

Empower!

GIVING VICTIMS AND THEIR FAMILIES A VOICE



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

Spring 2023 | Volume 14, Issue 4

Message from Tyria Fields



Tyria Fields

The Victim Services Branch members consistently personify advocacy and ensure survivors are supported following a victimization. Whether it be access to information about the criminal justice system or identifying resources to cover unexpected

expenses, we provide assistance in navigating unfamiliar situations. Our work brings a degree of comfort to the uncertain. It creates opportunities to foster relationships. As such, in the spirit of this year's theme for National Crime Victims' Right Week, which is celebrated April 23-29 —

“Survivor Voices: Elevate. Engage. Effect Change” — the Metropolitan Police Department affirms our commitment to enhancing environments where survivors will be heard, believed and supported.

Upcoming Events and Activities

April

Stewards of Children® Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Training

- Thursday, April 13 | 1-3:30 pm
- Wednesday, May 17 | 10 AM-12:30 Pm
- Wednesday, June 14 | 5-7:30 pm
(Spanish language options also available on April 11, May 9, and June 6)

This training teaches adults how to prevent, recognize and react responsibly to child sexual abuse. The program is designed for individuals concerned about the safety of children as well as organizations that serve youth. Training includes discussion about critical issues in sexual abuse prevention and the relevance of these issues in our communities through a video sharing the voices of survivors and experts in the field.

AGENCY:
Safe Shores - The DC Children's Advocacy Center

Location: Virtual (Zoom)
To register, visit safeshores.org/get-involved/stewards-of-children

CONTACT: Kaylan Weems
kweems@safeshores.org

MPD Coffee & Conversation at Starbucks
• Monday, April 24, 10-12 pm
3100 14th Street, NW
CONTACT: jackie.beathea@dc.gov

• Tuesday, April 25, 11-1 pm
2228 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, SE
CONTACT: berrita.willis@dc.gov

• Wednesday, April 26, 10-12 pm
625 H Street, NE
CONTACT: linda.boone@dc.gov

• Wednesday, April 26, 11-2 pm
232 Carroll Street, NW
CONTACT: robert.hamrick@dc.gov

• Wednesday, April 26, 11-2 pm
2800 Alabama Avenue, SE
CONTACT: jason.medina@dc.gov

• Thursday, April 27, 8-10 am
2430 Market Street, NE
CONTACT: arnita.hamilton@dc.gov

• Friday, April 28, 12-2 pm
3050 K Street, NW
CONTACT: kyi.branch@dc.gov

Join us for a free cup of coffee as we recognize National Crime Victims' Rights Week and honor Survivor Voices to Elevate, Engage & Effect Change. Also remember to wear your jeans on 4/26 Denim Day in support of sexual assault survivors!

DEA Drug Take Back DAY
• Sunday, April 22, 10 am-2 pm
Turn in unneeded medication for safe disposal. Too often, unused prescription drugs find their way into the wrong hands. That's dangerous and often tragic. That's why it was great to see thousands of folks from across the country clean out their medicine cabinets and turn in — safely and anonymously — a record amount of prescription drugs.

Agency:
United States Drug Enforcement Administration
LOCATION: Enter your Zip Code at dea.gov/takebackday#collection-locator

For more info, visit www.deaTakeBack.com

OAG in the Community:
Ward 5 Listening Session
• Tuesday, April 25, 6:30-8 Pm
Join AG Brian Schwalb as the Office of Attorney General (OAG) continues a citywide series of listening sessions. Learn about OAG's work and the services we provide, share concerns, and discuss ways to collaborate with the office.

Lamond-Riggs/Lillian J. Huff Neighborhood Library, 5401 South Dakota Ave, NE
Register: <https://oag.dc.gov/community>
CONTACT: Juan Ulloa, juan.ulloa@dc.gov

2023 National Crime Victims' Rights Week Candlelight Vigil
• Wednesday, April 26, 7-8 pm
Since 1981, National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCRVW) has challenged the Nation to confront and remove barriers to achieving justice for all victims of crime. Join OVC for a tribute to victims of crime and the many dedicated professionals and volunteers who advocate on their behalf. Space is limited so register today. For those unable to attend in-person, OVC plans to livestream the Vigil (details forthcoming).

Agency: Office for Victims of Crime
Location: National Mall (Central Panel at 4th Street NW) or Online
Register: <https://web.cvent.com/event/823e78b7-02c0-4123-82db-29f275097a4d/websitePage:7d00fb41-f85c-4412-a0c2-d9f14d7c52c8>
CONTACT: susan.frate@ojp.usdoj.gov

Denim Day 2023
• Wednesday, April 26
Join millions of people across the world that will wear jeans with a purpose, support survivors, and educate themselves and others about all forms of sexual violence. Wear jeans at your place of work, with friends and take selfies to post online.
Agency: Peace Over Violence
Location: Virtual
For more info, visit denimday.org

National Crime Victims Rights Week, April 23–29



National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRW) will be commemorated April 23–29, 2023. During NCVRW, communities across the nation honor victims and recognize the professionals who support them. The 2023 NCVRW theme is Survivor Voices: Elevate. Engage. Effect Change. This year's theme calls upon communities to amplify the voices of

survivors and create environments where survivors have the confidence that they will be heard, believed, and supported.

