The Trauma for Sex Trafficking Victims

JEANNE FUSCO

More and more, there is focus on human trafficking which includes sex and labor trafficking. Often, this second most profitable crime in the world (Baldas, 2012) is erroneously thought to be an international crisis and not a domestic one.

Trafficking of individuals for the purposes of sex or labor, like other forms of sexual violence, does not discriminate based on race, socioeconomic status, age, gender or geographic location. The National Human Trafficking Resource Center Hotline received reports of 25,696 cases of human trafficking from 2007-15; the majority of these cases were sex trafficking cases (Polaris Project, 2016). In Connecticut, human trafficking exists in urban centers and in suburban and rural areas, as well.

In the last year, 67 of Susan B. Anthony Project victims have indicated they have been sex trafficked. Sex trafficking is the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act, in which the commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion or in which the person induced to perform such act has not obtained 18 years of age. The term “commercial sex act” is any sex act of which anything of value is given to or received by any person. (Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000).

Those who are homeless, or for whom housing is unstable, especially for youth, are at particular risk. One in three teens will be approached by a trafficker within 48 hours of being on the street. (CT Coalition to End Homelessness, 2016).

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Meet Our Board

A lifelong resident of Litchfield County, I currently live in Torrington with my wife Nancy. I have enjoyed a long career in technology and credit card payment processing and I now serve as Data Privacy Officer at Patron Technology in NYC. I began as a volunteer at Susan B. Anthony Project and became a member of the SBAP Advisory Council in 2008 where I began assisting staff with online marketing, website and security projects. I eventually joined the Board of Directors in 2012.

As a young adult, I encountered the horrors of domestic and sexual violence in the lives of people close to me. When I finally came to know SBAP, I eagerly supported their mission, the services they offered to those in need, and the healing opportunities available to survivors. As a Board member, and now President, I passionately carry the torch for this great organization’s founders who, 35 years ago, made an idea into reality. I work diligently to ensure SBAP can continue to provide programs, services and hope for all who find themselves in need of it. I humbly serve with a great Board, management, and staff who are the best at what they do.

—Mark Famiglietti

I am the Banking Center Manager of the Webster Bank in Torrington, CT. I have been with Webster Bank for 13 years and have been a Torrington resident for the past 8 years. Working and living in Litchfield County has allowed me many wonderful opportunities to become involved in the community. Webster Bank has been a long-time supporter of Susan B. Anthony Project and as a result I was introduced to the stellar organization. I am an active member of a local civic organization in which the past Executive Director of Susan B. Anthony Project was also a member. With these two connections, I immediately gained an interest in learning more about Susan B. Anthony Project. I wanted to know how I can lend a hand in the efforts to eliminate domestic violence and provide support in prevention education. I joined the Board of Directors in 2014. I have since served as the Chair of the Business Task Force, working to spread awareness and grow relationships with businesses in and around the local area. I have also proudly taken on the role of Vice President of the Board of Directors in the 2017-2018 fiscal year.

—Maria Salomone
Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking (DMST) is sexual abuse of a child (under the age of 18) by another person in return for payment in money or in kind, paid to one or more third parties. In cases of DMST, a third party is always benefitting from the situation. The difference between DMST and commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) (under the age of 18) is that the sexual abuse of the child may include child pornography, trafficking in children for sexual purposes, child sex tourism and child marriage when payment is exchanged. (DCF, 2016)

The Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF) has increasingly sharpened its focus on the growing issue of DMST and CSEC afflicting children across the state and toward ending the sale of children of Connecticut. The efforts of DCF fall within three categories:

• Identification and Response
• Awareness and Education
• Restoration and Recovery

In Connecticut, there are six Human Anti-Trafficking Response Teams (HART). These are inter-disciplinary teams led by experienced HART liaisons and includes the child treatment team, specialized providers and legal representation if indicated, and connections to local multi-disciplinary teams (MDT). These MDTs ensure cases are afforded all resources to maximize prosecutions while ensuring the child and families are provided the appropriate medical and mental health services they are entitled to as victims.

