

MOMentum

ADVANCING THE WORK TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN MISSOURI

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Spotlight on a Service Provider:

RICHARD MILLER—Probation and Parole Officer, Individual member

When Richard Miller read *The Stalking of Kristin*, by George Lardner, Jr., he was thinking as a probation and parole officer and feeling as a father. The book, an account of how the Massachusetts probation systems failed to protect Lardner's daughter, stirred Richard personally and professionally. He wanted to make sure Missouri's system didn't do the same. Richard, then a probation and parole officer with a regular caseload, assessed how his district was addressing domestic violence cases and realized there wasn't a unified plan that directly considered the interests of victims. So, he made one, got it approved and implemented it in his district, the northeast side of Kansas City.

Richard is an individual member of MCADSV. He has been a probation and parole officer for 13 years and has specialized in domestic violence cases for the past seven years. He started the first domestic violence probation caseload in Jackson County and later in Lafayette County, where he is also helping start the first rural domestic violence court in Missouri. By separating domestic violence cases and making specific policies and procedures, officers and judges can better focus on protecting victims, Richard says.

Richard's mission extends beyond any one county, which is why he was also a member of MCADSV's Batters Intervention Program Standards Committee and, most recently, is a member of the Missouri Department of Corrections' Probation and Parole Statewide Domestic Violence Task Force. The Task Force's aim—to make communities safer for victims and hold batterers accountable for their behavior—requires law enforcement, criminal and civil courts and social service providers to work together. Probation and Parole can be a leader in that response, Richard says. These efforts provide an even greater opportunity for Richard to share his goal—to take a different approach with domestic violence cases.

Part of that change is recognizing domestic violence offenders as some of the most dangerous offenders within a community and some of the most difficult to supervise. Altering supervision practices and procedures and focusing on getting

a positive change from the offender, instead of only imposing a punitive approach, are some of the ways to implement change.

MCADSV is invaluable as a source of support, ideas and validity, Richard says. When he first started working as a probation and parole officer with a criminal justice degree, he says he knew some about domestic violence but not a lot. He knew he agreed with MCADSV's values, actions and goals, so, in 2003, he became an individual member.

"It was my way of affiliating with a group of people I could learn from," he says. But Richard got more than education from his membership. By joining MCADSV he gained connections with experts and allies.

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Probation and Parole
Officer Richard Miller
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experts and allies.

"As a probation and parole officer, you don't have anyone necessarily against you, but you don't have anyone for you either," he says. Involvement with MCADSV has changed that. Membership with MCADSV is a point of validation, Richard says, that helps others acknowledge his expertise.

"I've got these people saying the same things I am," he says. "It's not just me." When he refers to MCADSV, a nongovernmental organization, it piques others' interest, and they don't dismiss his opinion. His membership gives him background and backing.

Richard plans to stay an individual member. "It's something that I do separately outside of this position," says Richard, who also is connected to the Coalition through his position on the board of directors of House of Hope, a shelter in Lexington.

Richard's firsthand experience and training on domestic violence, much of which has been through MCADSV, have affirmed what he is practicing and promoting—a different way of handling domestic violence cases. It requires a change of thought and action to address those cases very specifically, as is currently done with sex offenders. Policies and procedures exist for sex offenders and other dangerous felons.

Story continued on page 3

From the CEO:

Members are our MOmentum

A recent proof of the effectiveness of MCADSV and its members happened during February and March: When 50 percent of state domestic violence funding was cut by a Missouri legislative committee, the Coalition and its members mobilized. The funding was restored as a result of the activism and advocacy of MCADSV as a membership organization with supporters throughout Missouri. That activism must continue to ensure there are sufficient resources to address and end violence against women.

I want you to become a part of the Coalition's membership to advance our collective advocacy for those who are victimized by sexual and domestic violence.

The power of the Missouri Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence as a statewide membership coalition of organizations and individuals is that we work together in common cause: to end violence against women and their children through social and systemic change. The Coalition is the state's oldest and sole grassroots organization of community-based programs, allied organizations and committed individuals working to help women who are victimized by violence and to hold offenders accountable.

As has just occurred—and must continue—change happens when each of us as individuals band together to form a collective voice to advocate for what we believe and know is right.

By becoming a member of MCADSV, you join a group of individuals and organizations committed to making Missouri safer for women and their children. Your support furthers the Coalition's effective achievement of its mission. During the past 30 years, we have worked together to make a significant difference in Missouri. I extend my gratitude to all of the individuals, organizations and businesses that have partnered with the Coalition to make those successes possible. As we celebrate those accomplishments, we also continue to work together on all that remains to be achieved.

MCADSV believes in the rights of all Missourians to live free from domestic and sexual violence, to have access to help, safety and protection from within their communities and to be able to raise children free from a legacy of violence. Since 1980, MCADSV has been working to ensure that survivors of domestic and sexual violence have someone to talk with, someplace to go and someone to help.

Join us. Learn how you can personally contribute to end domestic and sexual violence in Missouri. You can make a difference by completing the membership form on the back of this newsletter, or by calling MCADSV for more information: 573-634-4161. We need and value your support.

