



**National  
Victim Center**

# **National Victims' Rights Week**

## *Strategies for Action*

122130

307 West 7th Street  
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Fort Worth, Texas 76102  
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# NATIONAL VICTIMS' RIGHTS WEEK

## "STRATEGIES FOR ACTION"

A Publication of the



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An advocacy and resource center founded in honor of Sunny von Bulow

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February 1, 1990

Dear Friends:

National Victims' Rights Week is a time-honored tradition among victim service providers, criminal justice professionals, and the countless volunteers who serve victims of violent crime.

Each year in April, our nation is given the opportunity to learn about the many victims' rights and services which exist in America. This *Strategies for Action* book is filled with ideas, sample documents, and detailed guidelines to help you promote National Victims' Rights Week in your community.

Since 1985, the National Victim Center has worked to ease the trauma millions of victims face each year, and to make our nation's criminal justice system more responsive to their rights and needs. This publication is just one example of the many resources available from our Center to strengthen our nation's victims' rights movement.

I'm confident that *Strategies for Action* will be a valuable resource for your organization, not only to help you plan for National Victims' Rights Week, but to assist your public education and community outreach efforts in years to come.

Please let us know if we can provide you with additional information and assistance.

Best wishes from the Board of Directors and staff of the National Victim Center!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'E. Gene Patterson'.

E. Gene Patterson  
Executive Director

EGP/11

# NATIONAL VICTIMS' RIGHTS WEEK

## "Strategies For Action"

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section A	<u>PAGE</u>
<b>National Victims' Rights Week Public Awareness and Education Activities</b>	
Suggestions for organizing a public awareness campaign (includes information and referral, media, public awareness, education and fundraising ideas) .....	A- 1
Inspirational and motivational thoughts .....	A-10
Sample sermon (for use by ministers and rabbis).....	A-12
<i>The Victim Experience</i> (for use in speeches and other presentations).....	A-15
Sample letter to victims' organizations to create a National Victims' Rights Week calendar .....	A-20
Sample letter to print news mediums requesting support for National Victims' Rights Week .....	A-21
Sample letter to broadcast news mediums requesting support for National Victims' Rights Week .....	A-22
Sample letter requesting a message on electronic billboards.....	A-23
Radio or television actuality .....	A-24
Sample public service announcements .....	A-26
Sample public service announcement form .....	A-28
Sample cover letter for National Victims' Rights Week opinion/ editorial column .....	A-29
Sample opinion/editorial column .....	A-30
Sample letter to civic and community organizations requesting speaking engagements during National Victims' Rights Week.....	A-32
Sample letter requesting proclamations for National Victims' Rights Week .....	A-33
Sample proclamations .....	A-34
<i>National Crime Prevention Council's Crime and Crime Prevention Statistics</i> .....	A-36

## Section B

PAGE

### March Against Fear

Introduction .....	B- 1
"March Against Fear" Checklist: A Description of Tasks .....	B- 1
"Marchers a Thousand Strong Unite to Denounce Violence" article .....	B- 9
Sample letter to potential co-sponsoring organizations .....	B-10
Sample letter to dignitaries and elected officials.....	B-11
Sample letter to potential speakers.....	B-12
Sample letter to victims and victims' families .....	B-13
Sample thank you letter.....	B-14
Sample public service announcements .....	B-15
Sample press release .....	B-16

## Section C

### School Safety: Involving Students and Their Communities

Introduction .....	C- 1
101 School Safety Ideas .....	C- 2

## Section D

### Strategies for Sponsoring an Awards Program

Introduction .....	D- 1
Awards Ceremony Checklist: A Description of Tasks .....	D- 2
Sample letter to potential co-sponsoring organizations of the National Victims' Rights Week awards ceremony .....	D- 7
Sample response form to determine co-sponsorship of the awards ceremony .....	D- 8
Sample nomination form .....	D- 9
Sample award notification letter for award recipients .....	D-10
Sample letter to award recipients' supervisors or agency/organization leaders .....	D-11
Sample press release .....	D-12

**Section E**

PAGE

**Strategies for Planning and Implementing a  
"Crime Victims and the Media" Seminar**

Introduction .....	E- 1
Crime Victims and the Media Seminar Checklist: A Description of Tasks .....	E- 2
Resources concerning crime victims and the media .....	E- 9
Sample seminar agenda .....	E-10
Sample letter to potential co-sponsors .....	E-11

**Section F**

**Strategies for "Victims' Rights: A 'Capitol' Idea"**

Introduction .....	F- 1
Victims' Rights: A 'Capitol' Idea Checklist: A Description of Tasks .....	F- 2
Sample letter to potential co-sponsoring organizations .....	F- 9
Sample response form for co-sponsors .....	F-10
Sample letter to potential legislative co-sponsors .....	F-11
Sample press release .....	F-12
Sample prayers .....	F-13

**Section G**

**Strategies for Working with Libraries  
to Promote Victims' Rights**

Introduction .....	G- 1
Suggestions for working with your libraries .....	G- 1
<i>The National Library Resource Project on Crime Victimization</i> .....	G- 2

**Section H**

**Strategies for a Resource Arena**

Introduction .....	H- 1
Victims' Rights Resource Arena Checklist: A Description of Tasks .....	H- 2
Sample letter to potential co-sponsoring organizations .....	H- 7
Sample potential co-sponsoring organizations' response form .....	H- 8
Sample letter to civic and community organizations asking them to publicize the resource arena .....	H- 9
Sample public service announcements .....	H-10
Sample press release .....	H-11

**Strategies for a Candlelight Vigil and  
Victims' Rights Balloon Lift**

Candlelight Vigil/Balloon Lift Checklist: A Description of Tasks ..... I- 1  
Candlelight vigil/balloon lift countdown calendar ..... I- 9  
Sample letter to potential co-sponsoring organizations for candlelight  
vigil ..... I-11  
Sample letter to potential speakers for candlelight vigil ..... I-12  
Sample letter inviting dignitaries to candlelight vigil ..... I-13  
Sample letter to victims and survivors inviting them to attend the  
candlelight vigil ..... I-14  
Response form for victims' testimony (for candlelight vigil and  
balloon lift) ..... I-15  
Sample thank-you letter for candlelight vigil ..... I-16  
Sample candlelight vigil public service announcements ..... I-17  
Sample press release for candlelight vigil ..... I-18  
Sample editor's advisory for candlelight vigil ..... I-19  
Sample media response form (for vigil and balloon lift) ..... I-20  
Sample guidelines for media kits (for vigil and balloon lift) ..... I-21  
Sample sign-in sheet (for vigil and balloon lift) ..... I-22  
Sample letter to potential co-sponsoring organizations for balloon  
lift ..... I-23  
Sample letter to potential speakers for balloon lift ..... I-24  
Sample letter inviting dignitaries to balloon lift ..... I-25  
Sample letter to victims and survivors inviting them to attend the  
balloon lift ..... I-26  
Sample thank-you letter for balloon lift ..... I-27  
Sample public service announcements for balloon lift ..... I-28  
Sample press release for balloon lift ..... I-29  
Sample editor's advisory for balloon lift ..... I-30

# SUGGESTIONS FOR ORGANIZING A PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN FOR VICTIMS' RIGHTS WEEK

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**INFORMATION AND REFERRAL**  
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1. If your community lacks an information and referral directory of victim services and relevant social services, develop one in conjunction with National Victims' Rights Week. Make a list of applicable programs and services, including but not limited to: victim services; law enforcement and criminal justice programs which aid victims; social services; child protection programs; services for the elderly and differently-abled; emergency services; hospitals; mental health and counseling programs; services for the homeless and displaced; legal assistance; funeral homes; and crime victim compensation.

Mail a brief questionnaire to each program, requesting the following information: name of agency; address; contact person; services provided; service fees (if applicable); and region served.

Once you obtain all the information, compile it in a handbook (with programs listed either alphabetically or categorized according to the type of victims served). Ask a local printer to donate printing services, or ask a civic organization to fund this worthwhile project. Distribute the information and referral handbook through the contributing organizations and agencies.

2. A condensed version of the aforementioned project is a handy pocket card which contains the names of victim and related service organizations and their telephone numbers. Print this abbreviated information and referral listing on card stock, and make them available to law enforcement agencies for distribution to crime victims and survivors at the impact stage. You can also distribute these excellent resources through hospitals and victim service agencies.
3. Contact your state victim compensation program (in the 45 applicable states) and request a large supply of their brochures and compensation applications. Make them available to crime victims through victim service and criminal justice programs, and send public service announcements to radio stations publicizing victim compensation in your community.
4. Develop a statistical overview which contains the most up-to-date statistics and data relevant to crime and victimization. For local statistics, contact your police department. State statistics can be obtained from your state *Department of Public Safety* and/or *Office of the Attorney General*. National data is included in the enclosed *National Crime Prevention Council Crime and Crime Prevention Statistics*. Additional national statistics--particularly those related to specific areas of victimization--are available from the *Center* and the *National Criminal Justice Reference Service*. A top-notch statistical overview is a useful document not only for your staff, but especially for the news media.

5. If your organization is not already a member of the *National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS)*, join today! It's free, it's fabulous, and it's a continual source of valuable information about criminal justice and victims' rights. Some of the 22 *NCJRS Interest Profile* categories include: *Courts; Crime Prevention/Deterrence; Criminology; Corrections; Law Enforcement; Reference and Statistics; and Victim Services*. As a *NCJRS* member, you will receive updates, research briefs, and statistics on a regular basis throughout the year.

For information about how to register, contact *NCJRS* (toll-free) at (800) 851-3420 (in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, call (301) 251-5500), or write: *National Institute of Justice/NCJRS, U.S. Department of Justice, P.O. Box 6000, Rockville, MD 20850*.

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**MEDIA**  
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1. Send a letter to key print and broadcast mediums in your community asking for their support for your National Victims' Rights Week public service campaign (**sample enclosed**). Arrange a meeting, and solicit their advice concerning how to plan an effective week-long strategy for your community awareness and public education activities. **Encourage their involvement!**
2. At a recent seminar, Oklahoma victim advocates suggested that victim service providers work with schools to encourage children to write letters-to-the-editor about violent crime and victimization. You can provide teachers with information about victims' rights issues or talk to the students in a special class or school assembly. Then, ask them to express their feelings about violent crime and victimization in the letters-to-the-editor section of your local newspaper. Collect their responses and deliver them to your editor, encouraging him or her to print as many as possible during National Victims' Rights Week.
3. Mail a series of print and electronic public service announcements (**samples enclosed**) to radio and television stations, newspapers and magazines in your region. Include a cover letter (**sample enclosed**) featuring suggestions about how they can join your public awareness campaign (see number 4).

