

DCADV's 20th Advocates' Retreat and Conference

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On May 7-8, 2018, domestic violence advocates, service providers, and survivors gathered in Rehoboth Beach, DE, for DCADV's 20th Advocates' Retreat and Conference. This year's theme was "The Power of the Collective Voice: 20 Years of Advocacy." Conference attendees participated in a variety of workshops to enhance their skills and the services provided across Delaware.



Rita Landgraf presents Monday's keynote address

Rita Landgraf, University of Delaware Professor of Practice and Distinguished Health & Social Services Administrator in Residence and Director – UD Partnership for Health Communities, kicked off the conference with a keynote address. Landgraf discussed her experiences advocating for individuals with disabilities and those affected by trauma. She noted the importance of opportunities like this conference, saying, "We, as humans, need an interconnectedness with one another, especially during times of trauma while promoting equity and justice."

DCADV presented the Geri Lewis-Loper Memorial Award to the Honorable James G. McGiffin, Jr. Geri Lewis-Loper was a loyal and upstanding board member of the Delaware Coalition Against Domestic Violence from 1997 to 2009, who worked tirelessly on behalf of the organization and its mission to end domestic violence, and was a strong and committed advocate devoted to helping survivors of abuse find their own paths to justice and peace. This award recognizes an individual who has made extraordinary contributions to ending domestic violence and supporting survivors. Over his many years of service, Judge McGiffin has relentlessly worked for justice, fairness and protection for victims of domestic violence. His passion for justice, genuine respect for those he serves, and thoughtful legal guidance are qualities that transcend the roles he has held during his career and we are grateful for the outstanding service he has provided. Congratulations, Judge McGiffin!



From left: DCADV's Executive Director Sue Ryan, Keynote Speaker Rita Landgraf, the Honorable James McGiffin, DCADV's Director of Advocacy and Policy Mariann Kenville-Moore

Workshops presented on the first day of the conference covered a variety of topics including housing rights and services; safety planning for non-citizen survivors; responding to older survivors of domestic violence; media messaging promoting intimate partner and sexual violence; and issues related to head injury in victims of domestic violence. Participants also explored ways to sustain themselves while working with those affected by violence and trauma.



Women of Color Task Force "Fun at Five" Event

To wrap up the first day of the conference, DCADV's Women of Color Task Force (WOCTF) hosted "Fun at Five," a networking and social event. Attendees had the opportunity to mix and mingle, enjoy refreshments, and show off their dance moves! Thank you to the WOCTF for your work to put together such a welcoming space and fun evening- we hope this becomes an annual event!

The second day of the conference opened with a recognition of Delaware's Certified Domestic Violence Specialists (DVS). Currently, there are 43 certified DV Specialists who work in a variety of settings across our state, including but not limited to, city, county, and state police, community-based organizations, DV shelters, college campuses, and private practice; they work with victims and survivors, offenders, families, and community members. DV Specialists provide intervention services to assist those directly affected by violence, and work to create/improve conditions so we can prevent intimate partner violence in relationships, communities, and society. They have demonstrated a continued commitment to education, improving services, and mentoring the next generation of advocates. We appreciate the passion and dedication of these individuals as they help Delawareans recognize the importance of safe and healthy relationships.



A number of Delaware's Certified Domestic Violence Specialists attended this year's Retreat and Conference.



Lynn Rosenthal engaged with participants during Tuesday's keynote address

Lynn Rosenthal, Director for the Violence Against Women Initiative at the Biden Foundation, presented an inspiring and informative keynote about building our collective voice. She challenged the group to continually center our work on the survivor; and to remember that survivors are the experts on their lived experiences and the services that they need. Rosenthal encouraged participants to not see their programs as just "programs," but as "hubs of action."

Rosenthal's keynote address was followed by several workshop sessions, covering topics including sustainable self-care and resiliency; the effects of trauma on children; and a look at how the history of the LGBTQ+ community impacts our IPV work today.

Tuesday's plenary session was presented by Ian Harris, Technology Safety Legal Manager at the Safety Net Project of the National Network to End Domestic Violence. Harris identified some of the most common technological tools that abusers use to harass/abuse their victims, including direct communication (through texting, instant messaging, etc.), social media, images/photo sharing, and surveillance apps/sites. He also noted that the technology is not the problem- it is simply another method for abusers to gain power and control over their partner. Technology can also be used in positive ways- to help victims safety plan, find resources, and decrease isolation. Harris provided information and resources for advocates to become more aware of these technological methods of abuse, but also assist their clients.



Ian Harris presents Tuesday's plenary session

The Advocates' Retreat and Conference wrapped up on Tuesday afternoon with breakout sessions covering prevention and intervention services for teens, cultural competence in the workplace, and gathering tech evidence in cases of intimate partner violence.

For more information about the workshops and speakers featured at this year's Advocates' Retreat and Conference or to view more photos from the event, visit www.dcadv.org/retreat.

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