Susan B. Anthony Project’s sexual assault child advocate is a member of this region’s MDT. The MDT is coordinated and facilitated by Charlotte Hungerford Hospital’s Center for Youth and Families.

Like non-trafficked victims of domestic and sexual violence, trafficked persons often suffer multiple victimizations that include sexual assault and other forms of intimate partner violence. Victims who have escaped their trafficking situation and are living with an abusive partner or spouse may tend to minimize their violence because their current situation is so much better than their trafficking situation.

Safety planning takes on an added complexity for victims of trafficking because they may face danger from organized crime, gangs or an extensive trafficking organization. There is often generalized fear in the case of these victims as opposed to fear of a single abusive partner.

Susan B. Anthony Project is actively engaged in learning, providing community education and working in interventional ways to bring awareness and response to sex trafficking in northwestern Connecticut through partnerships identified in this article, along with many others.

The 24-hour hotline is available to answer questions and provide response and referral by calling: 860.482.7133.
Together, we can do great things!

Thanks to the Klebe Cares Program, victims of domestic and sexual violence have the opportunity to receive the shelter, the resources, and the peace of mind that they desperately seek. After a 10-year partnership with Susan B. Anthony Project, Klebe Fuel became a $1,000 Silver Level Program Sponsor for 2017-2018 through our new Business Sponsorship Opportunities.

This sponsorship has allowed SBAP to provide critical support to victims when they need it most. Each victim’s journey is unique, and so are each victim’s needs. The ability to help our clients in the way that benefits them the most is a tremendous gift.

Over the years, Klebe Fuel has also participated in our Adopt a Family program, our holiday wreath sale, our wish list collections, and has promoted our annual fundraising efforts and awareness events.

We are so grateful to everyone at Klebe Fuel for this special collaboration and for the kindness and commitment to victims of domestic and sexual abuse.

“...As a family owned and operated company. We know the value of supporting our local communities. It has always been our pleasure to be able to support such an important organization in our community.”

Klebe Fuel

Please join us for the 10th annual — and farewell — MOMIX in the Garden benefit performance!

We are so grateful to Moses Pendleton and Cynthia Quinn for a decade of breathtaking performances by their outstandingly talented MOMIX dancers at our annual MOMIX in the Garden event. We invite you to join us in celebrating our 10th and final MOMIX in the Garden experience. Please save the date for September 9th, 2018, 4:00-7:00 p.m. at the home of Peter Tillou in Litchfield. Tickets can be purchased online at www.sbaproject.org/momix or by phone at 860-489-3798.

Susan B. Anthony Project presents The Vagina Monologues in the Nancy Marine Studio at the Warner Theatre on February 15, 2018! Showtime is at 7:00 pm with a reception to follow. Stay tuned for ticket information.
Honoring Community Supporters at Candlelight Vigil

October was Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Each year, SBAP celebrates survivors of domestic violence and honors community members who collaborate and support our work at our annual candlelight vigil.

2017 Honorees

Academy of Medical Training*
Janette Coury — LCSW at Charlotte Hungerford Hospital
Teddi Creel — Litchfield/Waterbury Coordinated Access Network (CAN)
Candice Fedorovich — Judicial Branch Clerks Office
Officer James Foley — Torrington Police Department
Thomas A. Ford — CT Legal Services
Devin Stilson — Supervisory Assistant State’s Attorney

*Thank you to the Academy of Medical Training in Torrington for the $10,000 annual scholarship to an SBAP client pursuing a career in the healthcare field for use at the Torrington or Waterbury campuses.

The scholarship is made in memory of a past student at their Waterbury Campus, Ebony Swaby, who tragically lost her life as a result of domestic violence.

Thank you to Danielle Maida, Torrington Owner/Campus Director, and Jamie Mirabilio, Waterbury Owner/Campus Director, for this wonderful opportunity.