Since the *Center's* sample PSA's encourage listeners and viewers to "call for more information," **be prepared** for these inquiries. Prepare a list of volunteer duties and offer interested parties a "menu" of volunteer tasks. Use the enclosed **public service announcement form** for television and radio PSA's, as it provides **all** the details stations need.

Double-space your PSA's on this form and follow-up your letter with telephone calls to the stations, volunteering additional information and support, as needed. Mail your PSA's **no later than** six weeks prior to National Victims' Rights Week.

4. Ask your local print and electronic news media to broadcast special programming and publish articles during National Victims' Rights Week. Some suggestions include:
  - A series to provide an overview of the victim experience, involving various perspectives from victims of sexual assault, elder abuse, child abuse (using adult survivors or parents), hate or racial violence, domestic violence, drunk driving, family members of homicide victims, etc. Remember, avoid programs or articles which may be exploitative and encourage the media to be sensitive to the victims they wish to interview. An advocate should be present at all stages of production and interviews.
  - An overview of the criminal justice system, highlighting the roles of law enforcement, the district attorney's office, victim advocates, judges, the prison system, the parole board and other key players.
  - An overview of victims' rights legislation--past, present and future--in your state.
  - An investigative article/program about how victims are treated in your local judicial system. If your state has adopted a Crime Victims' Bill of Rights, are those rights observed? How well does your Crime Victims' Compensation Fund work? Are victims involved in plea bargaining agreements? Does your county provide professional victim advocates to guide victims through the judicial process?...
  - An article highlighting the victim advocacy programs and victim service agencies in your community.
  - A program or article on the need for "volunteers for victims." (Remember, April is also *National Volunteer Recognition Month!*) Provide details about various volunteer tasks, including but not limited to: court monitoring, one-on-one advocacy, assisting with support groups, developing new public awareness programs, writing, fundraising, clerical work, etc.
  - A focus on "sensitive" victims--such as the elderly, gays and lesbians, differently-abled or children--and their specific needs.
  - Update your media mailing list! A complete list of newspaper, radio and television mediums in your community--including contact persons, addresses and telephone numbers--is available from the *National Victim Center*.
5. Submit opinion/editorial columns (**sample enclosed**) to all your local newspapers, including weekly publications, "shoppers," and "throwaways." Personalize the *Center's* sample column to reflect victims' concerns and issues in

your community. Each column should be different if you decide to submit more than one. Consider "co-authoring" the column with other victims' organizations in your community, as a united effort will lend credibility to your column.

Attach brief biographical sketches of the column's authors (including names, organizations they represent, affiliation to victims' rights issues, and any other pertinent information).

Also, encourage your newspaper editors to author their own editorials commemorating National Victims' Rights Week and the outstanding services provided by the victim advocacy organizations in your community (sample cover letter enclosed).

6. Encourage your broadcast media to provide "live" coverage of a public awareness event (which must be scheduled during newscasts). Peg Winters of the *Office of States' Attorney* in Fargo, North Dakota, reported that the local television station captured the visual impact of their Balloon Lift on a "live feed" for television viewers.
7. Coordinate with victim advocacy organizations in your community to produce a "calendar of events" for National Victims' Rights Week. A sample letter is enclosed which asks victim service providers for information required for such a calendar.

Provide this calendar--which includes information about special events and activities and how to contact organizers--to print and broadcast media in your city (especially editors and news directors).

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**COMMUNITY AWARENESS**  
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1. In 1986, the *Fairfax County Police Department Victim/Witness Assistance Program* sponsored a volunteer appreciation night during National Victims' Rights Week. This is a nice way to publicly recognize people who have contributed time and resources to support your programs. A sample award certificate is enclosed.
2. Consider recognizing not only your staff volunteers, but also community leaders who have supported your efforts through fundraising, policy changes, and public advocacy for victims' rights.
3. Mail a letter to all civic, social and religious organizations in your community offering to speak at their meetings during National Victims' Rights Week (sample enclosed). Both your *United Way* agency and the *Yellow Pages* are good resources to identify these organizations.

4. Organize a Speakers' Bureau to fulfill requests for presentations. Invite good judges, victims' rights attorneys, law enforcement officials and other victim advocates to help educate these organizations during National Victims' Rights Week.

The enclosed *National Crime Prevention Council's Crime and Crime Prevention Statistics*, *The Victim Experience*, and *Inspirational and Motivational Thoughts* offer excellent resources for developing speeches.

5. The *Fairfax County Police Department Victim/Witness Assistance Program* also sponsored an evening open house. This is an excellent way to familiarize the citizens of your community with your program and goals.

Invite community leaders, *Chambers of Commerce* staff, social and service organizations, elected officials, and educators to your open house. Prepare a brief presentation which highlights the work of your organization. Arrange to receive an official National Victims' Rights Week proclamation from your mayor, city council, or Board of Supervisors. Invite the media to attend.

6. Reproduce the enclosed series of public service posters and distribute them to schools, small businesses, hospitals, public offices and community bulletin boards. Make sure you add your contact information--including your organization's name and telephone number--before you reproduce the posters.
7. Offer to write an article about victims' rights issues for any local business or non-profit organizations' newsletters or house organs (don't overlook your local *Chambers of Commerce!*). Also, ask them to publish one of the public service posters.
8. Develop a list of your region's "electronic billboards" (featured at many banks and businesses). Contact them and ask them to include a brief message on the billboard during National Victims' Rights Week (sample enclosed). Don't forget to follow-up with "thank-you" notes!
9. Eileen Ostrander of the *St. Clair County Prosecuting Attorney's Office* in Michigan sent us an audiocassette of a song which was written, recorded, and sung by a victim of crime. If any victims you serve have composed poetry, songs, or other tributes to their experience, use these works in one of your community awareness activities.
10. Ask your local elected officials, state legislators and Governor to author proclamations recognizing National Victims' Rights Week in their jurisdiction (two sample proclamations, along with a cover letter, are enclosed). If possible, arrange for an official ceremony early in the week to receive the proclamation and invite the media to attend. Or ask your elected official(s) to present the proclamation at any public awareness event you sponsor.

11. In 1987, the *Salvation Army* of Pascagoula, Mississippi arranged for all churches to chime their church bells at 11:15 a.m. each day to pay tribute to victims of violent crime.
12. Ask your local billboard companies to donate space for a billboard, using the camera-ready posters included in this kit for the artwork and message.
13. Obtain permission to place information about your organization and other victims' services in hospital emergency rooms and city, county and state offices. Post the enclosed public service posters during National Victims' Rights Week at these locations.
14. The *Crime Victims' Center* of Reading, Pennsylvania sponsored a tree planting ceremony during 1987 National Victims' Rights Week. This is a poignant "living memorial" which will commemorate victims of violence in years to come.
15. A similar idea entails asking your city or county parks department to donate an existing flower bed or garden for you to dedicate to victims. Ask a local monument company or engraving service to donate a plaque to be featured at the site. Sponsor a dedication ceremony, and invite your elected officials and the media to attend.
16. Frame your favorite public service poster and officially present it to your mayor, Board of Supervisors or local legislator(s). Invite the media to attend the presentation.
17. Contact your local *Council of Churches*. Ask its members to focus their sermons the Sunday beginning National Victims' Rights Week on violent crime, victims and the need to pray for and help those traumatized by violence. A **sample sermon** is included in *Section A*.
18. Ask your local churches to feature a brief message about National Victims' Rights Week and the work of your organization in their Sunday bulletin during National Victims' Rights Week.
19. Work with grocery and department store chains to get paper grocery bags imprinted with information about your organization's services, along with other victim advocacy services in your community.

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**PUBLIC EDUCATION**  
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1. Contact your local banks and public utilities offices (including gas, electric, sanitation and telephone companies), department stores, and brokerage houses. Ask them to include a small flyer about National Victims' Rights Week and the work of your organization in their April monthly mailing. If your state has a Crime Victims' Bill of Rights or provides financial compensation to victims, include this information in your message.

The companies you contact may ask for camera-ready artwork for this public service message. Ask them to provide specifications about quantity, size and type. Then, see if a local printer will donate camera-ready artwork and/or printing services.

2. The *Kalamazoo County Office of the Prosecuting Attorney* in Michigan prepared a bulletin board with victims' rights information in their waiting area. This is an excellent public education tool not only during National Victims' Rights Week, but throughout the year.
3. Ask your local legislator(s) to include an article about National Victims' Rights Week and victims' issues in their district(s) in their newsletters. Arrange for a photo session, and include a picture of representatives from victims' organizations with the legislator(s).

In Ypsilanti, Michigan, victims and advocates joined together with the *Washtenaw County Sheriff's Department* and others to sponsor a one-day victims' rights conference. Guest speakers included legislators, a judge, law enforcement officials, a prosecuting attorney, a state official, a researcher, and of course, victims and advocates.

This is an excellent project to take on with the cooperation of all victims' rights groups in your region.

5. Contact businesses and department stores--especially those with a high volume of customers--and ask them to place your organization's literature at every cash register.
6. Arrange a speaking engagement before your local *Parent-Teacher Association*. Focus on safety in schools, family violence, preventing gang violence and how to protect children from abuse or abduction.
7. The *Crime Victims' Center* of Reading, Pennsylvania sponsored a special program for children entitled, "Feel Good About Yourself," which featured Mr. McFeely, the postman from *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood*. This was an excellent method to reach children with a strong message of self-esteem.

8. Ask your local school boards if you can deliver a presentation to elementary and high school students regarding victims' experiences and issues. You can offer either a classroom presentation or a general school assembly presentation (the latter reaches a wide audience with less effort).
9. Sponsor a poster and essay contest (posters for elementary school students and essays for older students). Use the themes included in the various *Strategies for Action* materials.

Ask local businesses to donate prizes for the contest. Also, find a high visibility site to display the winning posters and essays (such as the library or shopping mall). You can make this a special media event.

10. Victim advocates joined with Texas' *Travis County Sheriff's Department* and the *Austin Police Department* to sponsor a ceremony entitled "Remembering the Victims and Survivors of Crime." This special event included honor guard teams, a flag ceremony, and a moment of silence to pay tribute to crime victims.

If you have colleges or universities in your area, organize a one-to-two hour symposium addressing victims' issues. This can be coordinated through a variety of departments, including but not limited to criminal justice or criminology, sociology, nursing and medicine, psychology or social work. Date rape, crime prevention and other relevant issues are appropriate topics for discussion.

