

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

As the summer tends to be times of leisure, the Victim Services Branch continues to provide education, information and support following a victimization. Advocacy is central to the work that we do. Our

role is to ensure victims are heard throughout the criminal justice process. Likewise, we work effortlessly to address your needs and to connect victims to supportive resources. If advocacy and assistance is required, the services of the Victim Ser-

vices should be sought. Take care.

—Tyria

Upcoming Events and Activities

August

National Immunization Awareness Month

www.cdc.gov/vaccines/events/niam.html

Resources
www.cdc.gov/vaccines/partners/index.html

September

National Suicide Prevention Month

<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/promote-national-suicide-prevention-month/>

Resources
www.nami.org/Get-Involved/Raise-Awareness/Awareness-Events/Suicide-Prevention-Awareness-Month

Addiction comes in many forms, and is always a difficult cycle to break. Creating a sense of community and support is an integral part of the healing process, and it is therefore important to raise awareness of the prevalence of addiction, and the resources available for recovery.

National Recovery Month
www.recoverymonth.gov/

Parent and Family Connection: Washington D.C.
<https://recoverymonth.gov/events/parent-family-connection-washington-dc>

October

Domestic Violence Awareness Month

<https://nrcdv.org/dvam/DVAM-history>

Resources
www.ncadv.org/

Events
Woodhull's Sexual Freedom Summit
<https://ncadv.org/Default.aspx?p=157567&evtid=682572:8/2/2018>

Search for an event near you! https://nrcdv.org/dvam/DVAM-Events?field_event_category_tid=All&field_state_tid=33

The loss of an infant or a pregnancy is an extremely painful event for the surviving family, and it can be a time when the family feels isolated and hopeless. In order to combat this sense of isolation, October has been named as an awareness month for those experiencing the loss of an infant or a pregnancy. Several organizations take this time to do community outreach, and to provide support and resources to those in need.

Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month
<http://nationalshare.org/october-awareness/>

Resources
<http://nationalshare.org/support-resources/additional-resources/>

Bullying is a constant issue for many school-age children and adolescents, but it can also have devastating impacts on adults, having links to heightened rates of depression, anxiety, and suicidal behavior. With the addition of technology, bullying can now occur in more ways than ever. Raising awareness of the magnitude of the issue and effective ways to combat it is crucial to protecting the physical and mental health of those affected.

National Bullying Prevention Month
<http://www.pacer.org/bullying/nbpm/>

November

Military Family Appreciation Month
www.military.com/military-family-appreciation-month

December

December 1st- World AIDs Day <https://www.worldaidsday.org/about>, for upcoming events, see <https://www.worldaidsday.org/events>

—Kristen Johnson, VSB Intern

MPD's Annual Unsolved Homicide/Cold Case Next of Kin Meeting

On Saturday, June 23, 2018, The Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) held its annual Cold Case Next-of-Kin Meeting for families of open homicide cases from 2008. The goal of the meetings was to continue to build rapport with survivors, maintain open dialogue, and provide hope to families of unsolved homicide victims. It is believed that survivors who are informed and treated with compassion are more likely to cooperate with the investigation than those who feel that their cases have been forgotten. Additionally, ongoing communication with the detectives can be beneficial in the healing process.

Members of the Victim Services Branch were available to provide support and connect families with services that may not have been available at the time of their loved one's death. Grief counseling referrals, information on Elder Abuse, and Gun Safety and Prevention resources were provided.

In light of June being National



Gun Violence Awareness Month families were provided with Gun Safety and Prevention Tips.

Parents were encouraged to share these four steps in their community:

- » Keep guns away from children — if you keep a gun at home, unload and lock it away. Keep all ammunition separate from the gun.
- » Make sure that your children know the dangers of guns. Teach them not to handle or touch guns- Teach your child if they come across an unsupervised gun, or another child with a gun, they should not touch it and should immediately get help from a parent or trusted adult.

» Talk to your children about guns and violence- Explain to your children we all have strong emotions like anger and fear, but that these feelings can be expressed in ways other than striking others or using weapons. Demonstrate healthy ways to express anger and disagreement. Support your children when they have used positive means of resolving conflict.

» Talk to your children about the differences between violence in entertainment media and violence in real life- Watch TV and movies with your children. Find out what type of music and music videos your children are watching. If it seems violent to you, talk about it explain that unlike TV and movies, guns can kill or cause long-term disabilities.

MPD is committed to keeping the community safe and aiding parents with tools to keep their family safe.

—Marlene Castro

Mothers Supporting Mothers: Death Ends a Life, Not a Relationship

Recently, mothers of homicide victims killed in the District of Columbia and neighboring states came together to celebrate the 25th Annual Mother's Day Brunch. Each year these mothers meet at a local restaurant to support, comfort and share memories of their children whose lives were taken too early. Twenty-five years ago Ms. Julia Dunkins started this tradition to remind mothers that the death of their child may be the end of a life, but it is not the end to their re-

lationship as a mother. More than 25 mothers and other family members attended the event and were showered with gifts and love as they celebrated life together.