2018 Sexual Violence Awareness Month

Each April, we hold our Sexual Violence Awareness Month Vigil to show community support for sexual assault survivors. This year, the following community members were recognized for collaborating and supporting our work throughout the year:

Judge Rosemarie Aquilina (in absentia) — Presided over the Larry Nassar sexual abuse trial
Michelle Colleoni — CAIT (Child Abuse Investigation Team)
Wendy Gadwah — Trinity Glen
Goshen Public Library
Detective Kyle Johnson — Torrington Police Dept.
Bobbi Jo Klug — Volunteer
Nicole Tavano — Trinity Glen
Union Savings Bank — Community Relations
Director Michelle Bonvicini & AVP Dina Pereira

SBAP Development Director, Gina Devaux with Dina Pereira, Assistant VP, Marketing at Union Savings Bank. Union Savings Bank has been instrumental in supporting our community education programs with their tremendous sponsorships these past 7 years, including becoming the first program sponsor of community education last year.

Making a Difference!

Twenty “Beauty Bags” containing pampering items for our clients were delivered to SBAP by Community Health & Wellness Center. Wendy Green & Anne Malisk, SBAP advocates, along with Denise Torson, SBAP Development Associate, are shown accepting the donation from Joanne Borduas, CEO of Community Health and Wellness Center.

New Vision Pioneers-Morris F. Tyler Chapter purchased an extraordinary donation of comforter sets, blankets, full size shampoos, conditioners and laundry detergent along with other items from our wish list to help stock our shelter.

Members of the Rhino Club made a very generous donation of food for our shelter. Shown left to right are: Michael Kovalchik, Cliff Cooper, Peter Litwin, Paul Sweeney, Jay Younling and Louis Donne. Not pictured: John Kleeman and Todd Anderson. We so appreciate your thoughtfulness and generosity.
Thank you to everyone who supported our first annual **Walk a Mile in Her Shoes®**! It was an incredibly successful day. Thanks to you, we welcomed the support of many friends, old and new, from all over the country and significantly surpassed our fundraising goal!

- 122 volunteers
- 252 registered participants
- 558 donors
- 17 sponsors
- **$52,718 raised!!!**

Thank you to all who participated, to the community members who came out to cheer on our walkers, and to those who graciously donated your products, time, and talents to make our inaugural Walk an unforgettable day.

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**Walk a Mile in Her Shoes®**

Sunday, May 20, 2018 • On the Litchfield Green

**2017-18 AGENCY SPONSORS**

2017-18 AGENCY SPONSORS

**SILVER SPONSORS**

- O & G Industries
- St. Paul’s Lodge No. 11

**BRONZE SPONSORS**

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- Arethusa Farm
- Beauty Mark Tattooing
- Borghesi Building & Engineering
- Charlotte Hungerford Hospital
- Hinkley, Allen & Snyder LLP
- Litchfield Distillery
- Sega Ready-Mix
- Sterling Sintered Technologies
- Torrington Savings Bank

**COMMUNICATIONS SPONSOR**

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**Walk a Mile in Her Shoes®**

THE INTERNATIONAL MEN’S MARCH TO STOP RAPE, SEXUAL ASSAULT & GENDER VIOLENCE

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Healing Boys
Thank You To Our Donors — We Raised $52,718!

Litchfield Fire Department

Sterling Sintered Technologies

Rumsey Hall

O & G Industries

Ian Campbell

Martha & Robert Bernstein

Elevator Services Company

St. Paul’s Lodge No. 11

Brian Mattiello

Litchfield Tang Soo Do

Stephen Torlai

Event volunteers
Planned Giving... such a dry term for an important way to make sure that the causes I care about can pursue their mission after I am no longer alive to offer support. Causes that resonate for my planned giving effort have several things in common: their mission speaks to me, they have sufficient resources to exist after my lifetime, and they are modest enough so that my planned gift will make an impact... they fall in what I call the sweet spot, an organization that is not too large and not too small. SBAP meets all these criteria. As a financial person, I look carefully at the organizations I support to make sure my gifts are handled prudently. I read 990s, annual reports, and third party reviews. These sources reinforce my decision to support SBAP today and into the future, through my Planned Giving program.