12. Work with professors in the departments mentioned in item 11 to develop a one-hour curriculum about victims' rights issues as they relate to their specific discipline. Offer to help teach this important course during National Victims' Rights Week and in future semesters.
13. Our friends in Alaska's victims' rights movement sponsored a "Victim's Fly-In" during which crime victims, advocates, and their supporters converged on the state capitol to raise awareness about crime victims' rights and needs. The "Fly-In" participants all wore "forget-me-not" flowers on their lapels--a very special way to remind people never to forget the devastation caused by crime.
14. Offer college journalism students a brief overview of the *The Victim Experience* (sample enclosed) and educate them about the importance of being sensitive to the trauma and suffering of crime victims, especially during the critical impact stage.
15. Sponsor a contest in your elementary and high school system in which students define "justice." Most children understand the concept of "justice" from the *Pledge of*

*Allegiance* which states "one nation, under God, with liberty and 'justice' for all." Offer them this context, then ask them to think about "justice" as it applies to violent crime and victims.

Offer awards or prizes for the best definitions of "justice." Publicize the winners in your newsletter and in your community's newspapers.

16. Arrange to have brochures and other literature about victim services in your community displayed in grocery and drug stores, laundromats, and churches.

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**FUNDRAISING**  
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1. Contact local restaurants (especially those belonging to chains) and ask if their servers would be willing to donate a percentage of their tips during National Victims' Rights Week to victims' organizations in your community. Or ask the restaurant manager to donate a nickel for each cup of coffee served during National Victims' Rights Week. Publicize such efforts in your local media.
2. Ask local youth groups, i.e., Boys' Clubs, scout troops, church groups, etc., to sponsor a "car wash-a-thon." The children collect pledges in advance of the event with a donation for each vehicle they can wash in a day. This service is free to car owners. Then, following the wash-a-thon, participants collect the pledges which are donated to your group. Also, citizens who receive a free car wash should be encouraged to donate money to your cause.

To thank the participants, host a party or dance in their honor.

3. Check with your city officials about their policies regarding collecting money at high traffic intersections. If such practices are legal, ask your local police or sheriff's association to collect money for victims' rights organizations on the Saturday during National Victims' Rights Week.
4. Construct a facsimile of a jail at your local shopping mall. "Incarcerate" popular judges, district attorneys, and your police chief until the public raises a specified amount of money for "bail." This can be developed into a fun, well-publicized media event.

## INSPIRATIONAL AND MOTIVATIONAL THOUGHTS

Many of the *National Victim Center's* constituents shared their favorite thoughts, quotations and passages that they used in speeches and other public awareness presentations during previous commemorations of National Victims' Rights Week. The following collection of inspirational and motivational thoughts should be useful as you prepare your outreach activities this year.

*We should all be concerned about the future because we will have to spend the rest of our lives there.*

--Charles Ketterling  
1949

*Our defense is not in armaments, nor in science, nor in going underground. Our defense is in law and order.*

--Albert Einstein  
1964

*For without belittling the courage with which men have died, we should not forget those acts of courage with which men...have lived. The courage of life is often a less dramatic spectacle than the courage of a final moment; but it is not less a mixture of triumph and tragedy. A man does what he must--in spite of personal consequences, in spite of obstacles and dangers and pressures--and that is the basis of all human morality.*

--John Fitzgerald Kennedy  
*Profiles in Courage, 1956*

*For of those to whom much is given, much is required. And when at some future date the high court of history sits in judgement on each of us, recording whether in our brief span of services we fulfilled our responsibilities to the state, our success or failure, in whatever office we hold, will be measured by the answers to four questions: First, were we truly men of courage?...Second, were we truly men of judgment?...Third, were we truly men of integrity?...Finally, were we truly men of dedication?*

--John Fitzgerald Kennedy  
1961

*Though lost to sight, to memory dear thou ever will remain.*

--George Linley

*Mankind censure injustice fearing that they may be victims of it, and not because they shrink from committing it.*

--Plato  
*The Republic*

*It takes two to speak the truth--one to speak, one to hear.*

--Thoreau

*The humblest citizen of all the land, when clad in the armor of a righteous cause, is stronger than all the hosts of Error.*

--William Jennings Bryan  
1896

*Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.*

--Rev. Martin Luther King  
1963

*Love our principle, order our foundation, progress our goal.*

--Auguste Comte  
1854

*What peaceful hours I once enjoyed! How sweet their memory still! But they have left an aching void the world can never fill.*

--William Cowper

*There are two kinds of people in the world--those who are always getting ready to do something, and those who go ahead and do it.*

--Albert Hubbard

*Nobody roots for Goliath.*

--Wilt Chamberlain

*A jury should decide a case the minute they are shown it, before the lawyers have had a chance to mislead 'em!*

--Will Rogers

*A jury consists of twelve persons chosen to decide who has the better lawyer.*

--Robert Frost

*I try to take one day at a time, but sometimes several days attack me at once!*

--Ashleigh Brilliant

*Praising what is lost makes the remembrance dear.*

--Author unknown

*A candle loses nothing by lighting another candle.*

--Author unknown

*Press on. Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education alone will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent.*

--Author unknown

## SAMPLE SERMON\*

It is winter...not a snowy winter, but a Los Angeles winter. By 6:30 p.m., darkness has fallen upon the city. A high school student walks home from basketball practice. He sees some guys from his school in a small knot on the corner. He only knows them well enough to say "hi!" as he passes. There is a blast from a passing car. The drug dealing target is missed. The basketball player lies dead on the pavement.

It is mid-day in Kansas City. An elderly woman pushes her little grocery cart back to her retirement home. Suddenly she feels a heavy bump on her frail back, and a powerful tug on her tiny arm. She is thrown to the ground. A sharp pain pierces through her hip. She tries to move the arm. The shoulder has been dislocated. The hip is broken. Her purse containing the balance of the money from her Social Security check is gone.

It is bed-time in the lovely suburban home in the tree shaded community outside of Philadelphia. The beautiful little blonde seven-year-old girl has just been tucked into bed. Her mother wonders as she leaves the bedroom why, every night, her daughter seems so tense, and pleads for mommy not to leave her alone. Maybe it's just a phase. A few minutes later, the child hears those familiar footsteps on the stairs. Her father is coming up to tell her goodnight again. But it's more than goodnight. Once again, she must endure the touching, the fondling, even the attempts of penetration of what her school teacher called those private parts that "no one should touch." He says that it is because he loves her, but it feels wrong, so very, very wrong. She is confused because it is her father, especially when he tells her that it is their secret, and bad things will happen if she tells.

It is the dawn of human history. A man is extremely angry with his brother. Listen to the account from the book of Genesis. "And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell...And Cain talked with Abel, his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel, his brother and slew him."

It is the fulcrum point of history. The time of division between "B.C." and "A.D.". A man is traveling along the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. On the most remote part of that steep, desolate "hiway," he is robbed, stripped of his clothes and beaten nearly to death. Certain religious types see him lying there and "pass by on the other side." Then, a despised foreigner stops, binds up the wounds, pours in oil and wine, takes him to an inn, and pays for him to be taken care of.

What do they have in common...the basketball player, the elderly woman, the seven-year-old girl, Cain's brother, Abel, and the man beside the road to Jericho? They are all victims. Each one's person has been violated by another. They and their bereaved are in desperate need of deep understanding, and of much help.

America is a country with great freedom, wealth, courage, faith, basic goodness and a very real concern for the rights of others. And yet we know, as has been true since the dawn of history in all societies, that opposite the light exists the darkness; within the clear life-giving stream of goodness is the pollution of evil. Always, not far from the doorsteps of our tranquil homes and peaceful lives, and even at times, within both, flows the menacing undercurrent of violence.

In the past decade, the violence seemed to have reached near epidemic proportions. The *Federal Bureau of Investigation* tells us that in the United States in 1986, based on convictions, not alleged incidents, there were 20,610 homicides, 90,430 forceable rapes, 542,780 robberies, 834,320 aggravated assaults, 3,241,400 burglaries, and 7,247,200 cases of larceny and theft. The *President's 1982 Task Force Report on Victims of Crime* states that "50 percent of violent crime goes unreported." The *National Resource Center for Child Abuse and Neglect* reports that there were 1,928,000 documented reports of child abuse and neglect in 1986 which they indicate is a ratio of 30 children out of every 1,000 in the United States. The *President's Child Safety Partnership Report* says that "each year, nearly three quarters of a million actual cases (versus those reported) are documented--more than 2,000 a day!" The *National Committee for the Prevention of Child Abuse* reports that approximately 2,000 children per year die of child abuse and/or neglect.\*\*

All of these millions every year leave a trail of victims...confused, angry, violated, fearful and, tragically, often avoided. As with the nearly dead man on the side of the road to Jericho, they are, all too many times, "passed by" not only by the general traveler, but also by the extremely busy religious folks as well.

But it need not be. The prophet Isaiah pled with the people of God who felt quite self-righteous because they fasted often. Hear the mighty messenger of Jahweh. "Is not this the fast that I choose; to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the thongs of the yolk, to let the oppressed go free...It is not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?"

And Jesus, in the synagogue, opened the book to that very prophet and read another powerful declaration, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor...to set at liberty those who are oppressed..."

I'm convinced that most want to help. But it is so difficult. We are saying to ourselves, "just to keep my own life together, to be what I should be to my family, to perform well on the job, to pay the bills...just to keep ahead, or maybe just even, or perhaps not too far behind in a very fast life is about all that I can do. I know that I have been like one of those 'religious types' on the road to Jericho. I have looked in the newspaper, on television and even on the street, and seen the suffering. I've been moved. But there is so much to do. I've 'passed by on the other side.' I wish I hadn't, but I did...I do."

For many, too many, there comes a time when violence strikes a friend, a loved one or even themselves or a member of their family. They see the wave of grief, the sense of loss, the anger, the fear, the vulnerability. They see it clearly...so they look. They must look. And they cry out as did Jeremiah, "For the wound of the daughter of my people is my heart wounded. I mourn, and dismay has taken hold on me. Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then has the health of the daughter of my people not been restored?"

These find time, born of suffering. They volunteer to work in battered women's shelters, on rape crisis hot lines, in support groups for crime victims of all kinds. They see that congregations and ministries of all kinds are working to save the criminal. Jail ministries abound. They encourage their pastor, priest or rabbi to initiate the same for the victim...maybe a program to give some respite to a single

parent who is at risk of abusing her children...or perhaps a foster home outreach for children who have been abused...possibly safe homes for the women fleeing a violent battering partner...or a support system for those who have been burglarized--new locks--money to tide the victim over until the next paycheck. Or, perhaps a good beginning could be to encourage the people of God to just be there, as was Ezekiel with the victimized Israelites. It is said of him that "he sat where they sat."