Victims Services Branch, DC Metropolitan Police Department joins OVC during NCVRW 2023 as we commit to elevating and engaging survivors to lift their voices, inform policy and practice, and thereby effect change. By engaging survivors, we will ensure our responses and services to victims and survivors

are credible, meaningful, and centered on their individual needs.

During this week, we are collaborating with MPD Outreach to hold NCVRW Coffee & Conversation with a Cop at 7 different Starbucks locations. On the Wednesday of that week (4/26) we ask everyone to wear jeans in honor of Denim Day in support of sexual assault survivors. We hope to see you at these events.

—Sharon Daugherty

Denim Day: 'Goodbye, Jean Alibi'

In 1992, in Rome, Italy, an 18-year-old woman was sexually assaulted by her driving instructor. While the perpetrator was initially arrested, convicted, and sentenced to jail, he appealed the sentencing using what was later coined in Italy as the "jean alibi." The jean alibi was created by the suspect's argument that due to the tightness of the victim's jeans, she had to assist him with pulling her pants down, thus implying consent. The Italian High Court ultimately overturned the conviction and released the perpetrator. The next day, women in the Italian Parlia-

ment came to work wearing denim as a display of solidarity for the victim. This act of support created Denim Day and has increasingly inspired others to take a stand.

Over the years, Denim Day has become a global campaign recognized annually on the fourth Wednesday in April as a sign of denouncing victim blaming and showing support for survivors. By wearing jeans on Denim Day, participants dispel a common erroneous viewpoint that a victim's fashion choice implicates them in their own victimization. By abolishing the negative stigma surrounding what

people wear, accountability is transferred from a victim's clothing to an offender's choices. This day provides a way for individuals to show victims and survivors of sexual assault that they are not alone in their fight for justice and healing. Ultimately, by wearing jeans on Denim Day, we as a community can say "Goodbye, jean alibi."

—Ashley McHenry



Latest Now You Know Roundtable Focuses on Strangulation Awareness

Now you know Roundtable – Strangulation Awareness Edition with guest speaker, **Erin Politt**, MHA, BSN, RN, FNE-A, SANE-A, Executive Director, DC Forensic Nurse Examiners covers the topics of:

- » Defining Strangulation and its impact
- » What to do if you are being strangled
- » How to help if you know some that is

Here are some of the facts about strangulation you may not already know:

- » Strangulation is one of the most lethal forms of domestic violence & accurate predictors for the homicide of victims of domestic violence.
- » Domestic violence offenders strangle their victims to let them know they can kill them — any time they wish.
- » Victims of one episode of strangulation are 750 percent more likely of becoming a homicide victim at the hands of the same partner.

It's a heavy subject but one we hope you will learn more about.

See the latest Now You Know at youtu.be/OcxPA-06dGcc.

If you or someone you know has been strangled, please reach out to DC Forensic Nurse Examiners (www.dcfne.org), which provides free medical forensic exams to survivors of sexual assault, intimate partner violence, strangulation and family violence. Services can be accessed via the DC Victim Hotline (**1-844-443-5732**) and 24/7 walk-in services are available through MedStar Washington Hospital Center's Emergency Department.

—Sharon Daugherty

DC Superior Court's Crime Victim Compensation Program

Resources

For more information regarding CVCP contact us at:

Crime Victims Compensation Program

Court Building A
515 5th Street, NW, Room 109
Washington, DC 20001
Monday–Friday: 8:30 am–5 pm

Satellite Office:

Courts' Domestic Violence
2041 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, SE, Room 400
Washington, DC 20020
Monday–Friday: 8:30 am–4 pm
(202) 879-4216

cvcoffice@dcsc.gov
www.dccourts.gov/services/crime-victims-compensation-matters

The Crime Victims Compensation Program (CVCP) provides financial assistance and reimbursement to victims of violent crime and their families with crime-related expenses. Compensable expenses include, but are not limited to, funeral and burial costs, medical and mental health expenses, lost wages, loss of support, crime scene clean up, and temporary emergency shelter and relocation. The CVCP staff processes claims, conducts assessments to determine compensation eligibility, and provides information about other victim service organizations and agencies in the District of Columbia. A maximum of \$25,000 per claim may be paid for necessary crime related services. Certain expenses within the claim may be subject to individual sub-limits.

While things are gradually returning to normal, the Crime Victims Compensation Program continues to be committed to the accessibility of services to claimants remotely and in-person. In addition, the CVCP continues to utilize the five Balance and Restorative Justice Centers around the city as pick-up and drop-off locations for CVCP applications. One CVCP enhancement is the opening of the CVCP satellite office.

To stay aligned with the Court's strategic goal of fair and timely case resolution, the Program has created and revised internal processes to accelerate the processing time and improve services in which external and internal customer receive. The CVCP team is also committed to providing proficient, efficient, and consistent services to victims of crime.

