

Empower!

GIVING VICTIMS AND THEIR FAMILIES A VOICE



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Next of Kin Meeting Commemorates National Crime Victims' Rights Week

Resources

For more information on the upcoming NOK Meeting or supportive services and resources, please contact the Victim Services Branch at (202) 645-6363 or victim.services@dc.gov.

In observance of National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRW), the Victim Services Branch (VSB) hosted MPD's Next-of-Kin Meeting during the week of April 22–26, 2024. The meetings were held at the Homicide Branch located at 101 M Street, SW. Families with open 2023 homicide cases were invited to schedule an appointment to meet with the detective investigating their loved one's case. Next-of-Kin meetings allow MPD to provide services, resources, and hope for families impacted by homicides in the District.



This year's NCVRW theme focuses on creating safe environments for victims to share their stories and seek support. It also challenges all of us to ask probing questions; "How can we help crime victims? Are we a victim-centered and trauma-informed agency? Are we knowledgeable about supportive services in the community?" In accordance with NCVRW's theme, one of VSB roles is to ensure that families of homicide victims know that MPD offers a safe space where families can receive updates throughout the investigative process and receive supportive services.

We know that visiting the homicide branch can be a trigger for families; therefore, families have an option to schedule a phone call with the detective as well as connect with a Family Liaison Specialist for support. As an agency, our goal is to be victim-centered, trauma-informed, and knowledgeable of resources to promote healing throughout the community. It is our hope that Next-of-Kin Meetings continue to bridge the gap with law enforcement by empowering survivors of homicide victims throughout the investigation and provide access to resources that foster hope and healing beyond the status of the investigation.

—Megan Riley

The Impact of Elderly Victimization

Resources

If you suspect elderly victimization, please call for help:

- Police/Fire Emergency — **911**
- Elder Abuse Hotline: (202) **541-3950**
- National Center of Elder Abuse: (855) **500-3537**
- MPD Victim Services Branch: (202) **727-6007**

Being a victim of a crime is a terrible experience for anyone to cope with, but imagine the impact it would have on someone who is one of the most vulnerable people in our society. Many victims experience a wide range of emotions, and reactions to their victimization. Some may feel isolated, shocked, shame and somehow believe that the victimization was their fault, and sometimes find it extremely challenging to accept. Now visualize the impact such victimization would have on the "elderly" population; those feelings can be exacerbated.

Often, when the elderly are victims of physical, psycholog-

ical, sexual, or financial abuse, they tend to suffer more than other age groups. For example, elderly victims of physical victimization are likely to require hospitalization when compared to alternate age groups and in many situations never fully recover from the injury. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), financial fraud of older adults is a growing problem; particularly in terms of number of incidents reported and total dollars loss. The impact of financial victimization is the most challenging for the elderly because many are living on fixed incomes, which negatively affects their daily lives.

All these levels of victimization make it extremely hard for the elderly population. They often feel family members will view them as incompetent and dependent on them post-victimization. In addition, they fear receiving a negative response from the police, fear being blamed for being a victim, fear not being taken seriously, and fear being segregated if they report a crime. Taking the assault seriously and acting swiftly is a high priority, but elderly victims need our assistance even more. Community members, friends, family and professionals are instrumental in helping them to report a crime and increases likelihood prosecution.

—Dawn Christie

VSB Supports Another Successful National Crime Victims' Rights Week

National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRW) 2024 MPD Victim Services Branch with MPD's Community Outreach teams in collaboration with the Washington, DC Police Foundation and Starbucks held NCVRW Coffee & Conversation events at nine different Starbucks locations. On the Wednesday of that week (April 24) we wore jeans in honor of Denim Day in support of sexual assault survivors. The annual NOK

(Next of Kin) Meeting was also held throughout the week (see story on front page). Over 37 families participated in meetings with the assigned Detectives to obtain an update on their loved one's case.

During National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRW), April 21–27, 2024, we honored crime victims and survivors, recognize the professionals and volunteers who provide critical services to victims of crime, and raise awareness about crime victims' rights and services. The 2024 theme "How would you help?"



Options, services, and hope for crime survivors" asks all of us — friends, family members, neighbors, colleagues, community leaders, victim service providers, criminal justice practitioners, and health professionals — how we can help crime victims.

—Sharon Daugherty

Chief Smith Shines Her Light on Victim Services Branch

Chief Pamela Smith spent focused and unhurried time with our Victim Services Branch members on April 11th at the Homicide Branch. While cake was on the menu, so was a deep dive into getting to know each of us and what the needs of the team are. Our new VSB Director, Diamond



Vann, (2 weeks at that time) gave solid input as did the rest of VSB.

Chief Smith posed thoughtful questions to the team and provided enlightening insight into her vision for MPD. Our team felt support, in various

ways, from encouraging us to attend trainings, listening to some of our passion projects, to knowing where to make specific requests & connections. We are excited to commit all our team to attend next year's MPD Women's Symposium.

Thank you, Chief Smith, for the encouragement and uplifting support.

—Victim Services Branch

Beat the Streets Brings the Noise and the Funk to Communities Across the District

Resources

Learn more Beat the Streets at mpdc.dc.gov/page/communityoutreach.

This community outreach event serves as a traveling Community Festival and is a partnership between the Metropolitan Police Department, local social service agencies and community

vendors. Community members of all ages enjoy musical performances from local bands and artists, as well as a street festival-like environment with local vendors and literature distributed by local social service agen-

cies. This is an opportunity for members of the community to experience the lighter side of the police department while enjoying dancing, free food and fun. Look for announcements on our website and other social media.

Let's Play Ball — Baller Brigade Provides the Equipment, Players to Increase Youth Sport

Resources

You can find MPD's Baller Brigade videos on TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook.

As better sports weather approaches, it means dusting off the gloves, balls and sports equipment to gear up for our MPD

Baller Brigade program. With a trunk full of sports equipment to distribute, officers provide these children and teenagers an opportunity to exercise, practice

their favorite sport, and build more positive relationships with law enforcement.