

Best Wishes for the Holiday Season from the SAVI Staff!

Handwritten signatures of SAVI staff members, including Iona Siegel, Diane Cochrane, Carolina Nudo, and others.

SAVI Advocate

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The Mount Sinai Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention Program (SAVI) is dedicated to assisting sexual assault and domestic violence survivors. SAVI provides free and confidential emergency room crisis intervention in nine hospitals in Manhattan and Queens, individual and group counseling at four sites, and a variety of public and professional education and outreach programs.

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SAVI Advocate

The Mount Sinai Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention Program

Thoughts from SAVI's Director on "The Miraculous Reality of Healing"

People still ask me, "How can you do this work?" And yet, after 18 years, I am moved and inspired everyday by the stories of healing and recovery that come out of "doing this work." One story of healing that has left an indelible mark on me, indeed on many, is one that is still being written, one that begins with suffering but ends—no, perseveres—with triumph. It is the story of the Central Park Jogger.

Fourteen years ago this April, the woman known to the world as The Central Park Jogger was brutally attacked. To use her own words, "This event and its aftermath were truly horrible. . . I was in terrible shape. I was in a coma that resulted from the traumatic brain injury I suffered. . . After coming out of that coma, some physicians were unsure if I would even be able to do simple tasks to take care of myself. . ." Yet as the country breathlessly watched and prayed, she did recover. Slowly at first, and then more rapidly, but always at her own pace, she began to heal. "Medically, I cannot explain what happened. . . I witnessed my own body transform from a person sitting in a wheelchair unable to remember the events from a novel's previous page to someone who helped manage a bond trading floor and who ran the NYC marathon in four and a half hours!"

And she didn't stop there! On the 10th anniversary of her attack, she wrote an article entitled "The Miraculous Reality of Healing," from which these quotes are taken, for a SAVI newsletter. She was finding her new voice. She also found that there were many people who, impacted, inspired and in-

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Mariska Hargitay with SAVI staff at the Benefit, May 2002. (left to right) Debbie Schwarz, Carolina Nudo, Mariska Hargitay, Lauren Moran, Jagruti Shah and Rosie Reyes.

TV Star Hopes to Bring Light into Darkness

An Interview with Mariska Hargitay by Diane Cochrane

What's next for the award-winning TV actress Mariska Hargitay who headlines NBC's "Law & Order: Special Victims Unit?" Education and Advocacy. After Dick Wolf, creator and executive producer of the series, received SAVI's Silver Whistle Award at its annual benefit last May, Hargitay, who attended the event along with other cast members, became interested in our organization. "I wanted to be of some service. Being on this job with the kind of recognition I get, I thought it would be helpful to become involved," she said at the time.

And she stuck to her word. On October 20th, Hargitay joined future ad-

vocates in the first of eight training sessions, which will run until November 23rd. Since she works many six and seven-day weeks, and 10- and 12-hour days at the studio, sometimes coming home at 3 am, finding time in her schedule to attend some of these sessions will be a problem. "It's not going to be easy. . . although. . . the producers of the Special Victims Unit (SVU) have been very supportive."

SVU, a spinoff from the long-running Law & Order, centers primarily on two detectives, Olivia Benson and Eliot Stabler, as they solve particularly

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Thoughts From SAVI's Director *continued from page 1*

fluenced by her story, wanted to hear what she had to say. The Jogger's voice became a ray of light to many who had suffered, and encouraged those who were ready to find their new voices as well.

Now, as we approach the 14th anniversary of the attack, she is once again navigating through uncharted waters. In April 2003, with the publication of her book, *The Central Park Jogger* will share her face, her name and her story with the world. And in May she will speak to a live audience about her journey of healing and recovery. That audience will be at the SAVI annual Silver Whistle Award Dinner.

We, at SAVI, cannot begin to express our feelings of gratitude and elation to be included in this stage of The Jogger's journey. Even as she cites the "unconditional love and support" she received from "so many" as being "crucial" to her recovery, I must assert that it is people like The Jogger, filled with hope in the face of terror, who are crucial to the success of programs like SAVI. Indeed, she and others like her are the reason that I, and the SAVI Staff, are able to do this work, because there is still so much of this work to be done.

As we near the end of this year, I join the entire staff of SAVI in wishing you a safe and happy holiday season.

Very best wishes!