"-Valerie Friedman

The Founders Society of Susan B. Anthony Project celebrates our founders, Polly Doremus & Gillian Hanna, and recognizes all of our donors who have also made a promise to help create a better tomorrow by providing a legacy gift. When you become a member of the Founders Society of Susan B. Anthony Project, you will help ensure the perpetuity of SBAP’s mission and role in our community. No matter the amount, you are making a gift of hope to victims of domestic and sexual violence.

Join us.
Inaugural Founders Society Gathering
Tuesday, September 11, 2018
5:30 – 7:00 pm
Susan B. Anthony Project

If you are interested in learning more about the Founders Society of Susan B. Anthony Project, please join us for wine and hors d’oeuvres at a special pinning ceremony honoring our current Founders Society members.

Call Gina Devaux at 860-489-3798 to R.S.V.P. or for more information about planned gifts.

Interested in Volunteering? SBAP NEEDS YOUR HELP!
There are many ways to volunteer at Susan B. Anthony Project

- Client Services
- General Office Help
- Special Events
- Childcare

For more information, go to www.sbaproject.org and click on the community involvement link or call Siobhain at 860-489-3798. Our next volunteer certification training will be held in September.

Ways to give ... IT ALL BEGINS WITH YOU
Susan B. Anthony Project receives almost 50% of its budget from people like you.

- Outright Gift: The simplest method of giving by check or credit card.
- Online Gift: Make a secure gift online at www.sbaproject.org
- Stock Gift: A gift of stock can provide considerable tax benefits.
- Endowment Gift: A gift to the Susan B. Anthony Project Endowment Fund will help secure our future.
- Wills and Bequests: Your gift passes to the Susan B. Anthony Project after your death.

To make a gift or to learn about these and other charitable giving programs, contact Gina Devaux at 860-489-3798 or gdevaux@sbaproject.org

Susan B. Anthony Project is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. EIN: 06-1085983
For questions about an item listed, please call Denise at 860-489-3798 or visit www.sbaproject.org

OUR CLIENTS’ MOST PRESSING NEEDS — GIFT CARDS
Stop & Shop, Price Rite, Aldi’s
Gas Cards, McDonald’s, Burger King
Target, Wal-Mart, Panera Bread
TJ Maxx, Payless Shoes, Dollar Tree
MasterCard or Visa
Movies or Hair Cuts
Dunkin Donuts

CASH DONATIONS
For client assistance

NEW BED & BATH
Twin, Full & Pack-n-Play sheets
Pillows
Bath towels & wash cloths
Dish towels & pot holders

PERSONAL HYGIENE
Shampoo & conditioner
Razors & shaving cream
Tampons & pads
Deodorant — male & female
Toothpaste & toothbrushes
Soaps & body wash
Lotions & hand sanitizer
Diapers — all sizes
Sensitive diaper cream
Sensitive baby wipes
Tissues & Q-tips
Baby shampoo
Sunscreen
Shower caddies
Hair dye

SHELTER SUPPLIES
Bathroom & kitchen cleaners
HE laundry detergent — unscented (HE = Energy Efficient)
Dryer sheets — unscented
Bleach
Fabric softener — unscented
Ziploc bags, foil, plastic wrap
Toilet paper, paper towels
Food containers

FOOD ITEMS
Coffee, creamer & coffee filters, tea
Canned, boxed or dry food items
Spices, sugar, salt, pepper
Flour, oil, tuna, cereal, rice, beans
Mayo, catsup, mustard
Sazon seasoning
Cookies, Pop Tarts, fruit snacks
Juice boxes, bottled water

