a Family Violence Coordinating Council since 1998 and has a strong history of collaboration among all of the member entities and agencies that serve victims", says Vernie Beorkrem, Director of Illinois Family Violence Coordinating Councils, "and will serve as a model for other rural circuits throughout Illinois." The FVCC committees that will assist with grant activities are the Planning/Steering, Law Enforcement, Helping Services, Health Services, Court Systems, Elder Abuse, and InterFaith Committees. All of these committees, and the Law Enforcement Committee in particular, are known for the many projects, programs, and events that they have developed, completed, and coordinated to assist victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking. Some of these projects include Victim Packets, Officers Pocket Cards, Stalking Kits, Stalking Training CD, Clergy Quick Guide, and "Now That You Have an Order of Protection" Brochure. One of the FVCC's most successful programs has been the "Responding to Teen Dating Violence: Helping Students Help Others" Workshop which has been offered over the last 5½ years to 15 school districts and 3300 Junior and Senior High School students and educators. Other presentations have featured nationally-known speakers on the topics of Law Enforcement Response to Domestic Violence Victims, Domestic Violence 101, Elder Abuse, Religion as a Resource and a Roadblock for Domestic Violence Victims, The Connection Between Animal Abuse and Child Abuse, Mandated Reporting, and Child Sexual Predators.

In order to facilitate the dissemination of this information over the large rural area covered by the 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit and the large number of people who will receive this training, the Circuit will be divided into three regions consisting of three counties each: Christian-Montgomery-Shelby; Fayette-Marion-Clinton; and Effingham-Jasper-Clay. Local non-profit domestic violence victim service programs will serve as coordinating agencies in each of the three-county regions as well as provide training services. State's Attorneys in each of the nine counties, local non-profit sexual assault victim services programs, and local law enforcement departments will determine staff members qualified to become part of the three Training Teams who will join with staff from local non-profit domestic violence victim service programs to train law enforcement officers, state's attorney's staff, court personnel including judges and probation officers, and others who serve victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking. Special training and on-going support will be provided by a very highly-qualified State's Attorney's Victim/Witness Coordinator for other State's Attorney's (SAO's) Victim/Witness Coordinators

within the Circuit. Grant funds will provide trainers, materials, and resources for training sessions throughout the 4<sup>th</sup> Circuit; materials and resources such as cameras, stalking kits, and victim's packets for local law enforcement departments; and training opportunities for members of the Training Teams to attend national conferences.

For more information, contact:

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