TV Star Hopes to Bring Light into Darkness *continued from page 1*

unpleasant sex crimes. The episodes are taken from real life, although they always merge two or three different crimes. Hargitay plays Olivia, the elegantly attractive detective with a no-nonsense approach to her job. According to the actress, "Olivia is not only a competent, street smart cop, she's an empathetic woman who can respond emotionally to victims of terrible crimes without compromising her professionalism. It's gratifying to play a part that's a multi-layered challenge." And she does it exceedingly well. In its freshman season, 1999-2000, Hargitay earned nominations from the Viewers for Quality Television for Best Actress, from the TV Guide Awards for Favorite Actress in a New Series and from the International Press Academy for Best Performance by an Actress in a Drama Series.

"I'm so proud of our show—it sheds light on an area that people tend to shy away from. It brings to the forefront things that people are so ashamed of. True crime survivors have grabbed me on the street or on the subway and cried and said, 'I was molested by my piano teacher; I can talk about it now.' To illuminate darkness (through entertainment) is good."

Hargitay has another reason for wanting to bring light into darkness. Several years ago a friend of hers was raped. "I remember feeling tremendously helpless as a friend. She felt guilty and ashamed, even responsible for the crime. Nothing I said could do anything to change her feelings. I felt impotent."

Being on SVU for the past four years has made her more adept at handling crises since then. "I feel that SVU has given me insight. I have a certain experience now with how to deal with situations, and I have a working knowledge of sex crimes. There is so much to learn because each case is individual. Who the victims are, what they feel. It requires humanity and empathy."

NYPD women have taught her much of her knowledge. "I work with three or four wom-

en detectives who have been very generous with their time and insights. They have shown me that things are never black and white. There are so many complexities to each crime and so many ways that people can twist things around."

At 38, Hargitay has been around show business all of her life. Born and raised in Los Angeles, she is the daughter of screen legend Jayne Mansfield and Mickey Hargitay, a former Mr. World, Mr. America and Mr. Universe. But Hargitay never lived the Hollywood life. She graduated from UCLA, speaks four languages, and volunteered on weekends at the Children's Institute in Los Angeles for foster children. During the past year, she has worked with the Rape Foundation in Santa Monica, fundraising and touring their rape crisis centers as research for SVU.

Hargitay is passionately committed to her role on SVU, and when I spoke to her a day after her first Advocate training session, passionately committed to her new role. "I am so excited. I can't believe how much I learned in one day." It looks like Mariska Hargitay will be bringing light into darkness for sometime to come.

Save the Date

SAVI's May 2003 Silver Whistle Award Dinner
Central Park Jogger to be Honored

With the theme of health, strength and recovery, it is only appropriate that we honor an incredibly brave and determined woman, The Central Park Jogger, during our Thursday, May 8th gala benefit at downtown's Puck Building at 295 Lafayette Street. The cocktail hour begins at 6pm, to be followed by a candlelight dinner beginning at 7pm. We hope you will take the time to share this truly special evening with us. To find out more about SAVI's Silver Whistle Award dinner, please call our event office at (212) 249-6188.



Larry Hollier, MD, President of Mount Sinai Hospital and Iona Siegel, CSW, Director of SAVI, with the HANYS award

SAVI Receives State's Community Health Award

On October 16, the Healthcare Association of New York State (HANYS) honored the Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention (SAVI) program, presenting a plaque to Larry Hollier, MD, President

...commends SAVI for
combining resources and efforts to
benefit the community."

of The Mount Sinai Hospital, and Iona Siegel, CSW, Founder and Director of SAVI. The occasion was HANYS' annual Recognition/Awards Ceremony, held at Lake George and attended by some 400 healthcare leaders from across the state. SAVI received an Honorable Mention for the 2002 Community Health Improvement Award.

"An independent panel of state and national reviewers ranked the initiative in a very positive way," said HANYS' President Daniel Sisto, "and commends SAVI for combining resources and efforts to benefit the community."

SAVI will be featured in a special HANYS' publication entitled *Profiles of Community Health Initiatives across New York State*, as well as in the Association's various newsletters and on its Web site.

SAVI Receives New Grant

The Mount Sinai SAVI Program has received a grant from the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services for establishing a state-of-the-art Sexual Assault Examiner (SAE) program in the Emergency Department at Mount Sinai.

