

AGENTS FOR CHANGE

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Agents for Change is a publication of the Battered Women's Legal Advocacy Project, Inc.

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NEVADA COMMUNITY ORGANIZING A SUCCESS

On February 5, 2003, Program Managers Tamara Buffalo and Rumna Chowdhury traveled to Fallon, NV to conduct a technical assistance training on community organizing. This training is one of several technical assistance trainings, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Justice, that BWLAP is conducting across the country.

Fallon is a small town in Nevada, about 60 miles east of Reno, in an area called the "high desert." We were happy to see that many people from several different organizations were present at the training. Attendees included directors, advocates, and volunteers from local Domestic Violence organizations. Also in the audience were representatives from health care organizations, the Reno City Attorney's office, local reservations, and a local church. The diverse group of people in attendance prompted lively discussion and the opportunity for the local agencies to network and forge relationships.

A discussion of cultural competence was part of BWLAP's presentation. The area's rural and frontier* populations, combined with the strong presence of military bases in the area, created a community whose dynamics are very different from that of the Twin Cities. As often happens, Rumna and Tamara felt that they learned as much in the training as the people who attended. All in all, the training was a success, and we are happy to have gained strong allies in Nevada.

* The "frontier" areas are those that are even less populated than rural areas.

Upcoming Events at BWLAP

- **Feb. 24**—Human Rights & Racism Workshop with the collaboration of Centro Legal. Centro Legal is located at 1915 Chicago Ave, 10-1 (Spanish).
- **Feb. 26**—Communication between Parents & Children with the collaboration of Centro Legal & Casa de Esperanza. At Centro Legal, 10-1 (Spanish).
- **Mar. 3 & 4**—MFIP Domestic Violence Training in St. Paul, 8:30-4:30, location to be announced (English).
- **Mar. 14**—Mutual Orders for Protection with the collaboration of Casa de Esperanza at 1821 University Ave, 8:30-1 (English).
- **Mar. 28 & 29**—Community Organizing & Social Change Training in Granger, WA with Amigas Unidas (Spanish).

ACTION ALERT

We encourage and challenge all of you to support your GLBT staff, co-workers, friends and family by attending GLBT Rally Day on March 6, 2003 at the State Office Building at 1:00 p.m.

The Minnesota House of Representatives introduced a bill to repeal portions of the state Human Rights Amend-

ment which protect GLBT people from discrimination in employment, education, housing, public accommodation and other areas. It would also remove sexual orientation as a protected class in state hate crimes laws. If approved, this would make Minnesota the first state ever to grant, then take away, civil

rights for GLBT people. Call your elected representatives and let them know that you oppose this bill and expect them to fight for the civil rights of all Minnesotans.

For information on how to contact your legislators visit www.outfront.org or call Sage at BWLAP 612.343.0793.

New Face at BWLAP

Sage Van Voorhis

I started as a Legal Resources Program Manager in January, 2003. I'm a graduate of the University of Minnesota Law School and Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. I have two sons, ages 13 and 10.

I am also a volunteer attorney for Ramsey County, doing mostly housing and family law. I was law clerk for the Minneapolis Public Schools, where I gained experience in discrimination and employment law. As a former director of the U of M Housing Law Clinic, I super-

vised 10 student attorneys as they prepared cases for settlement or trial. I have worked with BWLAP's "parent" organization, Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services.

I also volunteer for Women in the Trades, Habitat for Humanity, Lambda Legal Defense & Education Fund and the William E. McGee National Civil Rights Moot Court.

I am very excited about coming full circle and using my legal skills to help other battered women.

Punto de Vista Latino

Desde este lugar BWLAP desea inaugurar un espacio donde se puedan plantear los temas que más preocupan a las mujeres de la comunidad latina en este momento en Minnesota.

Hoy nos ha parecido de interés tratar el tema relativo a las visas de no inmigrantes que están disponibles para mujeres que son víctimas de violencia doméstica.

1) Una primera posibilidad que las mujeres víctimas de violencia doméstica tienen, es a través de lo que se conoce con el nombre de: *Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)*. Esta normativa, que ya tiene algunos años de vigencia pero ha sido ampliada recientemente, básicamente establece que la esposa o el hijo menor de edad de un ciudadano legal estadounidense o de un residente legal permanente de este país (o sea que posee la "green card"), víctimas de violencia doméstica, pueden solicitar ante las oficinas de Inmigración correspondientes una visa preferencial, sin la participación del esposo o padre abusador.

Esta petición, que no requiere en absoluto la firma o presencia del abusador, se puede hacer por la esposa misma en su propio nombre o por ella en representación de su hijo o hija menor de edad abusada.

Por supuesto debe agregarse a tal petición toda la documentación que acrediten los extremos requeridos por esta ley. Si bien no se requiere

firma de A bogado, tiene ciertas complejidades por las que se aconseja buscar el asesoramiento jurídico de por lo menos una A dvocate que entienda en la materia.

Importa destacar que, como se vió, esta ley requiere que la mujer esté o haya estado casada con un ciudadano o un residente legal permanente de los E stados U nidos, lo cual deja por cierto de lado una cantidad enorme de casos de mujeres inmigrantes de nuestra comunidad latina que no se encuentran en tal circunstancia.

