

Empower!

GIVING VICTIMS AND THEIR FAMILIES A VOICE



A Publication of the Metropolitan Police Department's Victim Services Branch

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Message from Tyria Fields



Tyria Fields

Spring is here. And it presents an awesome opportunity to remind the public of our sense of purpose at the Metropolitan Police Department. The Victim Services Branch provides advocacy, education and support to victims of crime. The members of the Victim Services Branch work tire-

lessly to display standards of excellence in victim services. Our dedication to enhancing the lives of those impacted by crime resonates in our responsiveness and ability to remove barriers that victims often face in the aftermath of crime. In the spirit of this year's theme for National Crime Victims' Rights Week, Serving Vic-

tims. Building Trust. Restoring Hope. we assert our continual commitment to delivering essential victim services to the citizens and visitors of the District of Columbia. Our team is ready to be a source of trustworthiness and credibility during times of uncertainty. We are here for you.

Upcoming Events and Activities

April

National Stalking Awareness Month

In January 2004, the National Center for Victims of Crime launched National Stalking Awareness Month (NSAM) to increase the public's understanding of the crime of stalking. NSAM emerged from the work of the Stalking Resource Center, a National Center program funded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice, to raise awareness about stalking and help develop and implement multidisciplinary responses to the crime. www.VictimsOfCrime.org

The Asian/Pacific Islander Domestic Violence Resource Project

3rd Annual *Art as a Voice* Event

April 21, 2016 7pm-8pm

La Casa, 3166 Mt. Pleasant St., NW

Through art, survivors, service providers, and supporters will share their stories of how domestic violence and sexual assault impacted their personal lives or communities. To RSVP, contact Marie Ramos at marie@dvrp.org or 202-833-2232.

May

Survivors of Homicide, Inc. 23rd Annual Mother's Day Brunch

May 8, 2016

Each year on this special Holiday, mothers' of homicide victims come

together to support, comfort and share memories of their children whose lives were taken too early. Mrs. Julia Dunkins started this tradition to remind mothers that the death of a loved one is the end of a life, but not the end of a relationship as a mother. To register to attend or to sponsor a surviving mother, please call Ms. Julia Dunkins at: 202-258-2564.

Trans Pride Celebration

May 21 – 22, 2016

Workshops: 10am – 4pm

Reeves Municipal Building/

The DC Center, 2000 14th ST NW

The annual Trans Pride celebration is for members, supporters, family, and friends of the Transgender community. Workshops, presentations, and one-on-one opportunities to network and learn from various vendors, agencies and organizations that provide services and support for the transgender community.

National Police Week Events

28th Annual Candlelight Vigil

May 13, 2016

National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial, 400 E Street, NW

The Candlelight Vigil will be held at 8:00 p.m. at the 400 block of E Street, NW. The event is sponsored by the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund. For additional information please call 202-737-3400.

National Police Survivors Conference and C.O.P.S. Kids/Teens

May 14, 2016

Sponsored by Concerns of Police Survivors (C.O.P.S.) at the Hilton Alexandria Mark Center Hotel. Family and co-worker survivors have opportunities to receive support to understanding grief, prepare for trial, learn new coping skills, and build connections with others. Visit www.nationalcops.org or call 573-346-4911 for more information.

10th Annual National Police Week 5K

May 14, 2016

To register, go to www.eventbrite.com/e/2016-10th-annual-national-police-week-5k-registration-20564836981

June 2016

Cold Case Next-of-Kin Meeting

Contact the Family Liaison Specialists Unit at (202) 645-6363 for information

Camp Forget-me-Not/Camp Erin

June 24-26, 2016

Camp Forget-Me-Not/Camp Erin DC is a free weekend, sleep-away grief camp that gives children an opportunity to enter a safe space — away from their everyday lives — to gently explore the normal process of grief. Contact Wendt Center for Loss and Healing: 202-624-0010 or www.wendtcenter.org.

—Megan Riley

Is it Time for a Season Change?

The four seasons – winter, spring, summer and fall can vary significantly in characteristics and can prompt changes in the world around them. In the spring seeds take root and vegetables begin to grow. In the summer temperature may increase to the hottest time of the year. If it gets too hot, heat waves or droughts may cause trouble for people and plants. In the autumn or fall temperatures cool down again. Plants may grow dormant; animals may prepare themselves for the cold weather. Winter often brings a chill. Some may experience snow or ice while others see cold rain experience snow or ice while other sees only cold rain.

As it is in the natural world, it is in our personal world. The difference is things can trigger our seasons. Perhaps you recently experienced a violent crime and you feel stuck. Perhaps you lost someone to homicide and you don't think you want to move. The fact that you are breathing and thinking means you are moving though seasons. Let me ask you, right now, what type of season(s) are you in? In all seasons there is some type of struggle. No natural season happens that we don't use tools to help us through it. It is the same for our personal seasons. We can find hundreds of self-help books that are tools created for our use. Sometimes we can fix our inner be-

ings alone and sometimes we need help. What tools are you using for you? The good news is we don't have to do it all by ourselves and can call others as needed.

If grief or trauma is piling up at your door allow us to provide you with some resources and individuals trained to help. Life continues on after a tragedy but when we feel like we have been in a season long enough, we must remember that it is alright to get help. Is it time for a season change in your life?

For additional information contact members of the Victim Services Branch at (202) 727-6007.

—La Verne Harley

Metropolitan Police Department's Annual Next-of-Kin Meeting

In observance of National Crime Victims' Rights Week the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) will host its annual "Next-Of-Kin" meeting. The meeting is open to immediate family members of open homicide cases from 2011 to 2015. This event will be held April 11-14, 2016 and family members are able to speak with the assigned detectives and other MPD officials between the hours of 10 AM – 8 PM.