Crime Victims Compensation has implemented an initiative to significantly increase program awareness, by creating a Program Aware-

ness Team (PAT). The mission of PAT is to inform the community about the CVCP, and the services offered. This year PAT has participated in several community outreach events, such as the H Street Festival, Delta Sigma Theta Community Day, No More Crime No More Tears, VIDA Senior Center Community Day and ANC meetings. CVCP has also provided information and training sessions to organizations and agencies, such as the District Alliance for Safe Housing (DASH), Gun Violence Prevention Office, DHS, DC Long Term Care, and the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD). At these various events the CVCP team were able to provide information, answer questions and take applications on the spot, if needed. The goal is to have an outreach or training event at least once a month in-person or virtually.

—Sequoria Brown



'Drawing Connections: Prevention Demands Equity'

April is National Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM). This year the National Sexual Violence Resource Center's (NSVRC) theme, Drawing Connections: Prevention Demands Equity invites us all to have a seat at the table to examine ourselves, communities, and organizations with the purpose of identifying how we can enhance equity and respect through inclusion. Drawing Connections is rooted in the premise that many types of systemic oppression such as racism, sexism, ageism, ableism, classism, and other forms of oppression all play a critical role in sexual violence.

Sexual violence is when someone forces or coerces another person into unwanted

sexual activity without their consent. Sexual violence comes in many forms, from sexual harassment to rape. It can look like unwanted sexual advancements by a co-worker, a friend making sexually charged culturally insensitive remarks based on a someone's physical appearance, or a caretaker inappropriately touching a patient living with Alzheimer's disease. Based on the given examples, we can see how systemic oppression as well as stereotypes and personal belief systems perpetuate the cycle of sexual violence. In order to prevent sexual violence, each of us must demand equity for all; in our communities, organizations, but most importantly we ourselves must first treat others with fairness and im-

partiality. In order to change sexual violence in our society, we must first change our society. Visit the National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC) at nsvrc.org, for additional information on this year's campaign, sexual assault resources, and more.

If you or someone you know is the victim of sexual violence and need support, you can call the National Sexual Assault Hotline, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at **(800) 656-4673**.

-Ashley McHenry



Dr. Tyreese McAllister Writes Children's Book, Starts Foundation

On the surface, **Dr. Tyreese R. McAllister** is a therapist, with 30 years' experience in emergency mental health and has helped thousands of individuals who have experienced mental illness or traumatic events. In March of 2017, Tyreese found herself on the other side of the counseling relationship, when her 18-year-old **Ayana** was killed by gun violence while home on spring break from college. Immediately after the death of her daughter, she forgave the person who killed Ayana, explaining that being angry will not bring Ayana back and would impede the important work she is drawn to as a result of this tragedy. She believes that no mother should have to bury their child and no mother should have to

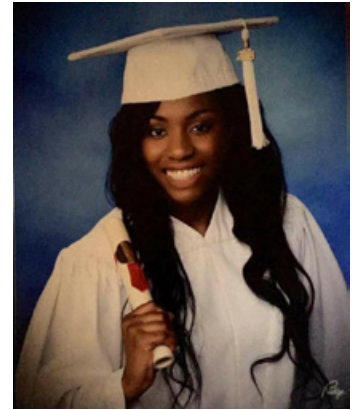
visit their child in prison.

The McAllister's triumphed over their tragic loss and founded The Ayana J. McAllister Legacy Foundation. Their mission is to deliberately engage communities of color disproportionately impacted by gun violence through advocacy and education strategies, to significantly reduce incidents of homicide, suicide, domestic violence, and other acts of violence resulting from irresponsible use of firearms by high-risk individuals.

Despite the tragic and untimely loss of her daughter, she continues to serve the community, now as a survivor. Tyreese is a best-selling author, international speaker, trainer, and transformational therapist. She

wrote a children's book,

to help children comprehend gun violence — *Is My Lollipop in Heaven?* — which in-



cludes a caregiver guide to assist adults help children who have experienced gun violence. She was voted 2021 Mental Health Advocate of the Year by *Glambitious Magazine* and received an honorary doctorate and a Humanitarian Award for her advocacy work in the gun violence arena.

To learn more, visit www.tyreseemcallister.org and www.ayanamcallister.com.

—Sharon Daugherty



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
Washington, DC 20024

Grateful for Tree of Remembrance

Good morning Ms. Carla! Thank you! Please let me know how you, your family and the team are doing.

Also, thank you all for doing such an amazing job for the Tree of Remembrance ceremony. You did an amazing job reading the speech for my brother James! Just an Incredible job! Especially knowing how hard you and your team may have worked through all of the challenges to get this

celebration done for us, which is so important to all of us!

Please forgive my very delayed response, we have been hit pretty hard on this end. Losing five people in our family circle since January, but GOD is so magnificent in HIS mercy he is seeing us through!

Blessings!

—B. C.

Above and Beyond

Good afternoon, I've had the pleasure of dealing with Ms Torie she's highly profes-

sional, knowledgeable, precise and handles the case with care. I'm happy to report her going above and beyond to help my family. Especially with the dynamics of the pandemic with uncertainty and aftermath it's comforting to know people care.

—JM



Metropolitan Police Department
Victim Services Branch/Family Liaison Specialists Unit
101 M Street, SW
Washington, DC 20024