

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

The Victim Services Branch provides advocacy, education and supportive services to victims of crime in the District of Columbia. We are made up of three units: the Family Liaison Specialists Unit, the Major Case Victims Unit and the Victim Specialists Unit. Our primary mission is to en-

sure victims have a voice in the criminal justice process by removing barriers for victims. Victim Specialists encourage survivors to take advantage of the multitude of system and community based services that exist for the sole purpose of helping to recover with the results of a victimization. Ultimately, we personify the no-

tion that you are not alone and that you have a partner in the Metropolitan Police Department by serving as a source of strength, hope, and empowerment.

Upcoming Events and Activities

September 11th Memorial Events

Pentagon Memorial 10 Year Commemoration

The events of September 11th, 2001 are forever etched into the hearts and souls of the family members and loved ones of those who died, our nation, and the world. The Pentagon plans to have an invite-only ceremony for families of 911 victims, and will re-open to the general public following the ceremony. More details will be provided to these families in the months ahead. Further details can be found on www.pentagonmemorial.org/news.

A Concert of Remembrance and Hope for the 10th Anniversary of 9/11

National Presbyterian Church
In recognition of the sacrifices and endurance of our community during and after the attacks of September 11th, 2011, there will be a special musical performance presented in Washington, DC on Sunday September 11th, 2011 to commemorate the milestone anniversary with a program to uplift and inspire. Families and survivors, memorial organizers, first responders from local police and fire departments, as well as military vet-

erans and their families will be in attendance. Further info can be found at www.choralis.org.

October 2011

National Domestic Violence Awareness Month

October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM) and across the country, advocates are joining survivors and families, health care providers, business leaders, policy makers, faith-based groups, college students and others at activities designed to educate and bring awareness to domestic violence and sexual assault. Additional information can be found at www.futurwithoutviolence.org (formerly National Violence Prevention Fund), or on the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence website, at www.ncadv.org/

Victim Services Branch will host a Tree of Remembrance Activity. The Tree of Remembrance holiday memorial is dedicated to honoring the lives of loved ones lost to homicides, and that took place in the District of Columbia. This event is hosted by MPD Criminal Investigation Division, Victims Service Branch, Family Liaison Unit (FLU) and Major Case Victim Unit (MCVU).

MPD believes that allowing families and friends to participate in The Tree of Remembrance will provide a source of empowerment and encouragement. Families and friends will be able to memorialize and honor their loved ones by placing a decorative ornament on the Tree of Remembrance. The Tree of Remembrance activity and agenda information will be forthcoming in advance of the event. Further information can be provided by contacting the Victim Services Branch Program Manager, **Tyria Fields** at 202-724-4339, or by email at Tyria.Fields@dc.gov.

—Submitted by Helen Hall

December 2011

Annual Tree of Remembrance

The Metropolitan Police Department

National Night Out is Tuesday, August 2

Learn more about this year's National Night Out — which was held on Tuesday, August 2 — in the Nation's Capital by visiting www.mpdcc.dc.gov/nno.

What is National Night Out? It's America's Night Out Against Crime! The 28th Annual National Night Out (NNO), held on Tuesday, August 2, is a unique crime/drug prevention event sponsored by the National Association of Town Watch (NATW). National Night Out campaign involves citizens, law enforcement agencies, civic groups, businesses, neighborhood organizations and lo-



cal officials from over 15,000 communities from all 50 states, U.S. territories, Canadian cities and military bases worldwide. Last year, over 37 million people participated in National Night Out 2010.

- 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.

—Helen Hall

Support for Survivors of Homicide – or – Don't Go It Alone!

For more information, please contact:

National Center for Victims of Crime
1-800-FYI-CALL

National Organization for Victim Assistance
1-800-879-6682

Losing a loved one to homicide is a tragedy nobody can prepare for. The unexpected and sudden loss of a loved one to homicide leaves the surviving loved ones to face a tumultuous mix of emotions and needs to be met. It is important for survivors to know that support is available and they do not have to go through this process alone. A number of government and community organizations are dedicated to meeting the immediate and long term needs of homicide survivors. Through support, advocacy, and assistance, these service providers help survivors to cope emotionally, recover financially, seek justice, and promote healing. Organiza-

tions play important roles in ensuring survivors have access to: crisis support, victim compensation, victims rights advocacy, funeral/burial assistance, law enforcement liaison services, criminal justice advocacy, court accompaniment, phone support, professional & peer counseling, support groups, information on grief and coping skills, community events, and ongoing access to information and referrals for individualized needs. Many of the services available to homicide survivors today were made possible by the efforts of other survivors associated with various community organizations that have dedicated their lives to advocating for services for homicide survivors. These ad-

vocates have not only served as a catalyst for change, but they continue to encourage other survivors to become involved in support groups, grief counseling, and activities that enhance their ability find support, hope, and healing. Though we cannot change the tragic loss of a loved one, we can empower survivors by providing them the information and supportive services necessary to promote healing in their lives and try to prevent further victimization. For information on specific resources and support available to survivors of homicide, please contact the Victim Services Branch at (202) 724-4339 or (202) 645-6363.