I sat listening to a young woman as she spoke in a clergy training conference in North San Diego County. Because of severe abuse and neglect, she and her sisters had been placed in foster homes at very young ages. As they were separated from one another and passed from placement to placement, she became very angry and sullen. Then came that last move to the foster home she will never forget. This church had taken on foster homes as a ministry. Their purpose was to show God's love to the placements, and to bring them to experience the same in their lives.

She said, "I tested this foster father to the limit. But the love never faltered. He always treated me in the same way that he did his own daughters...with love and understanding. Finally, I broke and gave my life to the Lord. I was a teenager by this time, and had kept in touch with my sisters. I was able to share this same love of God with them, which they also received. It washed the hatred from our hearts."

One day, this teenager's foster mother took the young woman's paycheck from the fast food establishment where she was working part-time to be cashed. She went to a branch of her bank in a suburb, other than their own. There were nine tellers. As the check was being cashed by the teller that she "just happened" to choose, the teller remarked about the unusual name of the check, and asked if the woman was the girl's mother. Upon being told that she was the foster mother, the teller said, "I know that girl. She has two sisters, doesn't she? Several years ago, three little ragged, troubled girls were brought to my Sunday School class by foster parents. They didn't stay long, but I have been praying for those three children ever since."

One can only imagine the joy of that "accidental" meeting when the teller was informed of the answer to her prayers of many years. Why the prayers? Why the dramatic answer? Because the people of God did not "pass by on the other side."

\* Contributed by Dave Delaplane, *Spiritual Dimensions in Victim Services*, Sacramento, California.

\*\*Update statistics annually.

## THE VICTIM EXPERIENCE\*

Those who have not personally experienced criminal victimization can never fully understand the painful reality and consequences of being a victim of violent crime. The victim experience creates an emphatic bond among those who suffer from crime and its aftermath.

However, individuals who are fortunate enough **not** to have been victimized can become sensitized to and educated about the victim experience. Advocates and professionals can become a valuable asset to victims when they know how to react, understand the complexities of the situation, and discover the importance of concern and support for violent crime victims. Perhaps the non-victim can never fully understand, but he or she can learn enough to make a difference in the life of a victim of violence.

The first step is to try and imagine what it feels like:

- To face the threat of death;
- To know the horror of someone wanting to injure you;
- To sense the violation of a brutal assault;
- To feel the impact of a bullet or knife piercing your body;
- To learn that a loved one has been murdered; or
- To walk into your home and find it ransacked with your precious mementos and valuables gone.

For most American citizens, crime enters their consciousness through media reports of violence in newspapers and on radio and television newscasts. One hears about crime stories through neighborhood chatter and social conversations. Some work with victims and learn about personal tragedies.

For non-victims, these situations are removed from their personal lives--the reality of crime is part of the big world, not their personal circle. Their world is a sane world where people "get what they deserve and deserve what they get." In this world, they are invulnerable to acts of violence, because they are in control of their lives. They take precautions to avoid potentially dangerous situations, to protect themselves from the seedier and criminal elements of society, and to maintain their healthy and wholesome lives. Herein lies the myth.....

The most crucial aspect of the victim experience is acknowledging the randomness and senselessness of crime. Victims are totally unprepared for the devastating problems they must face. The underlying question for victims is "why?" Trying to make sense of the chaotic world of criminal victimization is an arduous task for victims, criminologists, sociologists, psychologists, and all of us. For most Americans, such an

overpowering and far-reaching dilemma is easily ignored. "Leave it alone and it won't touch you." But the issue won't go away because it's prevalent in each and every American community. Crime affects everyone in some way. People owe it to themselves and to the victims of violent crime to look straight-forward at this crisis and learn how they--as concerned citizens--can be most effective.

In order to understand and assist victims, one needs to recognize the emotional responses a victim will experience. Morton Bard, in *The Crime Victims Book*, identifies three phases of the victim experience. The **impact phase** is usually accompanied by symptoms of shock, euphoria over survival and disorganization. Immediately following the violent experience, the victim is in crisis because the incident is beyond the normal range of experience. Crisis intervention at this point requires skill in recognizing the victim's emotional and physical problems and helping the individual cope.

Victims will come in contact with a number of people during this crisis stage. Each of them can have an impact on the victim's long term recovery:

- **Good Samaritans, bystanders and witnesses** become part of the victim's memory of the crime;
- **Emergency service workers** address any physical or medical problems;
- **Law enforcement professionals** investigate the crime and require the victim's assistance;
- **Hospital personnel** focus on urgent medical needs; and
- **Family and friends** provide support and try to find explanations for what has happened.

Everyone who comes in contact with a victim will have an effect based on the statements they make, the questions they ask, their obvious reactions and nonverbal messages that are conveyed. The victim will know if friends or professionals are horrified, impervious, doubtful, disinterested, upset or shocked. But, right now, the **victim** must be the focus of attention, and his or her needs must be addressed in a sensitive and supportive way. Professionals who work with victims of violence do not lose sight of the victim's emotional turmoil. They help the victim sift through the confusion and regain a sense of control over his or her life. Often, they may want to take over and provide security by making all the decisions. It is the victim, however, who must decide to give them that control.

Based upon the type of criminal victimization, reactions or concerns may vary. In non-violent crimes such as property loss, the extent of trauma may be less significant. Usually, the victim will regain control and progress through the stages in a shorter time. However, the way others react to the victim will still have an impact. Sometimes, law enforcement officials may appear apathetic and trivialize the incident. Friends may focus on the fact that "it could have been worse." Others dismiss the incident as commonplace.

But each victim reacts differently, and for that victim, this crime has been devastating. The victim may feel guilty for making the victimization "a big deal," or may feel rejected by those around him or her. Victims of non-violent crime also need to talk about their feelings, and need to feel supported. This crime happened to him or her, not to the number of victims reflected in statistics.

Friends and advocates can assist the victim by providing a comfortable arena to vent feelings which will be validated, and help the individual work through these feelings to regain control over his or her life. The victim may experience anger or rage at the perpetrator, the system, or at himself or herself for the loss. There may be questions about how the victim could let this happen. Also, the victim may grieve for lost items which have special, sentimental value. You should share these feelings with the victim.

With violent crimes, the trauma is usually much more severe. During the impact phase, the victim may suffer intense physical pain, uncontrollable crying or hysteria, total numbness or preoccupation with the crime. In Morton Bard's second phase--recoil--the victim tries to adapt to the situation and must deal with feelings of fear, anger, denial, alienation, self-blame and helplessness. The victim begins to realize that things are not the same, and life has been drastically altered. Ensuing problems become apparent, and the victim looks for help.

The victim experience creates a myriad of problems which affect every aspect of the victim's life. Victims vary in their reactions to nine areas of potential problems:

**Physical:** In addition to obvious physical injuries, a victim may suffer nightmares; changes in sleep patterns; extreme fatigue; impotence; extreme weight changes and chemical dependency or an exaggerated startle response. Often, emotional stress creates physical problems.

**Intellectual:** At times, victims may have trouble concentrating. They may be preoccupied with the crime and its results, often due to flashbacks. The victim may appear to make irrational decisions or suffer from loss of memory. The victim may question the social order in an attempt to comprehend what has happened.

**Emotional:** The emotional trauma experienced by victims has enormous consequences. Violent crime violates the sanctity and security of a victim's life and inner self. Victims suffer a loss in their sense of purpose for life. Victims must face feelings of loneliness, depression, sadness, fear, self-pity and helplessness. Some victims desire to flee by not acknowledging their problems; to withdraw from others for fear of further pain; or to commit suicide. The confusion and chaos in the victim's life is overwhelming. For some victims, the desire for revenge becomes a destructive force.

**Relational:** A major consequence of the victim experience is the disruption of interpersonal relationships. The victim may withdraw from or blame family members and loved ones. Reduced parenting skills, divorce, isolation from family networks, increased risk of family violence and chemical dependency are potential causes of family breakdown. Often, a victim is pressured by friends and family to "get on with your life," and is rejected when he or she cannot comply with others' expectations. Some victims are suffocated by overprotectiveness of family members.

**Financial:** The financial impact on victims is tremendous. Expenses are incurred for medical treatment and hospitals, funerals, psychological counseling, cooperation with the investigation, and prosecution costs. Victims may suffer loss of income or even lose their jobs while recovering from physical and emotional injuries. There may be hidden expenses due to changes in lifestyle for the victim, such as: college scholarship given up because of an inability to concentrate on studies; moving expenses to get away from painful memories of the crime; and a home or car repossessed because of non-payment.

**Spiritual:** Victims may suffer a loss of faith because of their inability to cope with pious platitudes sometimes offered by clergy and church members. Feelings of guilt and anger interfere with previously held beliefs and value systems. Some victims have an increased faith and reliance on God. But victims often re-evaluate their spiritual beliefs.

**Employment-Related:** After suffering a violent crime, victims may alter their work habits. Some victims become dysfunctional which may lead to termination if effects of the crime are prolonged. Others become workaholics, and let social and familial aspects of their lives suffer.

**Media:** Most victims have no prior involvement with the media. After the crime, victims may be intimidated by the press, and must deal with an intrusion into their private lives. Publication of names and addresses of victims may lead to undesired phone calls, and much worse circumstances in some cases. While some victims suffer from a media blitz, others are angered by the media's lack of concern for their story.

**Legal and Judicial:** Interaction with law enforcement agencies and the criminal justice system may produce a number of problems for victims who are unfamiliar with the process. The police or prosecutor may be insensitive or fail to provide information. Victims must learn to cope with postponements and continuances, plea bargains, numerous trips to officials' offices, release of the criminal, and light sentences. Victims often have to face the defendant in the courtroom or sometimes in the corridor or waiting room. Often, victims must confront the realities of a court process which does not meet their expectations for justice. In many cases, the crime is never solved.

The advocate/professional's role in the healing process of the victim experience can be crucial. Providing information about what is happening and what can be expected is an essential step. Look for signs which may explain a victim's behavior. Help others who come in contact with the victim to understand the victim experience so they, too, can be supportive, sensitive, and patient.