This year, 2016 marks the 10th anniversary of the Next-of-Kin Informational Meetings. The first meeting was held May 17, 2006 to address the open cases from 2001 through 2006.

**NEXT
OF
KIN**

Another meeting was held later that same year to address families whose loved one was killed prior to 2001. As a result of MPD's partnership with community based service providers and the encouragement of many survivors of homicide victims, MPD's Family Liaison Specialist Unit coordinated the meetings.

These meetings serve victims by giving them a voice in the criminal justice process as well as a chance to meet face

to face with detectives. Families are given an update on their particular case and an opportunity to voice any concerns about the investigation. When given an opportunity to meet with detectives, families feel empowered and are willing to participate more in the investigative process. Trust is built when citizens feel that the police department listens and appropriately respond to their concerns and questions. The Next-of-Kin meeting restores hope by helping families navigate through the grief process, so they can begin rebuilding their lives.

For more information or to make an appointment, please contact MPD's Victim Services Branch-Family Liaisons Specialists Unit at (202) 645-6363.

—Marlene Castro



Celebrating Social Work Month: Forging Solutions Out of Challenges

The March 2016 Social Work Month theme – Forging Solutions Out of Challenges – celebrates the work done by countless social workers to improve lives and communities.

Professional social workers tackle some of the toughest challenges facing our society. In every city and every community they develop solutions to make mental health and health care more available, to reduce poverty, to eliminate injustice and discrimination, and to



SOCIAL WORK

**FORGING SOLUTIONS
OUT OF CHALLENGES**

protect vulnerable children and adults from harm.

Social workers contribute at all levels of society, working with individuals, families, schools, universities, non-profit agencies, corporations, hospitals, and government offices to mediate conflict, foster positive relationships and create hope and opportunity for people in need. (Reference: National Association of Social Workers).

Within the Metropolitan Police Department, there are Social workers who are Victim Specialists. All Victim Specialists are dedicated civilian employees who are available to help victims of violent crimes, i.e. sexual assault, domestic violence, stalking, aggravated assault, ADW-Gun/Knife, survivors of homicide,

etc. cope with the trauma of being victimized while empowering them to participate in the criminal proceedings of their case.

MPD Victim Specialists provide crisis intervention, emotional support, safety planning, advocacy, community referrals, resources, police reports, outreach, cell phones, and act as a liaison between the victim and the detective assigned to their case.

For more information on how MPD Victim Specialists can assist you with forging solutions out of challenges, please call **Tyria Fields**, Director of Victim Services Branch at (202) 724-4339 or visit a district/station near you.

—Beyshinah Woods

Drunk Driving Touches Lives of Victims with Emotional Loss, Mounting Bills

Founded in September 1980, Mothers Against Drunk Drivers or (MADD) began its mission to aid the families and victims of crimes performed by individuals driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Victimization by DWI/DUIs often goes unnoticed and is not as frequently publicized as other violent crimes. For 35 years, MADD has strived to bring the vital issues of underage drinking, buzz drinking, and drunk-driving awareness to the forefront. MADD's efforts have continued to support the victims of these violent crimes while increasing public awareness of the problem of drinking and drugged driving (MADD, 2016).

The impact of a drunk-driving crash can devastate a family traumatically and financially.

Medical bills, property damage and funeral costs add up, leaving loved ones with an often overwhelming burden. MADD advocates for states to provide a source of compensation funds for the financial losses and expenses of all victims of violent crime, includ-



ing DWI/DUI victims and survivors of loved ones killed by an impaired driver. MADD Victim Advocates can assist with the application for Crime Victim Compensation—a financial assistance program that may help eligible crime

victims/survivors with certain expenses related to a crime. Although state funding and eligibility vary, benefits may cover compensation for funeral expenses, counseling, medical, rehabilitation and prescription expenses, lost wages, child care, and crime scene cleanup. Did you know? While these are approximate as different brands/types of beverages vary, a standard drink is defined as 12 ounces of beer, 5 ounces of wine, or 1.5 ounces of distilled spirits, which contain the same amount of alcohol (MADD, org, 2016)

If you or a loved one has been affected by drunk driving, MADD is here to help. 24-Hour Victim Help Line (877)MADD.HELP. For more information on MADD victims services you may visit www.madd.org/victim-services.

—Helen Hall

Letters & Kudos

Share your story

Send a letter detailing your experiences — positive or negative — to victim.services@dc.gov or send via US Mail to:

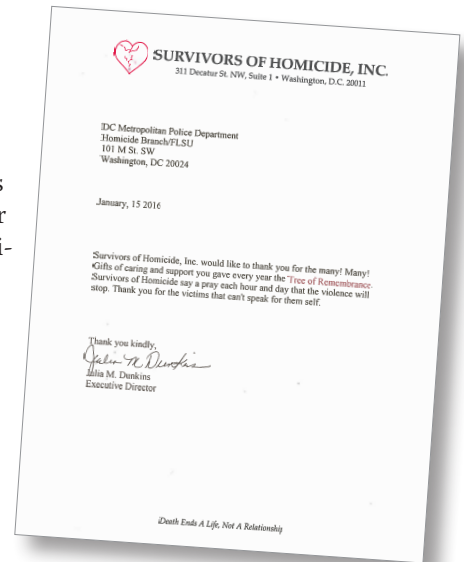
Family Liaison Specialists Unit
101 M Street SW, WDC 20024

Thanks for the Support

Survivors of Homicide, Inc. would like to thank you for the many! Many! Gifts of caring and support you gave. Every year, the Tree of Remembrance Survivors of Homicide say a prayer each hour and day that the violence will stop. Thank you for the vic-

tims that can't speak for themselves.

Thank you kindly,
—Julia M. Dinkins
Executive Director
Survivors of Homicide, Inc.



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