

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

Once victim service providers have completed their plans to commemorate NCVRW, it is helpful to send a general press release to local print and broadcast media that highlights key activities they will sponsor. The sample press release, which includes a national perspective and a quotation from the Director of the Office for Victims of Crime, can be easily personalized to state and local jurisdictions. The sample NCVRW letterhead included in the camera-ready artwork of the Resource Guide can be utilized for the press release. Usually, local libraries have a reference book listing print and broadcast media nationwide that can help create a current media mailing list.

SAMPLE PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

One of the best ways to promote victims' rights and services is through the broadcasting of public service announcements (PSAs). The

three sample PSAs can be utilized for either radio or television stations.

Each PSA should be personalized to include contact information for local victim services, along with any relevant data that accurately reflect crime and victimization in the area in which the PSAs are broadcast.

Victim advocates should contact local radio and television stations at least six weeks prior to NCVRW and ask to speak to the public service director. S/he can provide guidelines about whether the station accepts PSAs and the preferred format. While some stations simply accept PSA scripts that are read by on-air "personalities," others ask that the scripts be read by a representative from the organization that submits them. Be sure to understand and follow any guidelines that radio and television stations provide.

SAMPLE OPINION/EDITORIAL COLUMN

The opinion/editorial page(s) are the most frequently read section of

most newspapers. The sample opinion/editorial column should be personalized and expanded to reflect information pertinent to the community in which it will be published, such as current crime statistics, personal victims' vignettes, and information about local victim services.

The column can also be submitted to local radio and/or television stations as an actuality, which is a 60-second statement of opinion that is usually read on air by the author. Victim service providers should consider submitting the opinion/editorial column or radio/television actuality from a local NCVRW Planning Committee or coalition.

Remember to use the sample NCVRW letterhead for printing the opinion/editorial column or broadcast actuality!

Sample Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
[Date]

CONTACT: [Name/Title/Agency]
[A/C-Telephone #]

“Victims’ Rights: Reach for the Stars”

America Commemorates the 21st Anniversary of National Crime Victims’ Rights Week

[City/State] — During the week of April 22 to 28, 2001, crime victims, service providers, criminal and juvenile justice and allied professionals, and community volunteers will join together across America to commemorate the 21st anniversary of National Crime Victims’ Rights Week. This year’s theme, “Victims’ Rights: Reach for the Stars,” emphasizes the continued hope and aspirations for our nation to treat crime victims with dignity and compassion, and to provide them with services and support in the often devastating aftermath of criminal victimization.

The year 2001 also marks the 25th anniversary of the victim impact statement, which offers our criminal and juvenile justice systems important insights into the emotional, physical, and financial effects of crime on its victims. First implemented in Fresno County, California in 1976, the victim impact statement has become a vital and valued component of justice processes, providing the “voice of the victim” to promote greater understanding of victims’ needs and victim trauma.

For nearly three decades, the victims’ rights discipline has strived to place crime victims’ concerns and issues on the forefront of America’s public policy agenda. Over 30,000 laws have been passed at the federal, state, and local levels that promote victims’ rights and services, including constitutional amendments in 32 states [*including yours, if applicable*]. And 10,000 organizations exist today in our justice systems and communities that provide help and hope to victims of crime.

According to [*spokesperson*], the quantity and quality of victim services that exist today are a direct result of countless individuals who have dared to dream of a society where

— more —

true justice is possible, and consistent compassion for victims is a reality in our homes, neighborhoods, communities, and nation.

“A mere three decades ago, victims were ignored by the justice system and, for the most part, forgotten by society,” [spokesperson] noted. “Today, victims have a powerful voice not only in the criminal and juvenile justice system, but in our communities—voices that contribute to crime prevention, offender accountability, improved services and support for people hurt by crime, and safer communities as a whole.”

Here in [city/county/state], numerous activities have been planned to recognize victims of crime and those who serve them during National Crime Victims' Rights Week. Included are: [cite examples of special events].

Kathryn Turman, Director of the Office for Victims of Crime within the U.S. Department of Justice, encourages people across America to join the Justice Department in saluting the significant achievements of America's crime victims, service providers, and justice professionals.

“Because of the work of so many dedicated individuals who have dared to dream of a nation that respects crime victims, we now have laws on the books and services throughout the country to support victims' rights and needs,” Turman said. “National Crime Victims' Rights Week gives us the opportunity to thank crime victims and those who serve them, and to continue making the dream of comprehensive victims' rights and services a reality in every community.”

Members of our community are encouraged to join together during 2001 National Crime Victims' Rights Week and honor those who bring honor to victims of crime. For additional information about National Crime Victims' Rights Week, please contact [name], [title], or [agency/organization] at [area code/telephone number], or visit [name of agency's] Web site at [Web site address].

END

Type your press release *double-spaced* on the *sample letterhead* included in this *Resource Guide*. If your press release is more than one page, type “– more –” in the bottom right corner of the front page, and *paper clip* the second page to the first page. Add the title and date of the press release, plus “Page Two”, in the top left corner of the second page.

Sample Public Service Announcements

:60 Seconds: April 22 to 28 is National Crime Victims' Rights Week—a time for our nation to reflect upon the hurt and devastation that violence causes to individuals and communities; a time to recommit our support and services to people who have been hurt by crime; and a time to honor crime victims and those who serve them. This year, crime will touch nearly 29 million people in America, and the domino effect can be shocking. Crime touches individuals, neighborhoods, schools, businesses, and communities as a whole; and crime victims endure physical, emotional, and financial losses that can significantly alter their lives.