—Megan Riley

Resources for Domestic Violence Victims

To learn more about resources and services available to help prevent and aid those who have been the victims of domestic violence, please contact the following:

Hotline Numbers:
House of Ruth (24 hr shelter)
202-667-7001

My Sister's Place
(24 hr shelter)
202-529-5991

DASH
202-742-1728

Domestic Violence Intake Center
202-879-0152 or 202-561-3000

Helplessness, fear, and frustration are just a few of the sentiments victims experience after a domestic dispute. Once they have reported the crime to the police, victims are left wondering how they will get help in their time of distress. The District of Columbia domestic violence service providers have worked diligently to assure victims that their needs will be met when and if they are subjected to violence. The police are the often the first responders to domestic disputes and are the catalyst to the many other resources available to victims. The On Call Advocacy Program (OCAP), MPD's Victim Specialist Unit, DC Superior

assistance in unusual circumstances. OCAP helps close the gap for victims who face abuse after hours. Domestic violence victims are now able to get help at any time of the day. The police department is also on the forefront of victim services. The Victim Specialists Unit is a part of the Victim Services Branch. The unit is comprised of specialists that assist victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. After obtaining police reports, a specialist contacts the victim and informs them of their rights, offers supportive listening, crisis-intervention, and provides information and referrals to appropriate agencies. The victim specialist may offer information on the status of the

ed at both DC Superior Court at 500 Indiana Avenue, NW, Washington, DC and United Medical Hospital at 1328 Southern Avenue, SE, Washington, DC; the intake centers provide victims with a "one stop shop" of information and resources. Victims of domestic violence can file for protection orders, speak with advocates, have police reports taken, obtain legal representation, and apply for the Crime Victim's Compensation Program. Lastly, is the Crime Victim's Compensation Program (CVC). The CVC is singlehandedly the most notable resource for domestic violence victims. Victims of violent crime may suffer financial hardship that cause as much pain and stress as their physical injuries. The Crime Victims Compensation Program is a fund paid for by fines of perpetrators. CVC was created to economically help victims of violent crime. While the program's purpose is to assist victims of all violent crime, CVC has a community outreach component and a commitment to helping victims of domestic violence. They offer assistance through payment of emergency relocation, moving expenses, counseling, and transportation. CVC claims examiners also make referrals to shelters and social services to help get victims back on their feet. Empowering victims through knowledge is integral to the prevention and reduction of victimization. If you would like more information on the aforementioned resources please contact Tyria Fields at 202.724.4339 for the Victim Services Branch and Laura Reed 202.879.4216 for Crime Victim's Compensation.



Court's Domestic Violence Intake Centers, and the Crime Victims Compensation Program are just a few resources in place to help victims repair their lives. Created by Survivors and Advocates for Empowerment (S.A.F.E.), the On Call Advocacy Project (OCAP) provides advocates for domestic violence victims from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. and 24 hours a day over the weekends. These advocates can offer access to emergency shelter, safety planning, and assistance with obtaining emergency protection orders. OCAP is not only a resource for victims but also a tool for law enforcement. Advocates can provide officers with information on the validity and existence of protection orders as well as provided technical

case or encourage the victim to keep in touch with the detective. Encouraging victims to participate in the criminal process helps to achieve a sense of justice even if the perpetrator is never charged. The most important goal for the victim specialist is to ensure the victim's safety. That safety can be achieved through relocation or obtaining a civil and/or criminal protection order. Victim specialists can forward the referral for emergency housing as well as provide court accompaniment during court proceedings. The victim specialist works with the victim to strengthen measures put in place to keep them safe. One of the most important resources for victims of domestic violence is the Domestic Violence Intake Centers. Locat-

Next of Kin Meetings Provide Twice-Yearly Update for Survivors, Families

NEXT OF KIN

Next of Kin (NOK) meetings are opportunities for family members to learn about the status of unsolved homicide cases. During these special meetings, family members have direct communication with the detective who is assigned to his/her case. Also, victim rights are discussed along with information on grief, lost, trauma and memorial ideas. Moreover, family members receive printed in-

formation about Crime Victims Compensation Program and MPD Evidence Control Branch Systems. Contact information is distributed for diverse mental and social services agencies. The NOK meetings are hosted by the Family Liaison Specialist Unit (FLSU) and the Major Case Victims Unit (MCVU) in the Victim Services Branch. The FLSU coordinates NOK meetings with the Homicide Branch twice a year

for current homicides survivors. The MCVU coordinates NOK meetings annually with the Major Case Unit for homicides cases that took place three years ago and prior. Family members are encouraged to participate in NOK meetings. The contact number for the Family Liaison Unit is (202) 645-6363. The contact number for MCVU is (202) 724-4339.

