

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

Helping survivors of crime is taken very seriously at the Metropolitan Police Department. With intent and purpose, the Victim Services Branch contacts victims of crime with the purpose of helping them recover after a victimization. Through action victim specialists share

information on how to access resources and services. With compassion staff empowers survivors to participate in the criminal justice system. Using knowledge staff brings awareness on the dynamics of working with detectives and other members of the Metropolitan Police Department as their case is being inves-

tigated. The Victim Services Branch consistently and helpfully provides opportunities for survivors to engage with the Metropolitan Police Department. Let us know how we can be of service.

Upcoming Events and Activities

Ongoing

Survivors of Homicide Support Group Meeting

Last Thursday of every Month
7-8 pm

This support group is for secondary victims who have lost a love one to homicide. In the support group secondary victims are given an opportunity to express themselves on how they are coping with their loss and are provided with some strategies and tactic to assist them through the process.

For more information please call Survivors of Homicide at (202) 258-2564.

Howard University Campus
530 College Street, NW
Washington, DC 20059

October 2013

National Domestic Violence Awareness Month

October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM)
For more information, visit www.ncadv.org

Metropolitan Police Department's Next Of Kin (NOK) Meeting

TBD, Noon-8PM

The Next of Kin meeting presents an opportunity for family members of unsolved homicides to meet with the detective assigned to their case to learn about its status. The meetings are coordinated by the Family Liaison Specialists Unit.

Where: First District Station
101 M St, SW

Contact: Family Liaison Specialists Unit
(202) 645-6363

Million Youth Peace March & Torch of Hope, Inc

"Reclaiming Our Youth to a New Birth of Freedom"
October 4, 2013
10 am-3 pm

This event is a march against teen violence and childhood obesity where youths from around the world will march to the Capitol. Registration deadline is Saturday, September 28, 2013.

Where: Capitol Hill (Line-up begins at 10am)

Contact: Million Youth Peace March
(202) 455-8871 or Torch of Hope, Inc
(202) 256-9947

December 2013

Tree of Remembrance

TBD

The Tree of Remembrance is an annual event hosted by the Metropolitan Police Department's Victim Services Branch. Our goal is to support families of homicide during the holiday season.

Where: First District Station
101 M St, SW

Contact: Victim Services Branch
(202) 724-4339

—Submitted by Dawn Christie

30th National Night Out is August 6



National Night Out began in 1984 in an effort to promote involvement in crime prevention activities, strengthen police community partnerships and neighborhood trust, and to send a message that neighborhoods are organized and fighting back. The campaign involves law enforcements and

citizens from all 50 states. Law enforcement officials and civilian leaders work together in various events and activities such as block parties, cookouts, youth events, safety demonstrations, candlelight vigils, and athletic events. This year marked the 30th annual celebration of America’s Night Out Against Crime. All seven police Dis-

trict hosted events during the afternoon and late evening hours. For more information on this year’s event, go to www.mpdcc.gov.

Submitted by Marlene Castro

A Brief History of Crime Victim Compensation, Assistance for Victims

Resources

For more information, contact the DC Office of Victim Services at <http://ovs.dc.gov/service/financial-assistance-victims-crimes>.

Compensation for victims of crime is one of the earliest forms of victim assistance. Although each state has set up eligibility requirements victims must meet to qualify for compensation benefits. While eligibility requirements vary from state to state, virtually all programs require victims to: report the crime promptly to law enforcement, cooperate with police and prosecutors in the investigation and prosecution of the case; submit a timely application to the compensation program, generally within one year from the date of the crime. Children are generally exempted from timely filing requirements. Additionally, victims/survivors are required to provide other essential information as needed by the program. The list below includes landmarks in crime victim compensation and outlines the evolution of how states and laws have guided crime victims compensation services for victims, survivors and their families over the years.

Significant Landmarks in Crime Victim Compensation

- » In 1965, California established the nation’s first crime victim compensation program.
- » In 1975, the International Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards was established.
- » In 1977, the National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards was created.
- » In 1986, state compensation programs received their first funding from VOCA.
- » In 1988, the Office for Victims of Crime began providing funding to the National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards to support a range of technical assistance and national training efforts. VOCA was also amended to require states to provide benefits to victims of domestic violence and drunk driving.

- » In 1992, the first joint conference of state compensation and victim assistance administrators was funded by the Office for Victims of Crime.
- » In 1995, with support from the Office for Victims of Crime, a national advisory body composed of state compensation programs and representatives of the victim assistance community established standards for state programs.
- » In 1996, the passage of the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act required compensation programs to make crimes involving terrorism compensable, regardless of where the terrorism occurs around the world.

Submitted by 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

Dear Ms. Fields,
I am the former wife of [a] homicide victim. I’d like to take this opportunity to express my deepest appreciation for the DC Crime Victims Compensation Program (CVCP) and the work you do in the Family Liaison Specialists Unit (FLSU). As I reflect on where I am now in my life, seven years after losing my husband to a senseless act of violence, I feel a great sense of gratitude toward the District of Columbia. There were many people who contributed to my journey toward recovering from this tragedy and the individuals in CVCP and FLSU played a very important role in my path to a new life. I’d like to share with you my story with hopes that it may, in some way, serve as inspiration for others and also recognize you and your staff for the important work you do every day.