This addition to the SAVI program will provide survivors of sexual assault who come in to the Emergency Department with thorough, victim-centered, sensitive medical care. This care will include accompaniment by a trained SAVI volunteer advocate in the ED, who will provide emotional and practical support to the survivor and the survivor's friends and family (a service SAVI has been providing for years), as well as a comprehensive medical assessment and evaluation. With this funding, survivors will benefit from enhanced quality evidence collection by a trained forensic health care practitioner, as well as expert testimony, to be provided in court by these professionals, should any of the survivors decide to press charges against their perpetrators.

Did You Know. . . ?

- Child abuse is 15 times more likely to occur in a family with a history of violence between parents.*
- Sons raised in families with a history of domestic violence are one thousand times more likely to become adult abusers than sons raised in families with no violence in the home.*
- Many women in prison have been abused in their childhood. Prostitutes, for example, report staggering rates of abuse: 60% of 200 prostitutes in San Francisco, 75% of 200 in New York City, 65% of 200 in Seattle, and 90% in San Diego. **

*Facts taken from *The Mount Sinai "Violence Hurts" conference on Domestic Violence—October 2, 2002.*

***Factsheet: Incarcerated Women*, National Women's Law Center, Washington, DC, 1993

SAVI Volunteers at Advocate Meeting



Volunteers at the monthly advocate's meeting on October 12, 2002

Volunteering—It’s what’s in your heart

Interview with SAVI Volunteer Advocate Laura Kreft by Lina Nudo

Imagine being on call twice a month, and sometimes three times for the past ten years. Does the wait for the call get any easier? According to Laura Kreft, an active volunteer advocate since 1992, it doesn’t get any easier because one never knows what to expect. But her strong spiritual belief makes it more bearable. When Laura receives a call she tells herself, “Señor, voy en tu nombre a ayudar a esa persona.” (Lord, I go in your name to help this person). Helping people is the key to Laura’s dedication. For her, “uno crece dando, no recibiendo” (one grows by giving not receiving). “I thank God that I can do something for someone.”

Being an Advocate has also provided Laura with lessons to move forward with her own life. “SAVI helped me understand that ‘la violencia no tiene fronteras’ (violence does not have boundaries) and that violence can breed violence in families.” Growing up, Laura witnessed violence at home. As she grew older she needed to find out how her father, whom she loved dearly, and who taught her to discover and love the world, could have “another side—two personalities.” To learn more, Laura went to the town where her father was born and asked his brothers to tell her about *their* father. They told her that he never talked much—“only with his hands and feet.”

Laura believes that abusers need more than just jail; they need treatment too. In jail they get worse; they do not learn to respect the “divine within.” She explained that “I saw the hate that one can feel through the violence caused on women.” But if a person loves oneself, there is no way that he or she can hurt another so violently. Society tends to look more at violence than at ways to teach people to respect and love themselves and others. This teaching should start in schools at the ele-

mentary level. “We need to teach our children to love themselves. If we don’t educate, we don’t change.”

Laura began volunteering at SAVI when it operated in three hospitals in Manhattan. She and two female friends trained and volunteered in Manhattan. Since Laura lived in Queens, it was easier for her to be on call on the weekends. She would get up on Saturday mornings, make sure that her beeper was on, and take the subway into Manhattan to be closer to the hospitals. While waiting to be called, she went to a different museum each time as a reminder that life is a beautiful gift. In addition, Laura and her friends met regularly with Iona Siegel to discuss the possibility of offering SAVI services in Queens. In 1995, SAVI began operating in two Queens hospitals with a small number of advocates. Laura remembers being on call one full week at a time. It was not uncommon for three calls to come in at once. Sometimes she felt as if she lived in the hospital. “When you are there, you don’t realize that time flies.”

Over the years, many changes have taken place in the emergency room. When Laura first started, SAVI Advocates had a lot more educating to do. The staff, both medical and legal, was not as empathic and as experienced as they are today. Now she sees herself as part of a team. On a recent call to the ER at Mount Sinai of Queens, for example, the doctor, the social worker and the security officer all welcomed her as part of their professional “family.”

One of the things that has not changed over the years is the plight of undocumented immigrants. She finds that many women are still afraid to get help because INS may send them back. Hopefully, this will change. In the meantime, Laura continues to offer survivors options and reassurance that there is a way out. What she loves most about being a volunteer is that it “gives one the opportu-

nity to really develop as a human being because one has to give without ‘recompensa’ (expectations). “You either give or you don’t. To be a volunteer it is important to examine your heart.”