—La Verne Harley

FAQs: Crime Victims Compensation Program

For more information, contact:

Crime Victims Compensation Program
Court Building A
515 5th Street, NW
Room 109
Washington, DC 20001
Phone: (202) 879-4216
www.dccourts.gov

- Q: How long will it take to receive compensation?**
The average time is 60-150 days. Claim processing time varies depending upon the complexity of the claim and whether documentation of the expenses is promptly submitted. Claims for funeral expenses and moving expenses are expedited.
- Q: What documents do I need to apply for Compensation?**
- » Police Report *or* Court Orders and Petitions from Domestic Violence Unit/ Report from Sexual Assault Examination/Neglect Petition
 - » Medical Bills
 - » Mental Health Counseling Bills
 - » Verification of Employment
 - » Other information may be requested to support the claim

- Q: Does the survivor/victim's family receive a check to cover for expenses?**
No. The Crime Victims Compensation Program does not issue a check for a lump sum payment to a family. The Compensation Program is designed to send reimbursement or direct payment to providers only where there is no insurance or another resource available to pay the costs for documented services that were made necessary as a result of the crime.
- Q: Will Crime Victims compensate victims for damage to personal property such as a car or apartment window?**
No. The Crime Victims Compensation Program is not authorized to compensate victims for damaged or stolen personal property. The Crime Victims Compensation Program also does not com-

- pensate victims for pain and suffering.
- Q: How do I apply for Crime Victims?**
- » Victim Specialists from the Metropolitan Police Department Victim Services Branch may assist survivors to access and complete the application.
 - » Applications for compensation are available at the Crime Victims Compensation Program. You may receive assistance from the Crime Victims Compensation Program staff to fill out your application. (You may visit the website at www.dccourts.gov for more information and to download an application).
- Marlene Castro

Resources for Sexual Assault Survivors

Helping survivors of sexual violence find the help, hope, and healing they need after encountering sexual assault/rape is essential. The goal of the Specialists' is to provide support and information and to promote physical and emotional healing. In this regard, our commitment is to focus on empowering survivors who have survived violence and live on.

- Hotlines**
- » DC Rape Crisis Center
» 202-333-7273
 - » Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network (RAINN) 1-800-656-4673
 - » Shelter Hotline
1-800-535-7252 or 202-399-7093
 - » Suicide Prevention Hotline
1-888-793-4357
 - » Deaf Abused Women's Network (DAWN)
1-866-290-DAWN (3296) (TTY)
 - » National AIDS (& STD) Information Clearing House

- 1-800-344-7432
- » National Domestic Violence Hotline
1-800-799-SAFE (7233)
 - » Stalking Resource Center
1-800-FYI-CALL
- Counseling Services**
- » DC Rape Crisis Center Intake
202-232-0789
 - » Women Empowered Against Violence (WEAVE)
202-452-9550
 - » Women's Center (Washington, D.C.)
202-293-4580
 - » Multicultural Services Division French Spanish & English (DC)
202-673-2058
 - » Sexual Assault Male Survivor Support Groups
202-728-1166
 - » Whitman-Walker Clinic (GLBT) 202-745-7000
 - » Community Connections
202-546-1512

- Legal Services**
- » Bread for the City
202-332-0440

- » WEAVE, Inc.
202.452.9550
 - » D.C. Employment Justice Center
(202) 828-9675
www.dcejc.org
 - » District of Columbia Bar Legal Information Help Line
202-626-3499
 - » Ayuda, Inc.
202-387-4848
 - » Neighborhood Legal Services Program
202-682-2700
 - » Legal Aid
202-628-1161
- Employment**
- » Jubilee Jobs, Inc.
 - » Samaritan Ministry of DC NW Office: 202-722-2280; SE DC Office: 202-889-7702
 - » Byte Back, Inc., nonprofit organization provides computer literacy and employment readiness
(202) 529-3395

—Esther U. Thomas

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 Supervisor645-9629 carla.okonkwo@dc.gov
Marlene Castro Family Liaison Specialist645-9631 marlene.castro@dc.gov
Megan Riley Family Liaison Specialist645-5537 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

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).

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:

Victim Services Branch

Family Liaison Specialists Unit
101 M Street SW
Washington, DC 20024

On behalf of Survivors of Homicide, Inc., I would like to thank you very much for the annual Tree of Memory, Christmas Memorial of Victims of Homicide. Survivors of Homicide, Inc. will be eternally grateful.

It will be services like your's that will continue to help Survivors of Homicide, map out the course of this senseless violence.

Again, thank you for the gracious tribute.

—J.M.D.

Thank you for sending the tree ornament remembering our first grandson, J.B. We appreciate you and wish you peace, happiness and prosperity always.

With love,

—T.B.

[The following was included in a greeting card]

With special thanks to all of you.

Although this note says "Thank You" In just this simple way, There's special meaning in these words to all of you today, for the thoughts behind this message are especially warm and true, and words cannot express the special thanks this brings to you.

Love always,

—D.J.



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