

On May 9th, more than 50 community professionals gathered at the Solano County Events Center for a free training seminar sponsored by the Solano Family Justice Center (SFJC), Office of Family Violence Prevention (OFVP) and District Attorney (DA) in collaboration with the National Family Justice Center Alliance (NFJCA).



Deputy District Attorneys, Licensed Clinical Social Workers, Domestic Violence Victim-Advocates, Medical Personnel, Probation Officers, Police and Sheriff Detectives, DA Investigators, Superior Court Bench Officers, Solano Legal Access Center Staff, H&SS Child Welfare Services and Older and Disabled Adult Services workers were among attendees invited to take part in the half-day training focused on “Identifying, Investigating, and Prosecuting Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Strangulation Cases.”



The course was taught by Gael Strack, JD, and Chief Executive Officer of the NFJCA, shown here to the left. Ms. Strack, a dynamic speaker and an expert in the field of strangulation investigation and intimate partner violence, was instrumental in the recent passage of SB430 (D Kehoe), also known as the “Diane Gonzalez Strangulation Prevention Act of 2011.” This Act revised California Penal Code Section 273.5 (c) to state that a “traumatic condition” includes strangulation or suffocation; thereby strengthening prosecutors’ ability to obtain felony convictions in domestic violence and sexual assault cases. For additional information regarding the legislation, go to: http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/postquery?bill_number=sb_430&sess=CUR&house=B&author=kehoe

Later, key County and Community Stakeholders and SFJC Collaborative Partner Agency Leaders gathered to hear an equally informative lunchtime presentation on the status of the National Family Justice Center movement. Introduced by SFJC Coordinator, Christina Stimmann, LCSW, (pictured below), Ms. Strack shared progress made by other FJCs in establishing campuses or opening dedicated building sites. She also reported positive data findings in those jurisdictions, noting law enforcement agencies' reduced domestic violence (DV) calls for assistance and lower recidivism rates for DV offenders, resulting in prosecutorial cost savings in those areas with established Family Justice Centers.



Ms. Strack challenged local leaders to commit to moving forward with the identification and establishment of a separate Solano FJC building site that would allow for continued expansion of co-located DV victim services.



Shown above accepting the challenge are both elected and appointed County Department Heads, SFJC Collaborative Partner Agency Executives, representatives from 4 out of the 5 Solano County Supervisorial Districts, including Solano County Board Chair Linda Seifert and County Administrator Birgitta Corsello, among others.

The OFVP and SFJC staff wishes to express sincere appreciation to all those agency representatives who joined in welcoming Ms. Strack to Solano County and contributed in making the day's events such a success.