Without volunteer advocates, SAVI would not be able to provide round-the-clock support to survivors of domestic violence, incest, rape and sexual assault. Over the years, SAVI has trained and relied on hundreds of advocates, like Laura Kreft, who have made a difference in the lives of thousands of survivors in nine emergency rooms in Manhattan and Queens. SAVI staff thanks Laura for a decade of service, as well as past, present and future advocates for providing comfort, support and options to so many survivors. It truly is what’s in your heart that has made a difference. Thank you.

Did You Know. . . ?

- When asked why they stay with their abusers, mothers responded overwhelmingly that they believed it was important for their children to have a father. Ultimately, though, mothers cited their children as the top reason for leaving the violent relationship, because they felt that their children were not safe.
- Children exposed to violence in the home, even if they are not physically abused themselves, have shown increased developmental problems, reduction in IQ, increased rates of suicide in adolescents and adults, and symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder.

**Facts taken from The Mount Sinai “Violence Hurts” conference on Domestic Violence—October 2, 2002.*

2002 Volunteer Recruitment Update

By Meaghan Morelli, PR and Development Associate

a full-page article, “Rape Victims’ Hospital Help,” by Nichole Bode, which spawned two one-hour interviews on

“So many callers were thrilled by the fact that SAVI’s program even existed. People just wanted to help out in any way they could.”

WHCR 93.5 FM, one of CUNY’s official radio stations, and prompted dozens of calls by people interested in volunteering.

“People were really moved by Nicole’s article,” said Lauren, who handled a large number of the inquiry phone calls. “So

many callers were thrilled by the fact that SAVI’s program even existed. People just wanted to help out in any way they could.”

David Simon, a reporter for the *Queens Chronicle*, also shone a spotlight on SAVI’s volunteers. “This article was important for us,” said Lauren, “because we are seeking to expand our volunteer base in Queens.” The *Chronicle* “gave SAVI that extra boost” it needed in recruiting Queens volunteers.

Overall, SAVI sees this year’s recruitment as a success. “We’re thrilled,” said Lauren, “to incorporate the compassion of our new volunteers into the heart of SAVI.”

Report Calls Violence Against Women a Global Public Health Problem

The World Health Organization (WHO) published a report last week that acknowledges for the first time the public health implications of physical and sexual domestic violence. According to the report, somewhere between 50-70 percent of the women worldwide who die as a result of homicide are killed by former boyfriends or husbands. The report also states that one out of every four women will experience sexual violence by someone close to them in their lifetime, that some 20 percent of women suffer sexual abuse as children, and that in some countries up to one-third of all girls report that their first sexual experience was forced. This report sends the message that violence in the private sphere must be addressed because it is a worldwide public

health problem. According to Etienne Krug, the editor of the report, “violence is often only addressed in the context of war or the context of time. By doing so we miss some of the violence that is not necessarily crime: violence in the home, bullying, [and] suicide.”

The WHO report includes a series of recommendations to prevent violence, such as pre-school and social development programs for kids, strengthening responses to victims of violence, and promoting adherence to various international treaties and laws.

Media resources: World Health Organization 10/07/02.

Did You Know. . . ?

- 4-6 million women are abused annually.
- Battery is the leading cause of injury to women ages 15-44.
- 40% of female homicide victims are killed by an intimate partner.
- 45% of abused children have mothers who are abused as well.
- 63% of all American males, between the ages of 11 and 20, who are incarcerated for homicide, were convicted of an offense involving the killing of their mother’s batterer.

**Facts taken from The Mount Sinai “Violence Hurts” conference on Domestic Violence—October 2, 2002.*

The Rain

I am hiking up a trail on a warm,
sunny day.
Trees shade my gentle walk.

A bird screeches frantically through the air.
I get myself up and I walk on.

Behind the curve I come to a field of flowers.
I stop to watch.
A wonderful scent almost fills the air.

Lightning strikes. Sky roars.
Rain arrows down.
I run. Run. Run. Run.
I stomp down on the flower stems.
Mud splatters up from my sneakers.
I fall down.

