



**Mission:** *To promote a community-wide response to sexual violence by coordinating a multi-disciplinary team that will ensure victims receive comprehensive, compassionate care*

**Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) General Meeting  
MINUTES  
Thursday February 28, 2019**

**Call to Order:** Serenia Page-Beckton, Grant Coordinator

**Welcome / Introductions of Members and Guests:** Scott Addlesberger; Oren Alter, Vanessa Arriela, Belinda Barr, Courtney Barnes, Brandon Bidenman, Luis Blasco, Sherry Britton-Susino, Dylan Brooks, Leah Cauley, Maureen Chellette, Yvette Cueto, Sharon Daugherty, Holly DiBenedetto, Kat Duesterhaus, Becky Dymond, Lucas Hall, Monica Hertzbach, Jennifer Lipinski, Paul Lisker, Tanya Meade, Craig Newby, Serenia Page-Beckton, Samantha Poje', Jill Raftery, Abby Ross, Gena Rowlands, Julie Sikorsky, Jason Stout, Nicholas Tiscione, Noretta Tisdale, Judy Traub, Marci Rex.

Serenia welcomed all on behalf of Victim Services Director, Nicole Bishop, who was attending the Heart of a Women Luncheon hosted by Aid to Victims of Domestic Abuse (AVDA) during which Victim Services is being honored. She asked all members to keep SART Mission in the forefront of our minds as we meet. She introduced herself and asked all members to introduce themselves.

**Review/Approval of minutes:** January 31, 2019 minutes were approved with no revisions.

**On-Going Business:** Serenia Page-Beckton, Grant Coordinator

- SART member survey

Serenia explained the purpose of the survey, thanked the thirty-one participants, and presented a power point showing the results. All members were encouraged to continue to share feedback at any time despite that the formal survey process has ended for 2019.

- SART Member of the Year Voting

Serenia announced that as of the meeting, thirty members had voted for one of the six nominees. Everyone was encouraged to use the link provided and vote before the Survey Monkey ends tomorrow 3.1.19.

**New Business:** Serenia Page-Beckton, Grant Coordinator/Marci Rex, Assistant State Attorney

Marci Rex was welcomed as the new Director of the Special Victims Unit at the State Attorney's Office. Marci began by introducing the newly selected Victim Witness Coordinator, Maureen, to the team. And, updated the group about how her office plans to continue to work with SART. She stated she plans to continue with coordinating the Start by Believing Trainings with PBCVS, scheduling a meeting with the SANEs, and scheduling a meet & greet for her office and the PBCVS Advocates. She reminded all that her office has an open door policy, please call her at 355-7116 to arrange trainings, meetings, etc.

**Member Highlight:** PBSO, Corporal Luis Blasco, Road Patrol Officer

Corporal Blasco talked about the process of responding to a case from the first responder perspective. He outlined what happens from start to finish and shared that the SART protocols help tremendously because the steps are outlined for the officers. He conducts trainings and said the point cards are clear, concise, and user-friendly. No complaints about the cards or directions on them from Officers.

**SANE Report:** Sherry Britton-Susino, Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Coordinator

Sherry reported that there were twenty-one call outs in January; SANEs responded to all. There were two non-reporting cases. Seventeen victims had exams, all of which were completed by SANEs. Twelve of the exams were done at the Butterfly House and five were in the ER.

**PBSO Forensic Laboratory Update:** Julie Sikorsky, Forensic Biology Unit Manager

Julie talked about the status of the backlog of cases since passage of SB 636 and how testing is progressing with those kits. She stated that currently there were 1600 cases. They currently have 50 cases returned awaiting, 697 profiles with 248 CODIS hits; five arrests with one pending arrest.

**Community Action Network:** Sharon Daugherty, Outreach Coordinator

- **Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM):** Sharon invited the group to the Field of Hope event on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2019 starting at 5pm at SART. She pointed out that the flyers and poster cards are in front of them as a reminder and asked that all share about the event on their social media pages and within their networks. Extra postcards were available. She announced that this year's Field of Hope will be larger than before. The West Palm Beach Police Department static display will be participating and attracts a crowd.
- **PRIDEFEST:** Sharon announced that Victim Services is excited to participate in the 50 years of pride PRIDEFEST parade for the first time ever. The event is March 29 – 31, 2019.

**Training Committee:** on-going

**Legislative Committee:** Abby Ross & Kristopher Justs

Abby introduced Kris who is the Legislative Aide to the Senator sponsoring SB 606, HB 83 which is requesting to increase the limitations on when a report can be filed. The bill will increase from 8 years to 15 years the time a victim has to file a sexual assault report. The Senator is in the stage of looking for co-sponsors at this time. He stated that currently the bill can be tracked if you access the link online. Abby agreed to send link so others can sign up and follow progress of bills they are interested in.

**SART Case Staffings:** Samantha Poje', PBCVS Advocate

Sam reported that on March 7th, we had a sexual assault case staffing at the SART office. We staffed 4 cases with Victim Services staff.

We have been receiving many cases lately that cannot be charged with sexual crimes but have a sexual component. This has led them to be investigated by SVU detectives and they have been called into SART for advocacy support.

One case involved a 14 year old boy who was approached and touched on the leg by a creepy old man. When the crime was reported, it turned out that the man was a registered sex offender and this interaction with the boy may have violated the terms of his probation. The charge itself will be simple battery as the interaction was not necessarily sexual. This will be a case that can receive assistance from Victim Services but not necessarily the SART office. It would follow the catchment protocol like any other non-sexual case we receive.

The next 3 cases all involved the same suspect. He first approached two young teen girls last year. He requested sexual acts with them. An advocate responded and met with the victims at the police department. He called an advocate in case there was more interaction than just a proposition; there was not. No charges were filed and the teens did not feel traumatized so their cases were closed.

The same suspect came back to us with a new child victim in a new jurisdiction. This time he allowed the child to sit on his lap and drive around the neighborhood. This resulted in Lewd & Lascivious charges being filed against the suspect. This case will remain with SART. We will also be contacting the detective from the first two cases to make sure he knows about the additional charges. To keep all jurisdictions informed.

**Green DOT Program update:** Holly Dibenedetto, PBCVS Senior Program Manager

Holly announced that Yoga classes are starting again. Participants receive a free yoga mat. The Captain GreenDot costume has arrived and will likely debut during Pridefest parade at the end of

March. All were invited to the movie (“The Hate U Give”) viewing and panel discussion later in the evening at Keiser University. Lastly, Green Dot will have an Awareness Event in June. More information to come about the awareness event.

**Member field discussion:**

- Judy Traub from the National Counsel for Jewish Women announced that the human trafficking posters she shared last meeting and brought to display during this meeting are still for sale. She also announced that the posters will be displayed on various bus shelters around the county.
- Hezebeth House- Becky announced that they are transitioning some of their programming to include Equestrian Psycho Therapy. They are in the process of searching for a horse farm to start. They currently have Mental Health practitioners available.
- Compass- Dylan announced that PRIDEFEST is March 30th & 31<sup>st</sup>. He invited all to attend and announced that Compass is excited to have Victim Services join this year in the activities. PBCVS will march in the parade and have an informational table as well as be featured in the PRIDE Guide. Tickets to enter Bryant Park are on sale: \$8 in advance and \$10 at the gate.

**Next meeting date:** March 28, 2019 from 2pm – 3pm

Thank you!