If you are interested in being a part of this special fellowship, contact Ms. **Julia Dunkins** of Survivors of Homicide, Inc. at **(202) 258-**



2564 or Ms. **Shanda Smith** of Murdermistaken at **(202) 446-9433**.

—Megan Riley

Gun Violence and Gun Safety Awareness

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), on an average day 96 Americans are killed with guns. On June 2nd National Gun Violence Awareness Day, Americans across the nation wore orange to honor victims of gun violence and to highlight the importance of gun safety. The “Wear Orange” Campaign was launched by friends and family of Hadiya Pendleton who was an innocent bystander that was shot and killed in a Chicago park after taking her final exams. On June 2, 2015 on what would have been Hadiya’s 18th birthday her parents and friends chose to wear orange to honor her and raise awareness against gun violence. The color orange is often associated with hunting garments; it is worn by hunters to protect themselves and others from gunfire. Orange



has been transformed into a symbol of unity and a need for change to stop gun violence.

According to the CDC in the United States:

- » On average there are 13,000 firearm related homicides a year.
- » Children under the age of 19 are shot every day in the course of a year.
- » In an average month 50 women are shot to death by intimate partners.
- » Black men are 13 times more likely than white men to be shot and killed.
- » For every one person killed with guns, two more are injured.

» America’s gun homicide rate is more than 25 times the average of other high-income countries.

Additionally, The Urban Institute reported that in the District of Columbia during the 2011-2012 school year there were approximately 336 incidents of gunfire between the hours of 7am to 7pm. With more than half occurring within 1000 feet of a public school.

On June 2, volunteers and supporters hosted events throughout their community to raise awareness against gun violence as well as promote gun safety.

For more information and events, please visit:

<https://momsdemandaction.org>
www.bradycampaign.org/orange

—Marlene Castro

VSΒ Outreach Efforts to the District’s Senior Population

Elders form the base of the pyramid that has become our society. Unfortunately, the value of our elderly community has not been well received by all. According to the National Center on Elder Abuse, approximately 5 million seniors experience physical abuse, psychological or verbal abuse, sexual abuse, financial exploitation, and/or neglect. People with dementia are at an increased risk, with about 52% enduring some form of mistreatment. With every case of elder abuse that is reported, there are about 24 cases that remain undiscovered. The International Network for the Prevention of Elder

Abuse deemed this concern a public health and human rights issue. As a result, Annual World Elder Abuse Awareness Day was birthed. June 15, 2018, marked the 11th Annual World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. This day is a call to action for families, communities, and organizations to raise awareness about the abuse, exploitation, and neglect to this venerable population. The purpose of this day is to promote a better understanding of abuse and neglect that older persons may experience. We can do so by raising awareness of the culture, social, economic, and demographic processes affecting our seniors.

The Victim Services Branch (VSΒ) is committed to be-

ing responsive to all victims of violent crimes throughout the year. During the month of June, VSΒ visited local senior wellness centers to discuss the signs and symptoms of this horrendous abuse. It was an honor to sit at the feet of individuals that are filled with years of knowledge and wisdom, while making them aware of the resources that are available in the unlikely event of being victimized.

If you encounter elders seeking services contact the DC Victim Hotline via call/text at 1-844-4HELPDC or by chat at www.dcvictim.org. Information can also be found at the DC Office on Aging at <https://dcoa.dc.gov/services>.

—Tierra Laury-White



'Reaching All Victims': Closing the Gap Between Police, Marginalized Communities

Resources

If you want to get involved in future NNO activities in your community, please contact your local police district.

For a list of police districts, please visit www.mpdc.dc.gov/districts

National Night Out (NNO) is an annual event, sponsored by the National Association of Town Watch, that takes place on the first Tuesday in August. The National Night Out campaign supports engagement between communities and law enforcement and involves citizens, law enforcement agencies, civic groups, businesses, neighborhood organizations and local officials from 9,500 communities from all 50 states, US territories, Canadian cities and military bases worldwide. Each year, the Metropolitan Police Department actively participates in

National Night Out by rallying community members throughout the District of Columbia to join with neighbors and police officers in their PSAs to be a part of this annual event.

On Tuesday, August 7, thousands of DC residents will join with their neighbors, police officers and other community leaders to celebrate National Night Out. From community cookouts to open houses – block parties, candlelight vigils and athletic events – DC is gearing up for the 34th annual celebration of “America’s Night Out Against Crime.” In addition to the numerous activities at the kickoff

event, communities across DC – in all seven police districts – scheduled NNO events during the late afternoon and evening hours.

National Night Out is designed to:

- » Heighten crime and drug prevention awareness;
- » Generate support for, and participation in, local anti-crime programs;
- » Strengthen neighborhood spirit and police-community partnerships; and
- » Send a message to criminals letting them know that neighborhoods are organized and fighting back.

—Beyshinah Woods

National Night Out Day
www.NationalDayCalendar.com

First Tuesday
in August



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