On July 1, 2006 my life as I knew it was forever changed when I learned that my late husband was shot and killed during a robbery in a [nearby] convenience store we owned. I was overcome with shock and great sadness, never imagining I would fall victim to such a horrific circumstance. Over the next year, I spent my days dealing with the continuous media coverage, business affairs, single parenthood, and

ultimately just feeling sorry for myself. In May of 2007 I was faced with having major surgery and weeks of recovery. This forced me to slow down and reflect on my situation. During my recovery I realized that I never took time to grieve the loss of my husband and began a downward spiral of depression. It was at this point when I received a newsletter from FLSU that prompted me to take action toward “living” again. I was reminded of the compensation that is afforded to family member survivors of homicide victims through CVCP. I contacted a counselor in my church who worked with CVCP and began receiving the grief counseling I desperately needed. Over the next 7 months, my counselor helped me to see beyond my current circumstances which profoundly changed my life forever.

Without the FLSU newsletter and financial assistance of CVCP paying for these sessions, I would not have received the help I never knew I needed. During one of my sessions, my therapist told me that one day my story would change the lives of others who have experienced similar circumstances. I now see the reality of the seed she planted in me six years ago. It was the beginning of my

journey toward uncovering my God-given gift that was buried in my self-consuming grief. I’m sure in your line of work, you rarely hear of positive stories surrounding such horrendous conditions that violent crime bares, so that is why I was compelled to share mine with you. Although my loved one’s case has grown cold and no one has ever been arrested for this crime, I have been able to find peace in my life knowing that [my husband] would want me to live a life of greatness for our children, be grateful for my blessings and help to enrich the lives of others.

If I can ever be of assistance to the program, please feel free to reach out to me. I would be honored to personally share my story with other survivors of homicide victims in the District. I’m sure there are many individuals who did not utilize the valuable resources availed to them through CVCP and FLSU immediately following the loss of their loved one.

In closing, I’d like to thank you again for the work FLSU does which I’m sure at times can seem like a thankless job. Know that your work makes a difference because my story is an example of the impact FLSU and CVCP has had on me and ultimately the lives of my children.

Sincerely, A.W.

How May We Assist You?

Victim Services Branch

Tyria Fields Manager 724-4339 tyria.fields@dc.gov

The Family Liaison Specialists Unit (FLSU) provides support services to homicide victims and survivors throughout the investigative process.

Family Liaison Specialists Unit

Carla Okonkwo Supervisor 645-9629 carla.okonkwo@dc.gov
Marlene Castro Family Liaison Specialist 645-9631 marlene.castro@dc.gov
Megan Riley Family Liaison Specialist 645-5537 megan.riley@dc.gov

The Victim Specialists Unit (VSU) provides support, information, and referrals to victims and survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Victim Specialists Unit

Helen Hall Victim Specialist 727-6007 helen.hall@dc.gov
Kayce Simmons Victim Specialist 724-2215 kayce.simmons@dc.gov
Esther U. Thomas Victim Specialist 727-6006 estheru.thomas@dc.gov
Tramaine Newsome Victim Specialist 724-2215 tramaine.newsome@dc.gov
Beyshinah Woods Victim Specialist 727-6007 beyshinah.woods@dc.gov

The Major Case Victims Unit (MCVU) provides supportive services to secondary victims of unsolved homicides. Additionally, this unit offers victim services and assistance to victims of violent assaults in the District of Columbia.

Major Case Victims Unit

Dawn M. Christie Victim Specialist 727-7139 dawnm.christie@dc.gov
Laverne Harley Victim Specialist 727-5391 laverne.harley@dc.gov

Please Note: All numbers are area code (202).

The Forgotten Mourners

Resources

For more information on sibling grief and support resources, please contact the following agencies:

Parents of Murdered Children

Phone: (513) 721-5683

www.pomc.com/chapters.html

html

Compassionate Friends

Phone: (877) 969-0010

www.compassionatefriends.org

org

The sudden and unexpected death of a loved one to homicide affects people in different ways. Some family members are often overlooked or neglected in the grieving process. Adult siblings of the deceased often end up in this category and are frequently referred to as “the forgotten mourners.” In many situations the parents, spouse, and children are the focus of comfort and support given to the family. As such, adult siblings are frequently cast into the role of caregiver to their parents, the spouse and/or children of their deceased brother or sister. In taking on these new responsibilities, adult siblings often suppress their own grief to protect the family members from further stress. The tendency of surviving siblings to suppress their personal grief can complicate the grief process and minimize the impor-

tance of the unique bond that comes with sibling relationships.

The following quote is referred to by many sibling survivors as a poignant description of the unique nature of sibling grief, “When you lose a parent, you lose your past; when you lose a spouse, you lose your present; when you lose a child, you lose your future, but when you lose a sibling, you lose your past, present, and future.” When you lose a sibling, you lose the childhood memories of the past, the present memories in adulthood, and the anticipated milestones in the future such as, births, weddings, holidays, and other significant occasions.

Though adult sibling survivors experience many common grief reactions, there are some that are unique to the sibling relationship; guilt, anger and rejection. The guilt can be related to the relation-

ship shared with their sibling across their lifetime. They may experience anger regarding their new roles and responsibilities. They may feel rejection from their parents who may be distracted or consumed in their own grief. These are just a few examples of grief reactions unique to sibling survivors and are important to consider when offering support and resources to this group of survivors.

Though we cannot change the tragic loss of a loved one, we can empower sibling survivors by being inclusive with the information and support we provide throughout the grief process. Recognizing and validating each family member during their grief will not only promote healing, but will foster a culture that acknowledges the unique impact that grief has on all people as individuals.

Submitted by Megan Riley



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