OVER THE COUNTER MEDICINE
Tylenol / Advil / Motrin
Infant / Children’s Tylenol
Cold medicine — adult & children
Turns / Pepto Bismol
Allergy medicines
Thermometers
Anti-bacterial cream
Band-Aids

MISCELLANEOUS
School supplies
Flashlights & batteries, all sizes
Craft supplies — beads, paint, and canvas
Sleeping bags, air mattresses
Movies — family DVDs
Wii Games — family oriented
Play-Doh
Daily calendars
Colored pencils, crayons
Washable markers
Coloring books, stickers
New toys, crafts
Trac phones & minute cards
Flip flops, beach towels
Umbrellas
Card games — Uno, Old Maid
Playing cards
Board games — Monopoly, Clue, Bingo, checkers, Candyland, Life, Scrabble
Socks, underwear, pajamas, sweats & yoga pants for children & women — all sizes
Storage bins

SBAP advocates, Julia Jagger and Karina Presbie, accepted 14 handmade quilts and pillowcases from Shirley Metcalf and the Haystack Quilters in Norfolk. The quilting group has been more than generous to us over the past three years, bringing handmade quilts for our clients once a year.

Beautiful knit hats were delivered by Gaye Belli. The hats were knit by April White and her Angel Friends.
Adopt a Family for the Holidays

Thank you for helping to make this holiday season a bright one for our clients. Our generous donors helped provide gifts for 89 women, 4 men, 165 children and 2 therapy dogs.

OUR GENEROUS DONORS:

Sylvia Abbott
Jerry Ackerman
AIJA LLC
Alpha Eta Chapter of Beta Sigma Phi
Altek Electronics Inc.
Anderson/Hanrahan/Murphy Families
Judith Armstrong
Barbro & Hudson Families
Dorothy Bazzano & Elizabeth Peterson
BCD Meeting & Events
Sally Bergad
Antonia Bernard
The Boland Family
Joyce G. Briggs
Brooks, Todd & McNeil
The Brotherhood of the United Bikers
Connecticut
Denise & John Buchanan
Laura Cardello
Charlotte Hungerford Hospital
Rehabilitation and Sports Medicine Department
Anne Childs
Hope S. Childs
Mary Clancy
Siobhain Craemer
The Crossman Family
Jennifer & Brian Cuddeback
Joanne & Rob Gagne
Sylvia & Patience Deacon
Burlington GS Troop
Sandy Deacon
66107 and 67049
Delta Kappa Gamma
Gloria Gourley and friends
Tau-Upsilon Chapter
Jessica Hague and Christina Borel
Irene & Roger Dietlin
Tracy & Eli Hattem
Shireen Dilawar
Anna & Ed Dodge
Annie & Keri & Jon Hoffer
Suzanne & Francis Dooley
Catherine Hogan
The Donne Family
Laurie & Jay Hubbelbank
Kim Dragan
Christine A. Hunter
Marissa Dubeczy
Abigail Huntoon
Eckert/Nelson
Carol Iannuzzi
Thursday night
carol & Abby Interrante
Kyla Engel
The Jagger Family
Nancy & Mark Famiglietti
Laurie Jassen
Mary Fanette & Veronica Burns
Susan D. Jones
France Fenton
Suzanne A. Jones
Robert Finan
Philip Kamens
Emily FitzHugh & Nina Huffman
Michael Kazan
Franzi Knight
Doreen & Michael Kelly
Suzanne Kukolla
Marie Kennedy
The Litwin Family
Kathy Kinane
Marie & West Lowe
Klebe Fuel
Michael Maher
Eagles Aerie 974
The Malloy Family
Torrington
Lawrence & Rita Freedman
Palmerr Marrin
Jackie Frost
The Martinelli Family
Fuel Cell Energy
Scotty McCarty
Lynn Fulkerson
The McDermott Family
Jeanne & Michael Fusco
Pucci McGill
Joanne Nardi
Joanne & Abby Interrante
Bill Ndini
Carol & Rob Gagne
Carol & Abby Interrante
Laurie Jassen
Doreen & Michael Kelly
The Malloy Family
Kathy Kinane
Klebe Fuel
Suzanne Kukolla
The Litwin Family
Marie & West Lowe
Michael Maher
Palmer Marrin
The Malloy Family
The Martinelli Family
Pucci McGill
The McDermott Family
April Montgomery & Claire Powers
Katie Monroe & Lauren Monroe
Jan Moore
Sue Moore
The Morris Family
The Morris Family
Joanne Nardi
Bill Ndini
New Vision Pioneers
Rebecca Neary
Morris F. Tyler #9
Katherine Ongelia
Chapter
Robin Orlomoski
Catherine Ongelia
Emily Orton-Miller
Kathleen Kroner
Michelle Ouellette
Mary Peabody
Suzanne Seinfeld
Sharon Pronovost
Susan Rea
Turi Rostad & Ashley Rowe
Nancy Rogers
Randy & Dirk Sabin
Philip Samponaro
Patty & Rich Marshall
Sara Santora
The Martinelli Family
Mary Sarsfield
Scotty McCarty
Rosemary Sarsfield
The McDermott Family
Natasha Schnabel & Family
Pucci McGill
Lois Shafir
Christine McGrath
The Shelley Elves
Catherine & John McMahon
Shurtape Specialty Coating, LLC
Berta Andrusis Mette
Susan Smith
The Miller Family
Pam Sottolano
April Montgomery
Sterling Sintered Technologies, Inc.
Claire Powers
St. John Paul the Great Parish
Klebe Fuel
Viktoria Sundqvist
Brenda Kleinman
Eileen Tedesco
Franci Knight
Jon & Joann Thiede
Suzanne Kukolla
The Turri Family
The Litwin Family
Torrington Chapter of UNICO
The Turri Family
UTCA, Inc.
Visiting Nurses
of Connecticut,
Torrington Branch
Visiting Nurses of Connecticut, Torrington Branch
Annalisa Voket
Winchester Center
Sukey Wagner
Congregational Church
Wittman Battenfield Inc.

