

Twentieth Judicial Circuit Family Violence Coordinating Council

The purpose of the Family Violence Coordinating Council, at both the state and local/circuit level, is to establish a forum to improve the institutional, professional, and community response to family violence including child abuse, domestic abuse, and elder abuse; to engage in education and prevention; the coordination of intervention and services for victims and perpetrators; and to contribute to the improvement of the legal system and the administration of justice.

The twentieth Judicial Circuit Family Violence Coordinating council was established in 1995. The council serves five counties in Southern Illinois: Monroe, Perry, Randolph, St. Clair, and Washington. Currently it is chaired by Honorable Stephen Rice, and staffed by council coordinator, Jan Douglass. It is comprised of five committees including Steering, DV Court Review Board, Faith, Community Education, and Schools and Education.

The Full Council has participating members from the following: domestic violence program, sexual assault program, CAC, batterer program, CASA, ministry, substance abuse programs, community college (SWIC) guidance department, Scott Air Force Base family advocacy, and child abuse prevention. We also maintain members from State's Attorneys Office, local police departments, probation departments, legal services, circuit clerk's office, and the Visitation Exchange Program.

Our council has made a tremendous impact on how domestic violence issues are addressed within our circuit.

- We are participating in the Schools *Respond to Family Violence Guidebook*, training faculty and staff at local schools to recognize and respond to children living in violence.
- Provide educational speakers and trainings on a bi-annual basis for the entire community regarding a varied range of topics related to domestic violence issues. We just had one in October on *Child Sexual Predators* and it was one of the best trainings we have put on.
- The Visitation Exchange Center was established in January, 2000. The first site of the St. Clair County Visitation Exchange Center opened in Belleville. An additional site opened in January, 2001 in Centerville. The Centerville site closed in 2008.
- We had seven members from the DV Court Review Board attend a Firearms training in Springfield this past summer. We are now working together to formulate a plan of getting these individuals out in the community to train.

We continue to support efforts being made by local organizations and groups that are involved in the prevention of family violence. We also continue our goal of prevention of family violence by ongoing council and committee activity that focus on education, awareness, and resource availability.

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