Here in [*your community*] and across [*your state*], *help* and *hope* are available. There are many laws that protect victims, provide them with opportunities to actively participate in our criminal and juvenile justice systems, and hold offenders accountable for the harm they have caused. If you have been hurt by crime, we can help; there are rights and services available that can help you regain control over your life. If you are concerned about violence and its impact on [*your community*], now is a good time to get involved. Join us during National Crime Victims' Rights Week, and throughout the year, in providing support and services to victims of crime. Join us in making our community a safer place for us all. Together, we can “reach for the stars” of safety and justice. For information about victim assistance or volunteer opportunities, please call [*agency*] at [*area code/telephone number*], or visit our Web site at [*Web site address*].

:30 Seconds: Male and female, young and old, rural and urban, and every culture and economic status imaginable. These are the faces of victimization in America. These are our family members, neighbors, friends, and coworkers who may be hurt by crime and in need of assistance.

This is National Crime Victims' Rights Week—April 22 to 28. If you or someone you know is a victim of crime, help and hope are available in [*your community*]. There are services to help you understand your rights and feel safe and supported as you deal with the effects of victimization. And if you want to make a positive difference in making [*your community*] safer and helping those who have been hurt by crime, now is a good time to get involved! Remember, you can *get help* or *help out*. For information about services for crime victims or volunteer opportunities, please call [*agency*] at [*area code/telephone number*], or visit our Web site at [*Web site address*].

:15 Seconds: If you are a victim of crime, you have rights and services available to help you. It's National Crime Victims' Rights Week. This week and throughout the year, you can call us to *get help* or *give help*. Pick up the phone—you'll be glad you did. Call us at [*area code/telephone number*] for more information about crime victim services in [*your community*].

Sample Opinion/Editorial Column

“Reach for the Stars of Safety and Justice”

For nearly thirty years, countless volunteers and professionals have dedicated their lives to helping victims of crime and making our communities safer for us all. It has not been an easy journey, because its “pilots” *and* “passengers” are confronted on a daily basis with the human devastation and destruction that violence wreaks on our society. The road to victim justice has led its travelers toward creative, collaborative approaches that recognize the domino effect of crime on individuals, families, and communities, and promote cooperation to ensure that victims no longer fall through cracks in systems that must be designed to protect them.

This dynamic history is reflected in the words of Lieutenant General Omar Bradley, a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff under President Harry Truman: “We need to learn to set our course by the stars, not by the lights of every passing ship.” For crime victims and those who serve them, the “stars” that have provided the guiding light for nearly three decades comprise the basic concept of “victim justice.” Shouldn’t people whose lives have been devastated by crime have a voice in seeking justice? Shouldn’t our society work diligently to ensure that victims are treated with respect and provided with rights that keep them *informed* and *involved* in justice processes? And shouldn’t our communities be concerned with holding offenders accountable and providing them with opportunities to “right the wrongs” they have caused by their criminal and delinquent actions?

The answer to each of these questions is a resounding “yes!”. The course set by the stars of *safety and justice for all* is one that recognizes the pain and suffering of crime victims and validates their value as family members and friends who are hurt by crime; as important witnesses who can help hold offenders accountable for their actions; and as community members who are deserving of support and services.

April 22 to 28 is National Crime Victims’ Rights Week, a time to reflect upon the significant accomplishments of America’s victims’ rights discipline, and to pay tribute to the millions of Americans whose lives have been irrevocably marred by crime. Today in our nation, over 10,000 community- and justice system-based programs provide services and support to victims of crime. More than 30,000 laws at the federal, state, and community level help to ensure that victims can participate in justice processes and that individuals and communities are safer.

The year 2001 also marks the 25 year anniversary of the “victim impact statement”—a powerful tool that allows victims to define the harm they endured as a result of crime and delinquency and make sure that the justice system and offenders know about the physical, emotional, and financial losses they have suffered. The voices of victims tell us of the control and degradation that confront victims of family violence and sexual assault. They offer insights into the overwhelming fear that victims of child abuse face, often at the hands of someone they know and trust. Victims’ voices shed powerful light on the often-hidden crime of elder abuse and neglect that tarnishes the golden years of far too many elderly people in America. And the voices of victims whose loved ones have been murdered ensure that someone is speaking up for the rights of those who can no longer speak themselves.

By reaching for the stars of safety and justice, crime victims and those who serve them perform a public service of immense proportions. They take care of individuals and families who are hurting; they work with communities to prevent crime and promote protective measures that contribute to public safety; and they work closely with justice professionals and agencies to ensure that crime victims remain *informed* and *involved* throughout our criminal and juvenile justice systems.

During National Crime Victims’ Rights Week and throughout the year, every person in [*community*] can join in our crusade for victims’ rights, victim services, and victim justice. Our individual and community safety depends on such involvement, and our journey toward “justice for all” cannot be completed without the involvement and commitment of everyone. You can join our many initiatives that “reach for the stars of safety and justice” and, in doing so, can make a positive difference in the lives of countless victims who *need* and *deserve* your support.

Provide a two-to-three sentence description of the author’s title, agency, and relevant role at the end of this opinion/editorial column.