The final phase, according to Morton Bard, is reorganization. Victims begin to move beyond the victimization, to restructure the fragments of their lives, and to accept some irrevocable changes. At this time, victims may appear to be "normal" again, but the observer must be careful not to overlook the fact that the victim will never be the "same" as before the incident. Victims will build new relationships, will find a new purpose in life, may change careers and may "begin all over again." As time passes,

the physical and emotional wounds will heal, but the "scars"--both overt and hidden--will remain. There may still be some setbacks, especially around the anniversary of the crime or when something triggers a recollection of it.

When a victim meets new people, during the course of conversation or as a relationship is established, the victim may have to relate details of his or her past history which include the victimization. Victims must determine if they feel comfortable talking about it, or how they can avoid discussing the topic without appearing secretive. Victims may feel stigmatized when others react negatively to their background. Fortunately, the strength and resilience of most will help them cope with these incidents.

The victim experience cannot be measured within a specific time frame. Each victim recovers at his or her own pace. For some victims, the encounter with the criminal justice system, referred to as "the second injury" by Martin Symonds\*\*, prolongs the suffering. For others, professional counseling from private practitioners and helping agencies expedites the recovery process. And many victims are tremendously supported by the support group experience offered by some grass-roots victim organizations, which enable victims to share their feelings with those who have been through similar experiences. Victims can deal with their experience by taking action and getting involved in a victims' group which advocates victims' rights issues, and work to improve the criminal justice system.

Advocates and concerned citizens can help a victim by gathering information about victim services within your area. Show your concern for the victim by taking time to research ways in which the victim can solve their problems and overcome hurdles created by their experience. This will not only benefit the victim, but can help you learn more about the victim experience. And this knowledge may come in handy in the future. You will gain great satisfaction by knowing you have contributed to the well-being of someone who has been heartlessly thrown into the chaos of victimization. And, hopefully, you will find yourself motivated to actively pursue ways to make the victim experience less painful and less traumatic by working to change the perception and treatment of victims of violent crime in America.

\* The "potential problems" of the victim experience were developed by Patsy Day, Founder and President of Victims' Outreach in Dallas, Texas. Reprinted with permission.

## SAMPLE LETTER TO VICTIMS' ORGANIZATIONS TO CREATE A NATIONAL VICTIMS' RIGHTS WEEK CALENDAR

Name/Title  
Organization  
Street Address or P.O. Box  
City/State/Zip Code

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ :

Many of us are sponsoring public awareness events and other activities to commemorate (year) National Victims' Rights Week. In order to coordinate our efforts, the National Victim Center recommends that we produce a calendar of events for our (city/county) for our benefit and to inform the media of our plans.

Please take a moment to inform me of your planned or projected activities for (year) National Victims' Rights Week. It would be helpful if you could send me a list of events and activities with the following information:

- Type of event or activity;
- Sponsoring organization(s);
- Day/date/time/location of event or activity; and
- Contact person(s) and telephone number(s).

(Your organization) will gather this information from all victim advocacy groups in our (city/county) and produce a calendar of events. We will mail a copy of the calendar to you, and will also send copies to the print and broadcast media in our community.

Please send me the aforementioned information no later than (day/seven weeks in advance).

If you have any questions concerning the calendar of events, please call me at (area code/telephone number).

Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,

**SAMPLE LETTER TO NEWS MEDIUMS  
REQUESTING SUPPORT FOR  
NATIONAL VICTIMS' RIGHTS WEEK**

**Newspapers and Magazines**

Name  
Publication  
Street Address or P.O. Box  
City/State/Zip Code

Dear :

National Victims' Rights Week is scheduled for (dates). During this special observance, (list of organizations) which serve victims of violent crime in (your city) will join together to promote greater public awareness about the rights and needs of victims.

Our efforts cannot be successful without your support. We believe your readers can benefit from articles, editorials and public service information about crime and victimization.

We would like you to consider publishing an article or series of articles during National Victims' Rights Week which focus on various types of victimization, our criminal justice system, and the services provided to crime victims by our organization(s).

In addition, I have enclosed a series of public service posters which address different areas of victimization. We would be very grateful if you could publish these in your newspaper/magazine during National Victims' Rights Week.

I have enclosed materials about my/our organization(s) for your review. I have also attached a statistical overview which highlights the severity of violence in our nation.

I will contact you next week to see if you are interested in joining our greatly needed public service campaign.

If I can provide you with additional information concerning my/our organization(s) or (year) National Victims' Rights Week, please call me at (area code/telephone number).

Thank you for your consideration of my/our request.

Sincerely,

**Enclosures (Organizational Brochure(s), Public Service Information Posters, and  
National, State and/or Local Statistical Overview**

**SAMPLE LETTER TO NEWS MEDIUMS  
REQUESTING SUPPORT FOR  
NATIONAL VICTIMS' RIGHTS WEEK**

**Radio and Television**

Name  
Public Service Director  
Station  
Street Address or P.O. Box  
City/State/Zip Code

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ :

National Victims' Rights Week is scheduled for (dates). During this special observance, (list of organizations) which serve victims of violent crime will join together to promote greater public awareness about the rights and needs of victims.

Our efforts cannot be successful without your support. We believe your listeners/viewers can benefit from news reports, feature stories, talk shows and public service programming about crime and victimization.

We would like you to consider broadcasting special programs during National Victims' Rights Week which focus on various types of victimization, our criminal justice system, and the services provided to crime victims by our organization(s).

In addition, I have enclosed a series of public service announcements which address different areas of victimization. We would be very grateful if you could broadcast these during National Victims' Rights Week. A representative from our organization(s) will be available to record/help produce these spots at your convenience.

I have enclosed materials about my/our organization(s) for your review. I have also attached a statistical overview which highlights the severity of violence in our nation/state/community.

I will contact you next week to see if you are interested in joining our greatly needed public service campaign.

If I can provide you with additional information concerning my/our organization(s) or (year) National Victims' Rights Week, please call me at (area code/telephone number).

Thank you for your consideration of my/our request.

Sincerely,

**Enclosures Organizational Brochure(s), Copy for Public Service Announcements, and  
National, State and/or Local Statistical Overview**

## SAMPLE LETTER REQUESTING A MESSAGE ON ELECTRONIC BILLBOARDS

Name/Title  
Name of Corporation  
Street Address or P.O. Box  
City/State/Zip Code

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ :

National Victims' Rights Week is scheduled for (dates). During this special observance, violent crime victims and the organizations which serve them will promote a number of community awareness activities to educate (city's) citizens about crime and victimization.

We would like to publish a public service message on your electronic billboard from (dates). It will enhance our outreach efforts and, at the same time, help us solicit volunteers to support victims and our programs.

The message we would like you to publish for us is:

(SEE SAMPLE MESSAGES BELOW)

If you have any questions concerning either this public service message or (year) National Victims' Rights Week, please call me at (area code/telephone number).

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

### Sample Messages

"National Victims' Rights Week--(dates)--Support Victims' Rights--For More Info, Call (area code/telephone number)."

"Be A Voice For Victims During National Victims' Rights Week--(dates)--Call (area code/telephone number) For More Info."

"Stop Crime--Help Crime Victims During National Victims Rights Week--Call (area code/telephone number) For Info."

## RADIO OR TELEVISION ACTUALITY\*

An actuality is an audio or video editorial opinion personally delivered by the person who wrote it. Actualities are often featured on news/talk radio stations or television stations, especially those with strong records of public service programming. They contain brief (usually 60 seconds) hard-hitting opinions about relevant issues affecting the region in which the news medium broadcasts.

The following actuality can be modified to suit your organization's specific needs. Be creative, and draft your own actuality using the many resources featured in this kit.

Contact your local television and news/talk radio stations, and ask about their policies relevant to broadcasting actualities. Arrange a convenient time to go to the station and tape your actuality. For television actualities, a business suit is proper attire.

### :60 seconds

Most people think "it'll never happen to me. Not in *my* neighborhood. Not in *my* home." But the sad fact is, over 35 million Americans will become crime victims this year alone.

I'm (state your name/title/organization). Violent crime is not "someone else's problem." If our community is ever to achieve *true* victory over violence, we must *all* join together to combat crime, and to help the innocent victims whose lives are forever changed by criminal acts.

What can *you* do to get involved, to help (your city) fight violence? You can:

- Start right at home. Contact our police department to learn home safety tips to protect your loved ones.
- Join together with your friends and form a neighborhood watch program. Looking out for one another is the best measure to prevent crime from happening.
- Find out about the many fine services available in (your city) to help victims of all types of crime, from child abuse and rape to domestic violence and homicide family survivors. And volunteer for victims--your support will go a long way to ease their pain and suffering.
- Support our local law enforcement. Report crime and suspicious activities. Let's take back our streets from the criminals!
- Support the expansion of our jails and state prison system. We've got to be willing to "put our money where our mouth is" if we truly want to get tough on crime.
- Perhaps most important--*vote*...for elected officials who support victim services and tougher sentences for vicious criminals. Your ballot is a critical weapon in the war on crime.

Finally, remember: most people stop at *nothing* to help the innocent victims of crime. And *nothing* just isn't good enough in a nation where one out of four families is touched by crime annually. Get educated about and involved in crime victim services. I hope you'll *never* need our help, but it's nice to know we're here if you do!

-30-

\* Update statistics annually.

## **SAMPLE PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS\***

**:60**

Each year, there are over thirty-four million crimes committed nationwide. Almost seven million are crimes of violence.

A violent crime occurs every 20 seconds. Every 25 minutes, a murder is committed. Every six minutes, a woman is raped. And every three seconds, a property crime is committed.

These senseless acts of violence become even more devastating when you stop and think that behind each number, each statistic, there is a victim--an innocent citizen whose life is destroyed by violence.

During National Victims' Rights Week--(dates)--support victims' rights. Volunteer for victims!

For information about how you can get involved, call (area code/telephone number).

# # #

**:30**

The U.S. Department of Justice tells us that five out of six of today's twelve-year-olds will be a victim of violent crime in their lifetimes. What a frightening future for America's children!

We'll never be able to end the senseless violence in America. But we can help the innocent victims of crime.

Get involved...volunteer for victims. For more information, please call (organization) at (area code/telephone number).

# # #

**:30**

Child molesting...murder...family violence...rape. For millions of Americans, these tragedies hit close to home--devastating dreams and destroying lives.

But today, there are many programs and services in (your city) which help innocent victims of violent crime. You can help too! Volunteer for victims!

For more information, call (organization) at (area code/telephone number).

# # #

:30

Every 25 minutes, someone is murdered. Every six minutes, a person is raped. And every single minute, someone is robbed.

Behind every shocking crime statistic is a victim whose life will never be the same again. Because crime doesn't pay. Victims do.

The innocent victims of crime need **your** help. Volunteer for victims. For more information, call (area code/telephone number).

