



Rosa Beltré
(she/her/hers)

Awards Ceremony



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Sexual Assault Visionary Award

Amy LaGesse

- Northwest Regional Grant Coordinator, Look Beneath the Surface
- Board Member, OAESV Board of Directors



Amy is the Northwest Regional Grant Coordinator for the Look Beneath the Surface Grant, which is a federal grant awarded through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHS). According to the DHS website, the grant aims to “serve targeted geographic areas and focuses on the identification and referral of foreign and domestic victims of severe forms of trafficking in persons.” In her work, Amy partners with direct service providers in the Northwest Ohio area to provide training, outreach, and direct services to survivors of all forms of Human Trafficking within the region. With her guidance, local Rape Crisis and Human Trafficking Victim Services programs have identified and served hundreds of survivors who, without her hard work, may still be entrapped in the sex and labor trafficking industries today. Amy goes above and beyond her call of duty as Regional Grant Coordinator. She has served as the Secretary for the Lucas County Human Trafficking Coalition, a volunteer position which she held for over three years and also works on the University of Toledo Human Trafficking and Social Justice Institute’s PATH (Partners Against Trafficking in Humans) Program in addition to her duties through the LBS Grant. Amy is an incredibly passionate advocate and ally for and to survivors and at-risk populations statewide. Amy is always accessible to direct service providers, to answer questions and provide support. Many young leaders in the field consider her to be a mentor to them; a shining example of what it is to be a Social Justice Warrior in the

fight against all forms of sexual violence.



Unsung Hero

Ryn Farmer

- Director of Day One Crime Victim Services
- Vice President, OAESV Board of Directors



Kathryn "Ryn" Farmer received a Bachelor's degree in Social Work from Taylor University and a Master of Social Work degree from Baylor University. She is the Rape Crisis and Anti-Human Trafficking Director at Day One of Crime Victim Services, the Chair of the Northwest Ohio Rescue and Restore Coalition, a member of the Ohio Amber Alert Advisory Committee, and the Vice President for the Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence's Board of Directors. Ryn's first interactions with OAESV were in the capacity as a Rape Crisis Director in Northwest Ohio. "One of the aspects I value most about OAESV is that they provide critical leadership in how sexual violence intersects with race, gender, class, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, ability, age and so much more." She is committed to working alongside OAESV to help provide a comprehensive response to survivors who are impacted by sexual violence. Ryn goes above and beyond for her staff, survivors, boards and community. She is an avid co-conspirator, passionate, compassionate and driven. Today we honor Ryn Farmer for *exceptional dedication and sacrifice in service of sexual assault survivors and advocacy services in Ohio.*



Innovative Crisis Response

Chelsie Thomas-Karason

- Outreach & Education Director, The Abuse & Rape Crisis Shelter in Warren County



Chelsie provides and oversees hospital advocacy, provides sexual violence prevention trainings to the community and to law enforcement, and is focused on promoting positive messaging through events and social media. Chelsie has served in the field of sexual violence prevention & intervention for 5 years and has a diverse background in leadership, development, and team building. Throughout her career at ARCS, Chelsie has worked with youth providing violence prevention education in Junior and Senior High Schools, helping them to understand that sexual violence is unacceptable and preventable.

Committed to providing high quality services, Chelsie has developed a partnership with TriHealth Bethesda Hospital Group to create and deliver a simulated sexual assault response training at the hospital for ARCS staff and volunteer advocates. Chelsie's team has developed a community sexual violence prevention training that aims to empower individuals to be leaders in helping to end the normalization of violence and rape supportive culture in their communities.

Chelsie earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree from Bowling Green State University. Prior to joining ARCS, she served in various capacities at Joy Outdoor Education Center including assistant manager of their Young Adult & University Department. Chelsie is dedicated to modeling positive leadership and currently serves as a corporate leadership facilitator at Joy Outdoor Education Center.



Excellence in Advocacy

Ruth Nieves

- Advocate, Cleveland Rape Crisis Center



My name is Ruth Nieves I am a 32 year old Puerto Rican women that currently as had the honor to be an advocate for the Cleveland Rape Crisis Center for the last 5 years. I have had the pleasure of serving over 500+ survivors of sexual assault in many different departments. My advocacy journey started at the Cuyahoga Justice Center working with adults from making the initial police report proceeding to their interview with the detective assigned to the case and working with them until the end of the case. The support we are able to provide our survivors during the preparation of a trial working hand in hand with the prosecutor assigned and fighting for the rights each survivors to be informed, present and heard. Also working with Juveniles and the Juvenile Justice center and their families having each of them feel supported and also a clear understanding of every court proceeding. As well working with children at the Child Advocacy Center partnering up with the Department of Children and family services and other community partners to achieve the best results participating in multidisciplinary team meetings (MDT) to really look for the best services for each child individually. Which leads me to my current position as an advocate working with the Sexual Assault Kit Initiative which its looking at unsubmitted rape kits and working to notifying the survivors and link them to services.

It's been a honor and a privilege to work with each survivor in different stages of their healing process to see them empowering themselves. Taking back the power someone thought they took from them. Also to see them have a voice to speak up and tell their story when they were afraid too. Nevertheless, the best way I have been rewarded by my work is hearing how families and survivors I have supported want to join the advocacy work because of the work I did with them. Honestly nothing makes me more happier to know I was able to help a survivor or family during the most difficult process of their lives.

