

“UNITED VOICES 4 SEX OFFENSE REFORM”

General Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, October 12, 2021, 7:30P EST / Via ZOOM

Attendees: 13

Overview:

- Updates to Old Business
- Introduce items for discussion on New Business
- Group discussion
- Roundtable discussion
- Update Action Items

Notes:

1. 09/28/2021 meeting minutes approved with no changes.
2. Overview from last meeting and brief summary of focus for tonight’s meeting.
 - Old Business:
 - Non-Profit Update - Shawn
 - Web Site Design and Launch- Shawn
 - DOJ SMART Report Letter – Gail
 - Fundraising – Shawn
 - Social Media accounts – Shawn
 - Caution Click Media Blast Letter - Rita
 - New Business:
 - Mariana van Zeller – Topic for Docuseries – Jenny
 - Unheard Voices Taping – Jenny
 - Guest Speaker Anthony Gay discussion – Jenny
 - Photo Liability Release Form – Shawn
 - NARSOL Conference Update – Shawn
 - Open Task Issues (review from meeting minutes) - Group
3. Group Discussion:
 - Non – Profit Update:
 - Our second board meeting was held on Sunday 10/3/21, 8:00P EST.
 - Board members have been appointed who have diverse leadership abilities: Jenny/President, Pammy/Vice President, Kathy/Secretary, Rita/Treasurer, Page/Trustee #1, Betty/Trustee #2, Shawn/Executive Director.
 - Members submitted biographies to be published to the website.
 - Task to create by-laws at next meeting.
 - Next meeting is scheduled for Sunday, 11/7/21 @ 8:00 pm EST.

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- Web Site Design and Update:
 - We still have a few items to add prior to the completion and launch which is now pushed out to 10/26/21.
 - Continue finalizing content to upload to the site.
 - Finalize verbiage for Donate Page to emphasize that other people and groups are partnering with us.
 - A few have contributed items to add to “Resources” page – books, websites, articles (anything for those incarcerated, families, victims).
 - Non-profit description, anyone who can help with this should contact Shawn.
 - The website designer, Eric, is to be our guest at the next meeting to present the finished website.

- DOJ SMART Report Letter:
 - Gail presented the revised letter for review.
 - Suggestions for changes on the layout (grammar, justified margins, larger logo) will be made.
 - Discussion on concerns of not alienating those with more severe offenses as we are using wording from the report. Agreement that getting our name out there and our voices heard is important.
 - Sharon reported on the contact list for recipients of the letter, we have 103 on the list including Judiciary Committee members, DOJ, SMART office. She will email the letter to those attendees who asked to see it.
 - Gail, Kathy, and Sharon will approve final revisions and do the mailing to be completed by the end of October.

- Fundraising Committee:
 - We still need volunteers and a chair for this committee.
 - Page generously suggested that she could offer a counseling/therapy session to group members and donate all or part of the fee.
 - J. Robert will consider a similar idea with a possible raffle for a hypnosis session. He will think about details and parameters for this project.
 - Dawn suggested to open the idea that maybe others in the group with businesses or skills to offer can contribute.
 - Kathy brought up and explained [Amazon Smile](#) – once we have non-profit status, we can affiliate with that. A percentage of each purchase by those who designate us on their Amazon account goes to UV4SOR. We can ask in our Facebook group for donations to this once we are established.
 - Shawn spoke to a person at NARSOL who gave some advice about not limiting our fundraising or lobbying abilities by filing with the smaller filing fee. The \$600.00 filing fee is something to consider and find funding for.

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- Social Media:
 - Melanie agreed to help with Twitter and will get the account information from Shawn.
 - To keep our pages visible and effective, ideally, we should consistently have posts 2 to 3 times per day.
 - Dawn uses, and we can investigate www.later.com for post scheduling.
 - J. Robert suggested www.ifttt.com for cross-posting content automatically and to streamline online strategy.

- Caution Click’s Letter Campaign to Media:
 - Rita sat in with CC’s meeting on 10/11/21. All of the emails that they sent were returned/bounced back. Possibly due to firewalls?
 - They sent the media communication to three other advocacy groups and are asking for input.
 - We can collaborate with them by helping with contacts and can give suggestions on effective content or any changes to their letter. Contact Rita with any helpful information.