# # #

:30

Persons accused of crimes have many constitutional rights--the right to be informed of their rights...the right to counsel...the right to a speedy trial...the right to face their accusers.

On the other hand, the innocent victims of crime have no constitutional protections.

The way we treat victims is a **crime!** But you can help. Support crime victims' rights and volunteer for victims. Call (area code/telephone number) to find out how you can help.

# # #

:20

Murder...child abuse...rape. Violent crime is an inescapable fact of our society. Each year, horrible crimes destroy the lives of millions of Americans.

But you can help heal the wounds left by violent crime. **Volunteer for victims.** For more information, call (your organization) at (area code/telephone number). That's (area code/telephone number).

# # #

:20

You always think it won't happen to you. But crime will strike **one out of four** American families this year alone! Confront this issue **now** before it confronts you. Support victims' rights. Volunteer for victims. Call (your organization) for more information at (area code/telephone number).

# # #

\* Update statistics annually.

**PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT**

LENGTH: \_\_\_\_\_ CONTACT: \_\_\_\_\_

REPRESENTING: \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

DATES FOR AIRPLAY: \_\_\_\_\_ TO: \_\_\_\_\_

TOPIC: NATIONAL VICTIMS' RIGHTS WEEK (dates)

\*\*\*\*\*

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This message is provided as a public service  
by the  
National Victim Center  
and  
(name of organization)

**SAMPLE LETTER FOR  
NATIONAL VICTIMS' RIGHTS WEEK  
OPINION/EDITORIAL COLUMN**

(Name), Editor  
Publication  
Street Address or P.O. Box  
City/State/Zip Code

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ :

The annual observance of National Victims' Rights Week is planned for (dates). During this special week, our entire nation can reflect upon the crisis of violent crime and victimization and, at the same time, promote the need to improve programs and services for victims of violent crime.

I/we have written an opinion/editorial column which I/we would like you to consider for publication during National Victims' Rights Week. It is enclosed for your review. I/we believe it carries an important message for the citizens of (city)--one which your readers need to hear.

For your information, I/we have also enclosed (a) brief biographical sketch(es) which explain my/our involvement in the victims' rights movement.

I/we would like to encourage (name of publication) to publish your own editorial column supporting victims' rights issues and local programs which serve violent crime victims. The enclosed statistical overview highlights the severity of the problem in our nation today.

I will be pleased to meet with you at your convenience to further discuss the problems affecting victims of violence and what citizens in our community can do to tackle this crisis.

Your editorial support will greatly enhance our efforts to generate public support locally for improved and expanded victims' services.

If I/we can provide you with additional information about National Victims' Rights Week, please call me at (area code/telephone number).

Thank you for your consideration of this special request.

Sincerely,

Enclosures (Opinion/Editorial Column, Brief Biography of Column's Author(s), and National, State and/or Local Statistical Overview)

## SAMPLE OPINION/EDITORIAL COLUMN\*

### "Crime Doesn't Pay. Victims Do."

There is nothing in your life, short of war, famine or pestilence, that can prepare you to be a victim of violent crime. To be dragged from your car on your way home from work and mugged or beaten. To be raped in your own apartment in the middle of the night. To have your daughter murdered or sexually abused in her college dorm room on her first venture away from home. In our hearts, victims of violent crime hold a special, tender place, because we know that their pain might well be ours.

But there is no tender place in our criminal justice system for victims. Even the name implies it: justice is for criminals, not victims.

While criminals are surrounded by a blockade of legal and constitutional rights, victims are left out in the cold. Only a few states offer constitutional guarantees to victims. The rest offer various "Victims' Bills of Rights," with the provision that the rights named are suggestions only. If they are ignored by the authorities in a particular case, victims have no recourse.

Most Americans are unaware of the pain of victims, for a variety of reasons. Movies and television show a system of police officers, prosecutors and judges who are fighting for the victim. Their job is to get the criminal and put him away. All within sixty minutes.

In reality, it doesn't work that way. A victim may suffer a complete physical, emotional and financial breakdown from his or her experience, while the attacker is out on the streets again in a matter of hours, days, or months.

Part of the reason for this is that in the American system of criminal justice, a violent crime is held to be a crime against society. The officials of the law, from the first police officer on the scene, to the judge and jury, to the prison guard who finally releases the offender, are all agents of our injured society.

This is not an isolated problem. In 1986, one violent crime occurred every 21 seconds in this country. A property crime every 3 seconds. A forcible rape every 6 minutes. A murder every 25 minutes. Five out of six of today's 12-year-olds will someday be a victim of violent crime. And one in every four American families will be touched by crime this year alone.\*

When it happens, how will they be treated? One woman, a rape victim, was kept in a hospital emergency room until the early morning and subjected to the necessary (but painful and humiliating) examinations. All her belongings, including her clothes and her purse (with her wallet in it) were taken from her to be held as evidence. When it was over, she found herself standing on a street corner in a paper dress, without money or keys to her apartment, and with no way to get to her home across town.

Victims have needs, real needs, that must be met. To be denied even minimal involvement in "their case" is painful to them. Yet often they are barred from the courtroom by officials who feel that their presence might have an adverse effect on the rights of the criminal.

Today, the situation for victims is looking better. Ten years ago, there were seldom victims in our courts. Today, there are judges, prosecutors and law enforcement officials working with victims' rights groups to give victims a voice in our legal system, and to create avenues for compensation.

California, Rhode Island, Florida, Michigan, Texas and Washington all provide constitutional protections to victims. Forty-six states have victim compensation funds. Both Republicans and Democrats make victims' rights part of their election year platforms. President Bush has made the issue an integral part of his agenda. Victims and their advocates across the country have organized a grass-roots movement that has gained the attention and support of lawmakers and judges. It's a movement that is having a powerful effect on the way we approach the question of criminal justice.\*\*

In (your region), over (number) organizations have organized together into a powerful coalition to address this problem and to draw attention to the plight of victims. Many of us working on this issue are victims. Others are important members of the legal system. We have performed miracles in the last few years by helping to initiate needed reforms. We have often been the only ones who stood between a victim and total despair. We have put their time and money on the line for a cause. And we have made a difference.

This week is National Victims' Rights Week. All across our nation, from the Rose Garden at the White House to our own city hall, communities are taking a stand for victims' rights. And that's as it should be. We owe victims our support. And our respect.

George Santayana once said that one of the greatest crimes of all is to stand silent in the face of wrongdoing. The way we treat victims is a crime. It's a system we created, and it's a system we can change. The price of crime is too high and, so far, it's the victims who have paid the bill.

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\* Update statistics annually.

**SAMPLE LETTER TO CIVIC/COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS  
REQUESTING SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS DURING  
NATIONAL VICTIMS' RIGHTS WEEK\***

Name/Title  
Organization  
Street Address or P.O. Box  
City/State/Zip Code

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ :

The annual observance of National Victims' Rights Week is planned for (dates). During this special week, (your organization) is planning a number of activities to educate our community about the rights and needs of violent crime victims.

Most people are unaware that one out of four American families is touched by crime each year! Annually, there are almost six million violent crime victims who need special services and programs such as ours to help them cope with their personal tragedies.\*

In (your city), our organization (briefly describe your programs and services). I would welcome the opportunity to speak to your organization during National Victims' Rights Week or whenever your schedule allows such a presentation. (INSERT THE NEXT SENTENCE IF YOU ARE A VICTIM OR SURVIVOR.) As a victim/survivor of a violent crime, I can offer your members a first-hand personal perspective of my experience, along with an overview of how I turned my pain into positive action to benefit all victims. Your members may be interested in learning about the many programs and activities sponsored by my organization to help victims of violence.

I believe my message concerning victimization, victims' rights and the need for community support should be heard by all citizens of (your city). I will be delighted to address any specific topics concerning crime and victimization that you feel would interest your membership.

I have enclosed materials which highlight the goals and programs of my organization for your review.

I will contact you next week to further discuss this proposed presentation. If I can provide you with additional information about my organization or (year) National Victims' Rights Week, please contact me at (area code/telephone number).

Thank you for your consideration of my request.

Sincerely,

Enclosure (Information About Your Organization)

\* Update statistics annually.

## SAMPLE LETTER REQUESTING PROCLAMATIONS FOR NATIONAL VICTIMS' RIGHTS WEEK

Honorable (Name)  
(Official Title)  
Street Address or P.O. Box  
City/State/Zip Code

Dear :

The annual observance of National Victims' Rights Week is planned for (dates). During this special week, violent crime victims, their advocates and organizations which serve them will join together in (city/county/state/parish) to educate our citizens about crime and victimization and encourage their support to improve victims' rights and services.

(Your organization) would be honored if you could sponsor a proclamation to recognize (dates) as "(City/County/State/Parish) Victims' Rights Week." Such a proclamation will publicly reaffirm your commitment to our important cause and, at the same time, recognize the efforts of those who serve violent crime victims in our community.

I have enclosed two sample proclamations which you may wish to use to compose your proclamation.

(INSERT FOLLOWING PARAGRAPH IF YOU ARE SPONSORING A PUBLIC AWARENESS EVENT)

(List of organizations co-sponsoring event) are sponsoring a (describe event or activity) on (day), (date) at (time) at (location). You are cordially invited to attend this special event and, at that time, present your proclamation. If you are unable to attend, we would like to read your proclamation to the victims, their families and our supporters on (date).

If you have any questions concerning either this request or the sample proclamations, please call me at (area code/telephone number).

I will contact your staff next week to provide further details, as needed.

Thank you for your consideration of this special request.

Sincerely,

Enclosures (Sample Proclamations)

## SAMPLE PROCLAMATIONS\*

Whereas, the annual commemoration of National Victims' Rights Week is planned for (dates);  
and

Whereas, over 7,000 victim service, criminal justice and law enforcement organizations will  
join together in communities across America to focus attention on the  
plight of the innocent victims of crime; and

Whereas, for the second year since 1981, incidents of violent and household crimes increased;  
and

Whereas, there is a critical need for all Americans to support programs and services which  
provide short and long-term assistance to violent crime victims; and

Whereas, (your organization) (briefly describe the services you provide to victims); and

Whereas, (your organization) is joining forces with victim service programs and concerned  
citizens throughout (state) to observe (year) National Victims' Rights  
Week; therefore, be it

Resolved, that (elected official or government body) designate (dates), as year (city/county/  
parish/state) Victims' Rights Week;

Resolved, that (elected official or government body) reaffirms its commitment to address a  
National Victims' rights and criminal justice issues during (year)  
(city/county/ parish/state) Victims' Rights Week and throughout the year;  
and be it further

Resolved, that a suitably prepared copy of this proclamation be presented to (your  
organization).