I am also a wife and proud mother of a handsome 11 year old boy and a beautiful 4 year old little girl that inspire me every day to be a better version of myself. I will be starting grad school in a couple of weeks and excited to start this new chapter of my life. As well during these difficult times I have actually had a great summer exploring the outdoors and really focusing on what's important. Nothing is impossible when you are focused on the bigger picture.



Excellence in Prevention

New Directions

Program Executive Director:

Lori Jones-Perkins



New Directions is a dual rape crisis center and domestic violence agency located in Knox County. We have been in existence since 1983 as a domestic abuse shelter, became the rape crisis center in 1988 and have been providing prevention services since 2003. Our staff are cross-trained in direct services and prevention and we believe it is part of our mission to offer preventive education to create an informed and supportive community.

In the past year, our prevention educators provided Healthy Relationships programming to 1,216 K-12 students across all school districts in Knox County. This programming helps students learn about topics such as: healthy/unhealthy relationships, consent, bystander intervention, and proactive interventions. 183 community members participated in our community trainings such as See the Signs, SafeZone, Keep Knox Safe, and Hidden in Plain Sight. Our male engagement program AIM (Act. Impact. Motivate), using the Coaching Boys into Men curriculum, reached 58 young men and we trained 6 male facilitators to implement in the upcoming grant year.

Our youth-led prevention team, the Teen Advisory Council (TAC) created through DELTA funding, is comprised of county high school students. TAC utilized Knox County PRIDE survey data to create a Youth Driven Strategic Plan promoting healthy lifestyles

& relationships, reducing underage alcohol use, and promoting mental health awareness by providing information to Knox County youth at school events, sharing prevention messaging at school and on social media, and planning healthy community events such as the Color for a Cause 5k. In the past grant year, TAC members provided prevention outreach to 1,787 peers and community members. TAC members planned healthy community events like the Color for a Cause 5k, an event that brought over 650 community members together, and Teens and Technology Workshop for parents and youth. Individual school prevention events such Interactive Homecoming Tailgate activities and sponsoring Student Sections at basketball games to promote bystander intervention were planned and reached over 600 peers. TAC members also planned a Youth Leadership day where 119 Knox county youth came together to increase their knowledge of Bystander Intervention, Suicide Prevention, and Leadership skills. TAC members utilize social media platforms to share prevention messaging, including their Teen Dating Violence Awareness Campaign #ICan and to provide an engaging experience like polls, thought provoking questions, and challenges.

Faced with the challenges of COVID-19 our Prevention Team converted in-person training into an online format and created innovative ways to provide prevention our community while practicing social distancing. Our prevention Team hosted Prevention in the Park twice a week where they provided short educational lessons to youth of all ages. In addition, our Prevention Team also filmed at a variety of Knox County park locations called "Where is Prevention" to promote healthy relationships and bystander intervention while challenging social media members to guess where they were in the county. Our Prevention Team has a strong presence on a variety of social media platforms that are relevant to our community, including Instagram, SnapChat, and TikTok.



Excellence in Legal Services

Attorney Karen L. Ball



Karen has a long history of involvement with community and family issues. Her Dad was a funeral director. Her family members have continued that business. They are community leaders and entrepreneurs in a small town (population 5,000) in central New York State.

The concepts of “interrelatedness” and “service” were mingled with strong commitment to family. That created a deep commitment to making a difference in the world and supporting people in transition.

Karen ran track and played field hockey in addition to carrying her share of farm chores. College took her first to Kansas State University, then back to New York to complete a B.S. and a Masters at Cornell University.

As a Cornell University Residence Hall staff member, Karen was trained to listen to problems, find workable solutions, facilitate group discussions, and identify helping

resources for people. That provided the basis for later community work with the Fair Housing Contact Service in Akron, Ohio and non-profit civil rights groups, like the Human Rights Campaign (“HRC”) and Soulforce (www.Soulforce.org). She worked with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (“HUD”), the Economic Development Department of the State of Ohio, the City of Baltimore, and several non-profit groups like the YWCA, the battered women’s shelter, and the Methodist church. She regularly attends the Columbus Center for Spiritual Living.

Along the way, Karen attended Al-Anon and ACOA meetings, learned yoga, meditation techniques, collaborative law and took several classes from Landmark Education.

Karen completed law school in 1986 at Capital University. She practiced law on a part time basis for a number of years, while working in a Fortune 500 company in the Information Technology (“IT”) department and doing project management. Her other focus areas were training and information technology, working either as a consultant, or as an employee, of large corporations.

Karen has practiced law full time for more than 10 years. She is a strong practitioner with a passion for making a difference in the lives of her clients and their families. She has a holistic approach to all legal issues. Karen concerns herself not only with the forms that need to be filled out, court appearances that must be made, and documents that must be filed, but also with the personal well-being and growth of the parties involved. She takes unconventional approaches, where appropriate, and that seems to work very well. She is an attorney and Counselor at Law! (not a therapist, but a coach for those who want that additional support / service).

Karen has been in Ohio for thirty years. She has a “mixed” practice of law. The majority of her practice is in Family Law (Divorces, Dissolution, Domestic Partner Agreements, Custody). The vast majority of her clients are survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and / or other trauma. In addition, she works with End-of-Life preparation and issues; Small Business and some housing/real estate issues.