Fraternal Order of Eagles, Aerie 974 in Torrington were eager to hop on board this past year supporting our Adopt a Family program for the first time. We were so appreciative of their generosity!

Shurtape Specialty Coating, LLC in New Hartford participated in our Adopt a Family program for the first time this year. Employees went all out to make sure our children would have a wonderful Christmas. Thank you so much!
Wreath Fundraiser

Very special thanks to all who volunteered this past year. We raised over $14,000 to support our client services!

- Jennifer Abbott-Tillou
- Altek Electronics — Cynthia Sekulski
- Michelle Apiado
- Claudette Baril
- Marge Beary
- Gail Berglund
- Bob Berson & Barbara Putnam
- Black Rock Elementary School — Karen Payne
- Nancy Boland
- Charlotte Hungerford Hospital — Suzanne Fox
- Church of Christ, Goshen — Janet Hooper
- Pastor Dan Cote
- Patience Deacon
- Luca Devaux
- Tanya & Aiden Doehr
- Helen Donaher
- Louis Donne
- Dymax Corporation — Laurie Ludgewait
- Saun Ellis
- Mark Famiglietti
- First Congregational Church, Canton Center — Carol Hyer & Diane Mankowski
- First Congregational Church, Washington — MariLyn Roze
- Fuel Cell Energy — Mary Stempien
- Michael Fusco
- Doreen Hampton
- Harwinton Women’s Club — Gerri Brander