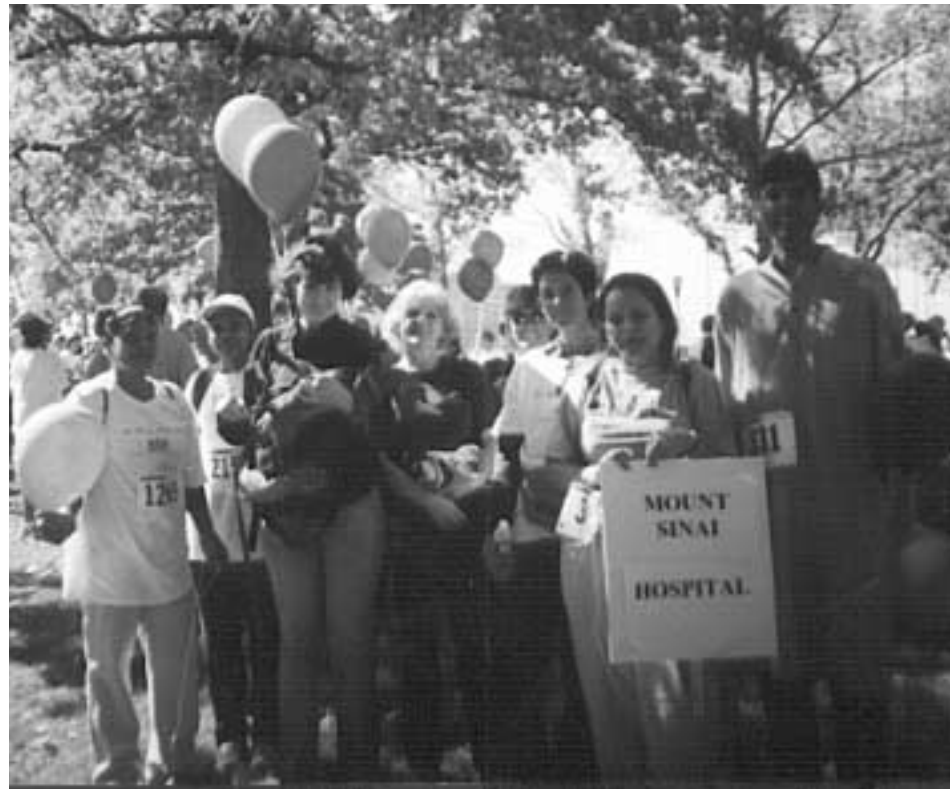
Dragging myself over to a cave,
I clean up my bruised leg.
I build a fire to dry out my cap.
Eat my cookie that my mom had told
me to pack.
Comb hair. Tidy up in a ponytail.

Rain drips down from the side
of the jutting rock.
I quench the thirsty empty water bottle
with rainwater.
Put on my sunglasses.
The sun has come out.
It is peeking from behind a cloud.
Rain stops.

I am ready to go on.

excerpted from the YWCA of Bergen County Rape
Crisis Center
November 2001 Newsletter

The Domestic Violence Walk/Run



The Domestic Violence Walk/Run, Sunday, October 6, 2002, in Battery Park City



Jagru Shah, SAVI Counselor, with SAVI materials at the Domestic Violence Walk/Run, Sunday, October 6, 2002, in Battery Park City

“with no immediate cause”

every 3 minutes a woman is beaten
every five minutes a
woman is raped/every ten minutes
a little girl is molested
yet I rode the subway today
I sat next to an old man who
may have beaten his old wife
3 minutes ago or 3 days/30 years ago
he might have sodomized
his daughter but I sat there

before I ride the subway/buy a paper or drink
coffee from your hands I must know
have you hurt a woman today
did you beat a woman today
throw a child a cross a room are they
little girls pants in your pocket
did you hurt a woman today
I have to ask these obscene questions
I must know you see
the authorities require us to
establish

immediate cause
every three minutes
every five minutes
every ten minutes
every day.