# # #

Whereas, over thirty-five million Americans become victims of crime each year, with six million citizens falling prey to violence; and

Whereas, the U.S. Department of Justice estimates that five out of six of today's twelve-year-olds--83 percent of Americans that age--will be the victims or intended victims of violent crime in their lifetimes; and

Whereas, only 37 percent of crimes are even reported to law enforcement officials; and

Whereas, to fight the continuing threat of crime and victimization, all Americans must join together, committing their individual and collective resources to crime prevention and victim services; and

Whereas, over 7,000 victim service, criminal justice and law enforcement organizations will work together to observe the annual commemoration of National Victims' Rights Week from (dates); and

Whereas, (your organization) (briefly describe your victim services) not only during National Victims' Rights Week, but throughout the year; and

Whereas, (your organization) requires the commitment of concerned citizens and leaders in both the public and private sectors to continue providing quality services which aid the innocent victims of crime; therefore, be it

Resolved, that (your organization) be commended during (year) National Victims' Rights Week for providing exemplary services to victims of violent crime and to (name of city/county/parish/state); and be it further

Resolved, that a suitably prepared copy of this proclamation be presented during (year) National Victims' Rights Week to (your organization).

# # #

\* Update statistics annually.

## NATIONAL CRIME PREVENTION COUNCIL

### "Crime and Crime Prevention Statistics"

The *National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC)* has granted permission to the *Center* to include the publication *Crime and Crime Prevention Statistics* in this *Strategies for Action* kit. This document contains valuable data and statistics relevant to violent crime and victimization.

The *National Victim Center* extends our sincere appreciation to the *National Crime Prevention Council* for allowing the *Crime and Crime Prevention Statistics* to be published in *Strategies for Action*.

These statistics from the *NCPC* are to be used for reference only. Additional copies of *Crime and Crime Prevention Statistics* for distribution in your community can be ordered from the *NCPC*. Single copies are \$3.00 each. Quantity discounts are: 3-10 copies, \$2.00 each; 11-25 copies, \$1.75 each; 26-50 copies, \$1.50 each; and 51 or more copies, \$1.00 each. Prices include handling and postage.

To order additional copies of the *NCPC's Crime and Crime Prevention Statistics*, please write: *National Crime Prevention Council*, 1700 K Street, N.W., Second Floor, Washington, D.C. 20006.



## REVISED

# Crime and Crime Prevention Statistics

### How Much Crime Is There?

Has crime gone up or gone down? Is crime worse than it used to be? Who are the victims of crime?

These and hundreds more questions come up every day when crime is discussed. Policymakers, reporters, and concerned citizens want to know. Crime prevention program planners *need* to know.

Statistics help to clarify crime and crime prevention problems. Well-constructed statistics can provide a broader and more accurate perspective on the crime problem than any one person's or group's experience ever could.

In this report, you will find national statistics about the most common kinds of personal and household crimes. Data are also provided on a number of crimes against businesses.

This quick reference guide is intended to help you:

- provide an overview for citizens, policymakers, funders, practitioners, and others of the most current national data available on various crimes and crime prevention issues;
- relate problems in your community to the national crime picture;
- see how crime affects various groups;
- become familiar with national statistical resources in crime and criminal justice.

### Different Yardsticks

Any statistic is useful only if you know the basis on which the measurement was made and what was being measured. Two distinct sets of crime statistics are compiled at a national level. When you cite numbers from either source, you must be careful to keep these differences in mind.

### Uniform Crime Reports

Since 1930, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has tallied crime reports from local law en-

forcement agencies around the country. This set of statistics is known as the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR).

More than 16,000 local law enforcement agencies send to the FBI a count of the murders (and non-negligent manslaughters), forcible rapes, aggravated assaults, robberies, burglaries, larcenies, motor vehicle thefts, and arsons which have been reported by citizens, together with arrest information.

The FBI assembles these data in an annual report, *Crime In The United States*, which gives national and local totals for these crimes.

The UCR does not provide demographics about the victim, and reflect only crimes actually brought to the attention of law enforcement. The UCR does show whether or not an arrest was made but gives offender demographics only where an arrest was made. The UCR data are presented for cities and states. The National Crime Survey data are expressed in national and regional terms only.

### National Crime Survey

In order to uncover data about crimes not reported to the police, and to gain more information about victimizations in general, the Bureau of Justice Statistics conducts a nationwide survey of persons 12 and older and of households. This survey has been conducted since 1973.

The survey asks whether the person has been the victim of any of several completed or attempted personal crimes: robbery, rape, assault, purse snatching or pocket

picking, or theft of personal possessions. Heads of household are asked if the household has experienced burglary, larceny, or auto theft.

If a victimization is indicated, the interviewer asks a series of specific questions about location, time, circumstances, loss, injury, and reporting to law enforcement.

These surveys are annually published in a report entitled *Criminal Victimization in the United States*.

The National Crime Survey (NCS) does not link victimizations with arrests, and is a survey rather than a tabulation of actual reports of crime. There are few local or state NCS reports.

Differences in the two reporting systems are further explained in *Measuring Crime*, from the Bureau of Justice Statistics. Both are currently being updated and revised to collect new and better data. The "enhanced" UCR will collect more detailed information about crime patterns from state

Contents	Page
Overview .....	1
Glossary .....	2
Community Crime Prevention .....	3
General Characteristics of Crime .....	4
Violent Crime .....	6
Assault .....	8
Rape .....	8
Robbery .....	8
Burglary .....	9
Motor Vehicle Theft .....	9
Vandalism .....	10
Crimes Against Business .....	10
Blacks As Crime Victims .....	10
Hispanics As Crime Victims .....	11
Elderly As Crime Victims .....	11
Teens As Crime Victims .....	11
Missing and Exploited Children .....	12
Child Abuse and Neglect .....	12
Family Violence .....	13
Cost of Crime .....	14
Locations of Crimes .....	14
Drugs, Alcohol, and Crime .....	14
Drugs, Alcohol, and Society .....	15
Student Use of Drugs .....	15
Crime and Schools .....	15
Sources .....	16

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and local law enforcement agencies. An additional benefit is that local agencies that participate will have greatly increased crime analysis capabilities.

### **If the FBI Says Crime Is Up, How Can BJS Say Crime Is Down?**

As explained above, the FBI's Uniform Crime Report counts crimes reported to local law enforcement. The Bureau of Justice Statistics's National Crime Survey measures how many citizens were subjected to criminal acts, *whether or not reported to police*.

As citizens become more aware of the desirability of reporting crime to the police, reported crime may, in a given area, increase in disproportion to any increase in the actual commission of crimes. Indeed, it is possible that *actual crime* could have decreased while *reported crime* increased. Nationally, the reporting of crime

increased 14% between 1973 and 1987.

### **Sources for This Report**

In this report, National Crime Survey data are used where they are available. These data most closely reflect the actual incidence of crime, and therefore are likely to give the most accurate picture of what is actually happening to citizens around the country.

Some of the data in this report are from special studies conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, and other agencies. These studies are not conducted on a regular, cyclical basis. Studies for specific topics may be three or five or more years old, but represent the best information available.

Other sources of data, including public opinion polls by reputable organizations, independent studies by academic researchers, and re-

ports and analyses by other nationally recognized groups have been used as appropriate to round out the statistical overview of national crime and crime prevention issues. The data in this report are based on statistics available in October 1988.

### **Local Statistics**

At the local level, statistics about crime tend to be drawn exclusively from local police data, reflecting only those crimes which citizens have brought to the attention of the police. Local or state victimization surveys require extensive sampling and meticulous analysis, and they are expensive. Except in a very few jurisdictions, law enforcement officers do not systematically collect and tabulate routine demographic data on every victim of any crime. Our knowledge of crime victims in the U.S. comes from anecdote, from highly constrained

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## **Glossary**

Based on *Criminal Victimization in the United States, 1986*. Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice.

**Aggravated assault**—Attack with a weapon, irrespective of whether or not there was injury, and attack without a weapon resulting in serious injury. Also includes attempted assault with a weapon.

**Assault**—An unlawful physical attack, whether aggravated or simple, upon a person. Includes attempted assaults with or without a weapon.

**Burglary**—Unlawful or forcible entry of a residence, usually but not necessarily attended by theft. Includes attempted forcible entry. The entry may be by force, or it may be through an unlocked door or an open window. As long as the person entering had no legal right to be present in the structure, a burglary has occurred.

**Household crimes**—Burglary or larceny of a residence, or motor vehicle theft, crimes that do not involve personal confrontation. Includes both completed and attempted acts.

**Household larceny**—Theft or attempted theft of property or cash from a residence or its immediate vicinity. For a household larceny to occur within the home itself, the thief must be someone with a right to be there, such as a maid, a delivery person, or a guest.

**Larceny**—Theft or attempted theft of property or cash without force. A basic distinction is made between personal larceny and household larceny.

**Motor vehicle theft**—Stealing or unauthorized taking of an automobile,

truck, motorcycle, or other motor vehicle, including attempts at such acts.

**Nonstranger**—With respect to crimes entailing direct contact between victim and offender, victimizations (or incidents) are classified as having involved nonstrangers if victim and offender either are related, well known to, or casually acquainted with one another.

**Offender**—The person committing the criminal act; perpetrator of a crime; the term generally is applied in relation to crimes entailing contact between victim and offender.

**Personal crimes**—Rape, robbery of persons, assault, personal larceny with contact, or personal larceny without contact. Includes both completed and attempted acts.

**Personal crimes of theft**—Theft or attempted theft of property or cash by stealth, either with contact (but without force or threat of force) or without direct contact between victim and offender. Equivalent to personal larceny.

**Personal crimes of violence**—Rape, robbery of persons, or assault. Includes both completed and attempted acts. Always involves contact between the victim and offender.

**Personal larceny**—Equivalent to personal crimes of theft. A distinction is made between personal larceny with contact and personal larceny without contact.

**Personal larceny with contact**—Theft of purse, wallet, or cash by stealth directly from the person of the victim,

but without force or the threat of force. Also includes attempted purse snatching.

**Personal larceny without contact**—Theft or attempted theft, without direct contact between victim and offender, of property or cash from any place other than the victim's home or its immediate vicinity.

**Rape**—Carnal knowledge through the use of force or the threat of force, including attempts. Statutory rape without force is excluded. Includes both heterosexual and homosexual rape.

**Robbery**—Completed or attempted theft of property or cash directly from a person, by force or threat of force, with or without a weapon.