Sincerely,



Colleen Coble,
MCADSV CEO

By the Numbers:

A 24-hour Census of Domestic Violence Services

On March 8, the National Network to End Domestic Violence released results of the 2009 Domestic Violence Counts, a 24-hour census of domestic violence services. By highlighting the number of survivors served across the nation in one day, these results are an important and effective means of safely describing the work programs do every day and are a tool for advocates to use in the effort to raise awareness about domestic violence.

Missouri:

- ▶ **2,033** victims were provided with domestic violence services. Nationally, 65,321 victims received services in one day;
- ▶ **1,238** victims received safe shelter;
- ▶ **795** victims received non-residential advocacy services;
- ▶ **515** hotline calls were answered—21 calls every hour;
- ▶ **416** requests for services were unmet—50 percent of these were for safe shelter or transitional housing;
- ▶ **1,419** community members attended 58 violence prevention and education sessions provided by local program advocates.

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MCADSV is a statewide membership coalition of organizations and individuals working to end violence against women and their children through direct services and social and systemic change. MCADSV works to achieve its mission through Education, Assistance, Alliance and Research.

Spotlight on an MCADSV PROJECT:

Coalition Sponsors Regional Legislative Advocacy Days

Throughout every week in February, the Missouri Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence held its fifth annual Regional Legislative Advocacy Days. This year brought together 36 advocates, six survivors and 30 students who met with their state legislators in the Capitol to talk about the importance of domestic and sexual violence services and the need for funding and enhanced laws to support this work.

Each year the Advocacy Days event grows: 2010 brought a record number of survivors sharing their stories and a new partnership with Washington University and Westminster College to train students to advocate at the Capitol. "It was exciting to have additional voices communicating the message that the services provided by domestic and sexual violence programs are essential and life-saving," said Emily van Schenkhoef, MCADSV policy specialist.

The Coalition hosts four advocacy days throughout the month with an evening and morning training before each advocacy day. "Hosting multiple days gives advocates flexibility in scheduling and allows legislators to give those visiting more attention—plus it keeps our message and momentum going all month long," van Schenkhoef said.

MCADSV's Advocacy Days became even more important this year when a House Appropriations Committee cut domestic violence service funding by 50 percent during the second week of February. Advocates watched as the committee voted to adopt the cuts and were able to respond immediately by alerting their legislators and members of the House Budget Committee that the cuts would have a devastating impact on domestic violence programs and victims.

By the end of March, MCADSV's effective advocacy resulted in the full restoration of domestic violence funding, which the Senate maintained. There were no cuts to domestic violence funds in the final state budget that passed on April 30. "This achievement is a definitive testament to the power of members' advocacy and their direct activism through visits to the Capitol," said Colleen Coble, CEO of the Coalition.

For information on how you can be involved in ongoing advocacy efforts, call MCADSV at 573-634-4161.



Pictured above: MCADSV member and Board member Sharon Meusch meets with Senator Frank Barnitz (D-16) in mid February and explains how the budget cuts would affect her community.

Spotlight on a Service Provider: Richard Miller, continued

Richard says batterers exhibit behaviors of both, and, therefore, warrant the same kind of policies and procedures for their supervision and monitoring.

But this way of thinking is an adjustment for some, maybe most, of the people Richard encounters. "We realize we are asking for a mindset change," Richard says of the task before him and his colleagues. He is asking others to do what he experienced seven years ago—change their perspective in the way the system responds to domestic violence.

Richard, who is getting his master's degree in criminal justice administration to continue his own education, is a blend of critical thinking and reflective



Pictured above: MCADSV individual member Richard Miller, a probation and parole officer, is helping reshape how Missouri handles domestic violence cases.

action that makes him an asset to the Domestic Violence Task Force. He is excited about the potential changes for the state and even more excited about MCADSV's presence on the Task Force.

"We've given victims a voice in this process by having representatives from MCADSV sitting on this task force," he says. "It's like an official acknowledgement that what you have to say matters, that the victim's perspective in creating this process matters."

As with other realms of his life, Richard's membership with MCADSV is driven by his passion for change, his mission to help end violence. "It's my own personal commitment," he says.

He sees that same desire in his oldest daughter, 13, who volunteers with him at House of Hope. She talks with her dad about how to help her friends when she hears them talking about domestic violence in their own lives. Richard doesn't have to explain his commitment; his daughter witnesses it firsthand. "When she sees what I do, she tells me she's proud of me," he says. And that might be one of Richard's greatest rewards.



Yes! I want to take action to help end domestic and sexual violence in Missouri.

Your support helps change lives, and donations are tax deductible.

- General donation to the Coalition \$ _____
- Gift to honor a survivor or loved one \$ _____
- Individual supportive membership - \$45
- Advocate membership - \$35
(Individual staff, Board member or volunteer of member program)
- Student membership - \$25
- I would like information on planned giving (will, trust or endowment) to MCADSV

Name: _____ E-mail: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Total gift enclosed: \$ _____ Phone: _____

To make a donation by credit card, please visit our secure website at www.mocadsv.org

Please make checks payable to MCADSV.

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