2) La buena noticia es que existe la posibilidad para las mujeres víctimas de violencia doméstica que no están casadas con un ciudadano o con un residente legal permanente de los E stados U nidos, de solicitar una visa especial, llamada U , aprobada en el año 2000, si es que además de la violencia doméstica se dan estos requisitos:

- La mujer debe haber sufrido un daño físico o mental sustancial como resultado de la violencia doméstica, violación, tortura, asalto sexual, etc.
- La mujer debe poseer información acerca de dicha actividad criminal y ha sido o puede ser de utilidad para los fiscales del crimen.
- Se debe determinar que esa mujer o su hijo/a menor de edad sufrirían un daño muy grande si la mujer volviera a su país de

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Ties to the Community

BWLAP staff members have been hard at work forging and strengthening ties with other community service organizations. In the upcoming months, we will be co-sponsoring Community Forums on various topics of interest to those who are affected by domestic violence. Everyone is welcome to be a part of these forums. Your input and perspectives are invaluable.

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE!
WWW.BWLAP.ORG

Thanks to the Board!

We at BWLAP would like to thank our Board of Trustees for their hard work and guidance. Board Members include Candy Bakion, San Juana Flores, Ka Yang, Andrea Fortune and Kileen Weise.

Goodbye to Eva

Eva Aguilar left the BWLAP staff in December. While at BWLAP, Eva worked on the Immigration project and worked to secure funding. Zabat Awed and Gloria Fressia will continue Eva's work on the Immigration project. Rumna Chowdhury is the new contact for funders. We wish Eva good luck in her future endeavors.

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origen y asimismo que la investigación del caso también se vería perjudicada si la mujer se alejara de este país.

Esta ley fue aprobada al final del período del gobierno demócrata anterior y viene a llenar el vacío que precisamente dejaba VAWA. Ahora la mujer inmigrante, víctima de violencia doméstica, sin necesidad de estar casada o haber estado casada con un ciudadano o un residente legal permanente de los Estados Unidos, puede beneficiarse de una visa de no inmigrante con un inmediato permiso de trabajo, en el caso de que se den los demás extremos previstos en dicha ley.

3) Lamentablemente, hay un lado negativo que empaña el gran progreso que constituye esta ley en el campo de la violencia doméstica y es que dicha ley aún no ha sido reglamentada. La falta de esa reglamentación hace que su aplicación a los casos concretos plantee una serie de interrogantes prácticos razón por la cual, hasta donde sabemos, en nuestra comunidad, hasta la fecha solamente se ha planteado un caso, todavía no resuelto, al amparo de esta nueva ley.

Nosotros creemos que la falta de reglamentación no debería ser un obstáculo para la aplicación de esta nueva ley. En esta apreciación la hacemos en base a principios fundamentales del derecho. En el próximo número daremos las razones que nos llevan a esa conclusión.

**Battered Women's Legal Advocacy Project's
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PACKETS
--- ORDER FORM ---**

- Federal Firearms Prohibitions
- State Firearm Prohibitions
- Harassment Restraining Order
- Criminal Court Sentencing Options
- Custody Determinations: Best Interest Factors
- Data Practices and Confidentiality
- Expungement of Court Records
- Expunging your Eviction (UD)
- Extraordinary Writs: Writs of Mandamus and Writs of Prohibition
- Family Court Motion Practice
- Filing Complaints Against Attorneys
- Filing Complaints Against Judges
- Filing a Motion a Preparing for a Hearing
- How to Become A Notary Public
- How to Hire An Attorney/ Fee Arbitration
- Juvenile Court: A Basic Introduction
- MN Harassment/Stalking Law
- MN Court of Appeals Practice / Pro Se Appeals
- Mutual OFP
- Name and Social Security Number Change Information
- OFP Without Hearings
- OFP: Finding Personal Jurisdiction Over Non-resident Batterers
- OFP: Methods of Service of Process
- Alternatives to OFP: Harassment Restraining Orders
- Qualifying for *In Forma Pauperis* Status in Legal Proceedings
- Using An Interpreter In Court
- Violence Against Women Act (VAWA): Full Faith and Credit Provision

Technical Assistance Packets are available at no cost.

To order, check the desired packets on this order form and complete the "mail to" section.

Send your request/order form to:

BWLAP
1611 Park Ave S – Suite 2
Minneapolis, MN 55404

612-343-9842
staff@bwlap.org

Mail packets to:

Name _____

Organization _____

Address _____

Phone No. _____



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Non Profit Organization
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BWLAP is a Minnesota-based, statewide, non-profit organization that provides legal information, consultation, training, litigation and legal resource support, and policy development assistance to battered women and to criminal justice, legal and social service systems.

Questions or Comments? Email us: staff@bwlap.org

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

February

Board of Trustees Quarterly Meeting
Call Tamara at 612.343.9842 for date & time

Free lunch provided!

Community Forum Topics

Dates & Times to be announced

March 14: Mutual OFPs

April: Working with Diverse Communities

May: Native American Month

June: Gay Pride Month

July: State-sanctioned Violence

Please call Rumna at 612.343.9842 for more details.

VOLUNTEERS

Needed for a variety of tasks.

If you are interested, email:

sage@bwlap.org