- Josephine Jones
- Robert Kwaliick
- Litchfield High School — Dean Birdsell
- Beth McCabe
- Jacqueline Miller
- New Preston Congregational Church — Clarinda Deitz
- Nancy Newton
- Northwestern CT Community College — Sharon Gusky
- Catherine Oneglia
- Lynn & Bill Richmond
- Turi Rostad
- Salem Evangelical Covenant Church of Washington — Linda Williams
- Melisa Smailjbasic
- Diana Savory
- Lois Shafir
- Marlene & Chris Smith
- St. Anthony’s Church, Litchfield — Carol & Pat Iannuzzi
- St. Bridget Church, Sharon — Marjorie Morris & Louise Riley
- St. Paul’s Parish, Bantam — Jean Grela
- Cara & Mark Torson
- Trinity Episcopal Church, Torrington — Faye Tway & Gary Grant
- Anne Tyrrell
- Nancy Wadhams
- Winchester Center Congregational Church — Holly Martin

Luca Devaux and Aidan Doehr, taking a donut break, were very energetic helpers at our annual Wreath sale.

Making a Difference!

We were one of the recipients of underwear, socks and bras thanks to Trinity Church and other area churches who held an Undie Sunday Drive. Shown accepting the donations are Denise Torson, SBAP Development Associate, Virginia Cianciolo, The Community Soup Kitchen, Gina Devaux, SBAP Director of Development and Lisa Hageman, Executive Director, The Community Soup Kitchen.

SBAP staff members showing their support for Give Local. Back row: Michelle Marone, Siobhain Craemer, Denise Torson and Emily Orton-Miller. Front row: Tarah Hawley, Jeane Fusco, Gina Devaux, Cheryl Wallace and Matthias Ekstrand.

Give Local 2018, a 36-hour online giving challenge hosted by the Connecticut Community Foundation, was held on April 24th – 25th and successfully raised over $1.34 million to support the vital work being done in Greater Waterbury and the Litchfield Hills. Every dollar raised during the 36-hour campaign was amplified by matching funds and prizes secured by the Connecticut Community Foundation totaling $7,495.74 to support victims of domestic and sexual violence who come to Susan B. Anthony Project for help. Thank you CCF and our loyal donors for your generosity!
I began at SBAP in February 2001 as a part-time assistant to the administrator and later as a domestic violence advocate. I was placed at SBAP as an intern from an office training program I had completed through the Puerto Rican Forum. I stayed at SBAP because I believe that interpersonal relationship violence is wrong and I would love to see an end to it.

I grew up in a home with domestic violence and understand first hand its effects on the victim and their children. I witnessed countless acts of horrific abuse while growing up and came to understand how that experience has impacted me and my own intimate partner relationships. I could not give information or help to my mother but I can give it to every survivor who asks help of SBAP. I have worked with clients of differing backgrounds and circumstances and love to give people the tools and support they may have never had. I am honored to be a part of their journey to self-discovery. It gives me great purpose when a client can see their own worth, their own growth, and that they are worthy of love and respect.

As a civil court advocate, I see first hand the struggles our clients face in the judicial system. Often times the abuser is able to retain legal counsel when our clients are not. I would love to see a pro-bono program in our service area to assist clients with legal counsel. In the past, I had an opportunity to be a part of a grant funded transitional housing program. That funding allowed women and children to have a safe, abuse-free place to live while focusing on their emotional healing, educational goals, and sustainable employment. Often times, it’s very hard for our clients to secure housing because of many barriers, including expensive start-up costs (security deposits), lack of rental history, and low credit scores.

SBAP is a safe, non-judgmental place to get help and support from our well-trained and dedicated staff. If you, your family, or a friend are experiencing domestic or sexual violence, please reach out for help. If you are not sure if what you are experiencing is abuse, ask us here at SBAP. Domestic violence is not just being hit; it encompasses physical abuse, mental abuse, emotional abuse, verbal abuse, sexual abuse (any unwanted sexual behaviors), financial abuse, threatening, and using children to control you, to name a few. Abuse is not okay and there is help available. It may be scary to reach out but our services are confidential and free of charge. You have the right to live abuse free and accept help.