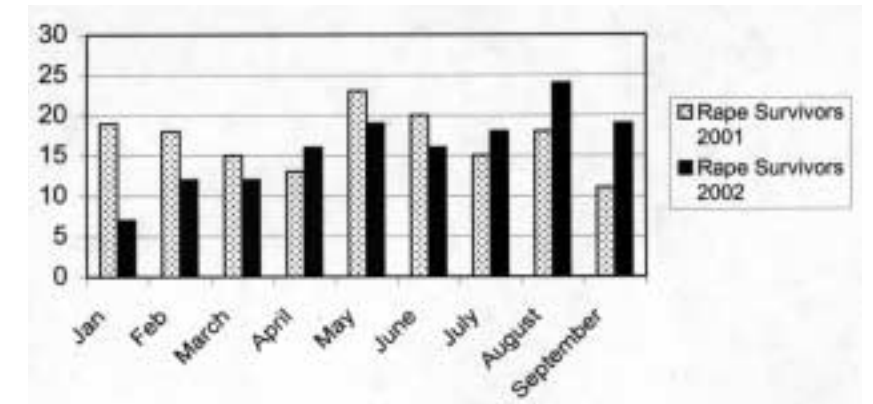
Excerpt from the poem “with no immediate cause” by
Ntozake Shange as it appears in *Stopping Rape: A
Challenge for Men* by Rus Ervin Funk published by
New Society Pub., 1993.

Did You Know. . . ?

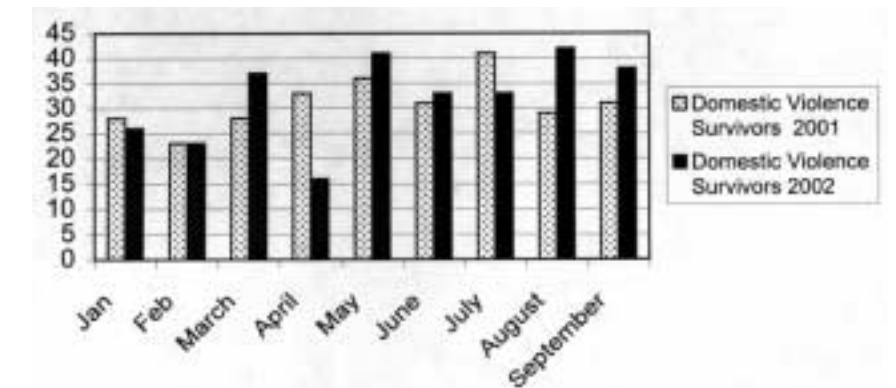
- Men who witnessed their fathers hit their mothers are three times more likely to hit their wives than men who have not witnessed such abuse while growing up.

*Facts taken from *The Mount Sinai “Violence Hurts” conference on Domestic Violence—October 2, 2002.*

Rape—ED Cases—SAVI Jan. – Sept.

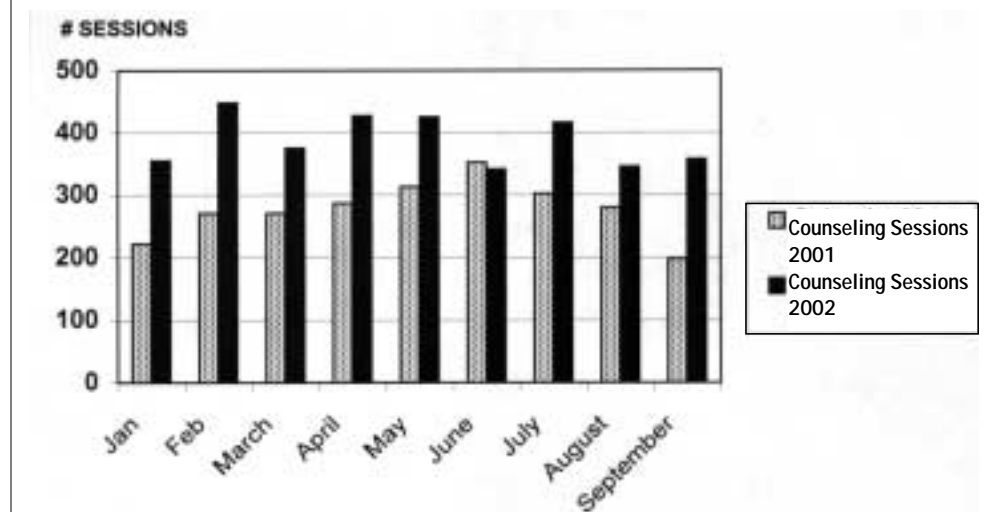


Domestic Violence—ED Cases—SAVI Jan. – Sept.



Depicted in the graphs above are the number of Emergency Department cases that SAVI Advocates responded to, in 2001 and 2002.

SAVI Counseling Sessions provided 40% higher in 2002 Jan. – Sept.



Depicted in this graph, by month, is the 40% increase in counseling sessions that SAVI has provided this year, compared to last year.