- Mariana van Zeller Documentary Series:
 - Mariana van Zeller is an investigative journalist with a series called “Trafficked” on National Geographic. She is starting a second season. (<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/tv/shows/trafficked-with-mariana-van-zeller>)
 - Jenny has reached out to her to see if she is interested in pursuing any stories that would bring light to the issues that concern us.
 - Some ideas of suggested subject matter we discussed are mandatory minimum sentences, disparity in sentencing, the registry with the many faceted impacts on children and families including collateral damage of residence and job restrictions, homelessness, and broken relationships.
 - Let’s think about this and send any ideas to Jenny.

- Unheard Voices:
 - Tosha Smith-Mills is a mother, a paralegal, and author of the book “Momma I Should Have Listened”. She has a son who is serving 40 years in prison. She and another son Christopher are producing a documentary series called “Unheard Voices: A Mother’s Quest for Freedom”. (<https://www.unheardproductions.com/>)
 - Jenny has contacted Tosha. Are we interested in having her son Christopher come to one of our meetings to get information about us and talk about their project? We could have it as an organic or staged conversation. This could be a great introduction to our group.

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- Guest Speaker Anthony Gay:
 - Jenny discussed Anthony Gay as a potential guest. He spent 22 years in solitary confinement in an Illinois prison. He has introduced The [Anthony Gay Isolated Confinement Restriction](#) Act which would limit such extreme confinement for any individual to no more than 10 consecutive days in any 180-day period, and compel the Illinois department of corrections to produce quarterly reports showing the use of the practice. Additionally, it would guarantee a prisoner’s access to exercise, recreation, and therapy while not in their cells.
 - We could try to get him as a special guest at a meeting or set up a special meeting with him.
 - He has a hearing on 11/19 for a probation violation but may be able to schedule for a later date. Jenny will follow up.

- Liability Release Form:
 - Reviewed the reasoning of having photos on the website to show the humanity aspect of our members and the need for a liability release.
 - Final revision of the form is complete.
 - Discussed if we need to ask for proof of POA if the person signing the release is not the person pictured. It was agreed that yes, we do.
 - Melanie volunteered to handle the record keeping of the signed forms. Shawn will forward all information to her.

- NARSOL Conference Update from Shawn and Discussion:
 - The conference was held in Houston on October 8-10th. Shawn attended and came away from it fired up! It was amazing and inspiring. (<https://conference.narsol.org/>)
 - Discussed the theme of Framing Your Message to hit at the humanity level and not just citing statistics (which no one listens to).
 - To advocate successfully, look at what your targeted audience is looking for and find commonality.
 - Change the narrative by humanizing the offender and all who are affected.
 - Discussed the subject of removing “recidivism” from the vocabulary used due to the negative connotation and replace with “repeat offending”.
 - Conference wound up with a powerful presentation from Chicago 400 Alliance with great information on aligning with other groups and personalizing our message, which shows how we need diversity to be successful. (<https://narsol.org/2021/10/stellar-presentation-by-chicago-400-wraps-up-narsols-2021-conference/>)
 - Shawn sat down with NARSOL Executive Director, Brenda, who is very interested in our group!

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- Reviewed open Task issues and updates.

4. Roundtable:

- New Member introductions:
 - No New Members were present this week.
- If time, share “something good!”
 - Gail and Sharon are discussing creating a spreadsheet with information obtained from DOJ Project Safe Childhood news releases to document sentencing disparities between various judicial districts and judges, to include dates, charges, length of sentences and supervised release. This could be a good tool for future projects.

Action items:

Item #	Meeting Date	Description	Owner	Completion Date
1.	8/3/21	Update the contacts list as elections occur.	Dawn, Gail, Melanie, Sharon	On-Going
4.	8/3/21	Volunteer to research Federal (complete) & is ongoing for State Guidelines. Post on Facebook.	Shawn, Sharon	On-Going
7.	6/01/21	Provide Nonprofit status.	Shawn	11/9/2021
9.	8/03/21	Provide contacts to receive letter. Ashley obtained some information from FAMM about the software that they utilize. Now waiting on more contact information from them.	Ashley	3/2022
11.	7/20/21	Add the verbiage under the logo on Facebook page, it has been added on the website.	Shawn	10/26/2021
15.	8/17/21	Web Design Changes: Attach PayPal account to the donate button.	Shawn	11/9/2021
17.	9/28/21	Submit any additional contacts for the SMART Report letter mailing.	Sharon	Complete
18.	10/12/21	Letter being finalized and mailed by 10/31/21.	Gail, Kathy, Sharon	10/31/21
19.	10/12/21	Documentary Series and Guest Speakers follow-up.	Jenny	10/26/21

9:35 - 9:45P Adjourn Meeting. Next Meeting Date is Tuesday, October 26, 2021, 7:30P EST.