



**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 July 30, 2020**

### **Call to Order:**

Nicole Bishop, Director, Palm Beach County Victim Services & Certified Rape Crisis Center (PBCVS)

### **Welcome/Introductions of Members and Guests:**

Nicole Bishop welcomed all who were in attendance at the meeting and facilitated introductions.

**Review/Approval of minutes:** Minutes for June 25<sup>th</sup> meeting were approved without any changes.

### **SART Member of the Year:**

Nicole Bishop announced the SART Member of the Year for 2019 after reading the nominations of the candidates. This year SART members voted between 3 nominees for the 2019 SART Member of the Year. These 3 SART members were nominated by their peers as someone who embodies the SART mission:

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

The SART member of the year represents a member who participates in SART meetings, promotes SART's multidisciplinary team approach to case response and works with the community to ensure that all victims receive comprehensive, compassionate care. Nicole thanked all of the nominees for being present for this virtual reveal and for going above and beyond in advocating for victims of sexual violence in our community.

The SART Member of the Year for 2019 was announced as PBSO Forensic Biology Unit Manager, Julie Conover Sikorsy.

The nominations in full can be seen below:

**Nominee: Kenia Desravines, Victim Advocate, Palm Beach County Victim Services**

Nominator's Agency: State Attorney's Office

Nomination Justification Narrative:

"I've been working somewhat closely with Kenia for about three months now. She acts as a bridge between the State Attorney's Office and the victims. She is wonderful with her victims and goes above and beyond to meet their needs. She is a compassionate and hardworking human being. I always look forward to having cases with her because I know she will be there and she will do her best to communicate with me. It really means a lot, especially when things get hectic.

Her position is a tough one. Working with victims is not an easy task. Kenia does it gracefully. She's always full of light and love. It has been a pleasure working beside her for these last couple of months.

She offers a large amount of comfort to victims. Especially Haitian victims. They always feel comfortable and cared for when she is around. It's always a joy to see the Haitian victims light up when there is an advocate there who understands them. Kenia has a caring way about her. She goes above and beyond all of the time.

Kenia is also gifted at keeping her victims calm, cool and collected. She knows exactly how to comfort them and prepare them for what lies ahead. It's quite a sight to see. She has the patience of a saint.

I remember one particular victim who was quite a handful. She was not cooperating and was making things quite, difficult. Kenia stayed calm and collected. She was also able to keep the victim calm. It is truly a gift. She genuinely loves her job."

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**Nominee: Jeffrey Gleicher, Detective, Boynton Beach Police Department**

Nominator's Agency: Boynton Beach Police Department

Nomination Justification Narrative:

"Detective Jeffrey Gleicher is a member of the Boynton Beach Police Major Case Unit and SART, where he deals with heinous crimes such as homicides, robberies and aggravated assaults. He also investigates sex crimes from time to time. Detective Gleicher demonstrates his tenacity and passion to bring perpetrators of sexual battery cases to justice by working tirelessly every day to identify suspects and ultimately bringing justice to those who cannot defend themselves. Detective Gleicher recently got a defendant pled guilty to X3 counts of Child Sexual Battery caring a sentence of 7 years per count along with being registered a Sexual Offender upon his eventual release. Detective Gleicher was lead detective in this investigation stemming from an on-call callout then worked the case until its completion in what was described to me at the SAO as a 'Phenomenal Investigation'.

At the end of 2019, Detective Gleicher responded to a violent sexual battery case where the suspect entered the victim's residence by force and proceeded to rape her violently. The suspect punched the victim in the eye and forced her into her apartment. A struggle ensued and the suspect sexually battered the victim on the floor of the apartment. The suspect then fled the area

on foot. The victim was transported to the Butterfly House. The PBC victim advocate and SANE were notified and a SAK was completed. Given the gravity of the case and the fact that there was a violent rapist on the loose, Detective Gleicher requested an expedite DNA analysis. Within a month the perpetrator was identified and arrested. Detective Gleicher made sure that the victim was in constant contact with the victim advocate and he immediately contacted the victim once an arrest had been made. Detective Gleicher has gone above and beyond the call of duty. Based on his tenacity, dedication and constant bridging the gap between the community and the Police Department; he brings great credit upon himself and the Sexual Assault Response Team. As such, I would like to nominate Detective Gleicher as SART Member of the year."

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Nominee: Julie Conover Sikorsky, Forensic Biology Unit Manager, Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office

Nominator's Agency: Palm Beach County Victim Services

Nomination Justification Narrative:

"Julie Sikorsky is the Forensic Biology Unit Manager for Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office and essentially oversees the operations related to DNA testing for Sexual Assault evidence collection. She has been a long-time supporter of and has tremendous respect for the work of the multi-disciplinary SART team. Julie is very knowledgeable about the latest research on biology of DNA testing and the latest technology required to gain the most precise results. Acquisition of those precise results obtained in the lab has contributed to the convictions of many perpetrators who may have otherwise been set free due to lack of evidence. Julie has also been instrumental with her team having several positive DNA hits on cold cases that lead to the arrest and prosecution of offenders.

This past year, Julie was instrumental in updating our sexual assault test kits used county-wide, to meet the revised standards and worked to get the kits produced with the changes implemented. She shared the latest testing research information with SART by presenting during meetings, and keeps the team updated about how many tests have been completed since the passing of Senate Bill 636. Her contributions to ad hoc committees such as revision of CPT protocol, victim notification initiative developed by PBSO, SAK changes, and non-reporting protocol were invaluable, impactful, and certainly contributed majorly to the mission of providing a victim centered approach to services for sexual assault survivors. She was responsible for the implementation of the pilot project with CPT to enhance services for child victims of sexual assault.

Julie participates in Countywide and statewide initiatives to improve the evidence collection process as it relates to enhancing how law enforcement and SANEs collect evidence. As a result, Julie's utilization of current best practices is shared throughout our community and with SART when responding to sexual violence. She has trained new SANEs on evidence collection process and meets regularly with PBCVS Program Coordinator and SANE Nurse Coordinator to review our countywide process to assist all involved focusing on the needs of the victim as it relates to evidence collection to move towards successful prosecution of cases.

She has gone above and beyond as the Forensic Biology manager and is always available to provide information and training whenever needed to SART members and the community. She provides monthly updates at SART meetings to share the work she and her team are doing to improve our community wide response. Julie's victim-centered approach has garnered respect from the community to bring a focus that each Sexual Assault Kit is not just a case number, but is a real person and is treated with the compassionate care each victim deserves. Julie is truly the 2019 SART member of the year."

**Next meeting date:** August 27, 2020 @ 2pm – 3pm

Thank you!