**Simple assault**—Attack without a weapon resulting either in minor injury (e.g., bruises, black eyes, cuts, scratches, swelling) or in undetermined injury requiring less than 2 days of hospitalization. Also includes attempted assault without a weapon.

**Stranger**—With respect to crimes entailing direct contact between victim and offender, victimizations (or incidents) are classified as involving strangers if the victim so stated, or did not see or recognize the offender, or knew the offender only "by sight."

**Victimization rate**—For crimes against persons, computed on the basis of the number of victimizations per 1,000 people age 12 and over. For crimes against households, victimization rates are calculated on the basis of the number of incidents per 1,000 households. Allows comparison of relative frequencies of various crimes, especially among population subgroups.

studies, or from inferences which can be made at the national level through the National Crime Survey. This suggests the need for caution in comparing local and national statistics and the need to compare like sets of statistics. If local data are available only for Uniform Crime Reports, these should be compared against national Uniform Crime Report data.

In addition to this measurement problem, it is important to recall that in any given area the statistics (and the crime picture) may not be at the national norm. For example, the elderly, on a nationwide basis, are the age group least frequently victimized by violent crime. But in any given community or neighborhood, the elderly may be the most victimized. Motor vehicle theft may have decreased on a nationwide average, but may be up sharply in a given city or state; likewise, robbery may have increased at a national level but may actually be down for a particular local jurisdiction. Care must be taken to avoid unfairly judging local conditions against national statistics.

### Statistics and Fear

Using fear of crime to motivate citizens can be a double-edged sword: a moderate amount of concern can prompt citizens to act; too much fear can stifle cooperation. The use of statistics to flail citizens or policymakers with fear of crime frequently backfires. Findings must be accurately stated. But they can be tempered to make them statements of conditions which need to be changed.

### Crimes and Other Life Events

This table relates various types and levels of personal crimes to other stressful life events, ranging from causes of death to accidental injuries at home or work. For example:

- The chance of being a violent crime victim is greater than that of being hurt in a traffic accident.
- The risk of being the victim of a violent crime is significantly higher than the risk of death from cancer or injury or death from fire.
- The chance of injury is much more likely through accidents

(at home or work) than through criminal victimization.

**How do crime rates compare with the rates of other life events?**

Events	Rate per 1,000 adults per year*
Accidental injury, all circumstances	242
Accidental injury at home	79
Personal theft	72
Accidental injury at work	58
Violent victimization	31
Assault (aggravated and simple)	24
Injury in motor vehicle accident	17
Death, all causes	11
Victimization with injury	10
Serious (aggravated) assault	9
Robbery	6
Heart disease death	4
Cancer death	2
Rape (women only)	2
Accidental death, all circumstances	5
Pneumonia/influenza death	3
Motor vehicle accident death	2
Suicide	2
Injury from fire	1
Homicide/legal intervention death	1
Death from fire	.03

Source: Report to the Nation on Crime and Justice: Second Edition. Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, 1988.

### Quote Carefully

The statistics in this report are carefully phrased to reflect accurately the findings that are reported by the sources. In using these numbers, take care to ensure that you have not changed the meaning or drawn conclusions that the information does not warrant.

## Community Crime Prevention

### The Growth of Neighborhood Watch

There is growing interest in neighborhood watch programs, and questions are often asked about the number of participants in these activities.

- Participation in community crime prevention programs is growing, with more than 19 million Americans now actively involved in neighborhood crime watch programs.
- Forty-seven million Americans live in communities which have active crime watch programs.
- Individual participation in neighborhood crime watch has grown (1981 to 1984) from 5% to 7% of the American population. Neighborhood watch household participation has increased from 17% to 19% of American households surveyed.

Source: National Crime Prevention Council—data supplied by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, and the Gallup Report.

- About 38% of U.S. families participate in Neighborhood Watch programs *where they are available*.
- One in four urban families lives in a neighborhood with a crime watch program, compared to one in the five suburban families, and one in eight families who live outside of metropolitan regions.
- Seven percent of U.S. households have a burglar alarm, and 25% engrave their valuables with an identification number.

Source: Crime Prevention Measures. Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, 1986.

- In one national study, 82% of those surveyed indicated that they would like to have a crime watch program in their neighborhood, and 81% expressed interest in joining.

Source: The Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics, 1984. Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice. Data supplied by the Gallup Report.

- In one national survey, 85% of responding police departments stated that neighborhood watch was a crime prevention activity performed by that agency.

Source: *Private Security and Police in America*. Hallcrest Systems, Inc., funded by the National Institute of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice, 1985.

### Characteristics of Local Programs

■ Neighborhood Watch programs are more likely to be effective when they are part of general-purpose or multi-issue community groups. Programs should address local concerns that arouse and enlist the energies and interest of residents—jobs for youth, deteriorating housing, drug dealing, trash pickups, or barking dogs.

### Seven of ten residents feel crime is lower in their Neighborhood Watch areas than in adjacent neighborhoods

■ Virtually all programs receive startup and ongoing advice from local law enforcement. More than 70% indicate that they have no formal operating budget. Approximately 80% of the administrative staffs of the program are volunteers.

■ Newsletters and regularly scheduled meetings are used extensively to disseminate information to participants. Approximately 60% of the responding programs reported using at least one of these, and 40% use both.

■ By a margin of nearly two to one, Neighborhood Watch programs are implemented to prevent crime rather than to combat an existing problem.

Source: *Improving the Effectiveness and Utilization of Neighborhood Watch Programs. Draft Final Report*. Hindelang Criminal Justice Research Center, 1986. Research funded by the National Institute of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice.

### The Success of Crime Prevention Programs

Do crime prevention programs work? Thousands of programs from around the country have pointed to success in lowering crime rates or totals. Listed below are just a few examples of state and city-wide programs, plus efforts representing public housing and schools.

### Nineteen million Americans are active in neighborhood watch programs.

■ People feel safer and perceive their neighborhoods to be safer. In a national survey, 72% of Neighborhood Watch area residents "perceived the rate of crime in their Neighborhood Watch areas to be lower than in adjacent neighborhoods."

■ An evaluation of the California Community Crime Resistance Programs reports that Neighborhood Watch programs "are perceived by both citizens and law enforcement as an effective means of reducing crime." As to additional benefits of the programs, the report notes that burglary rates were reduced in target communities.

■ A telephone survey of Neighborhood Watch programs by the Florida Attorney General's Office discovered over 14,000 active programs with 2.4 million citizens involved. There were 15% to 64% reductions in crime reported by programs which could document effects.

■ Burglary rates in Seattle, Washington, neighborhoods were cut roughly in half by implementing a strong Watch program. The effort was cited by the Department of Justice as an exemplary program. Citizens reported crime to police more frequently, and calls to report burglaries in progress increased.

■ In the fall of 1983, St. Louis, Missouri, introduced a city-wide neighborhood crime prevention program, Operation SafeStreet, which resulted in substantial reductions in both violent and property crimes. Participants were enthusiastic—75% rated Operation SafeStreet either good or excellent; 78% felt that the home security projects deterred crime.

■ The Bromley-Heath (Boston, Massachusetts) housing project suffered many of the traditional ills of public housing units, including crime, dilapidated hallways, and broken windows. Tenants took over operations, repaired

and maintained the property, and started a community patrol. Robberies were reduced by 77%.

■ Youth Crime Watch (a teen-led effort) in Dade County, Florida, has generated crime reporting systems, anti-crime rallies, and emphasis on student pride in school and community. The program has in effect adapted Neighborhood Watch concepts to junior and senior high schools. Between 1981 and 1986, many crimes were reduced: assaults on staff declined by 26%, robberies were reduced 34.5%, sexual offenses went down 34%, incidents involving drugs plummeted 29.6%. These reductions came while crime generally was increasing in Dade County. One school official termed the introduction of the program "the best year in our school's history."

Source: *The Success of Community Crime Prevention*. The National Crime Prevention Council, 1988.

### General Characteristics of Crime

The crime problem in the United States has several victims—the individual victimized, his or her family, and the community in which he or she resides. The characteristics of crime help outline this scope.

■ In 1987, the National Crime Survey reported 34.7 million crimes in the United States.

■ There were 1.8% more crimes in 1987 than 1986. The increase in personal and household crimes ended a 5-year trend of falling crime. During 1986, personal and household crimes had reached their lowest levels in the survey's 15-year history. However, there were 16% fewer crimes in 1987 than in the peak year of 1981.

Source: *Criminal Victimization 1987*. Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice.

■ One in four households was touched by a crime of violence or theft in 1987, the same proportion as in the previous two years. The estimate thus remains at its lowest level since 1975 (32%), the first year it was available.

Source: *Households Touched By Crime, 1987*. Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice.

■ The FBI, in its Uniform Crime Reports (UCR), states that the overall crime index for reported crime rose 2% to 13.5 million offenses in 1987. Total crime rose 4.6% in 1985, and 6.3% in 1986. There were decreases for the three years before 1985. From 1986 to 1987, overall violent crime showed virtually no change.

■ Five- and 10-year changes for the UCR show that the 1987 total was 12% above the 1983 level and 21% higher than 1978.

Source: *Crime in the United States, 1987*. Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Department of Justice.

### Crime Committed By Strangers

It has been said that fear of crime is largely a fear of strangers. The unpredictable violent criminal event by an unknown offender is greatly feared. New data from the National Crime Survey, however, indicate that violent crime by total strangers represents less than half of such crimes. Because of the reluctance or inability of victims to report family violence, the proportion of stranger-related crime may be overestimated.

■ Forty-six percent of violent criminal events involve total strangers.

■ An additional 11% of violent crimes were committed by offenders known only by sight.

■ Violent crimes by completely unknown offenders include rape (49%), robbery (71%), aggravated assault (44%), and simple assault (39%).

■ Violent crimes by nonstrangers were more likely than crimes by strangers to involve an attack. Sixty-two percent of relatives were attacked (47% injured), 51% of acquaintances were attacked (33% injured), and 44% of strangers were attacked (27% injured).

■ Most violent crimes by strangers were committed against males (70%). Most violent crimes committed by relatives (77%) were committed against females.

Source: *Violent Crime by Strangers and Nonstrangers*. Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, 1987.

### Fear of Crime

It is difficult to gauge accurately the true effect of fear of crime in America. For example, a Gallup poll of the most important prob-

lems facing the country indicates that only 3% of Americans think that crime is a major issue in 1987.

There are, however, other national or regional polls that rate the concern about crime or drugs higher.

**87% of violent crimes by strangers occurred away from the victim's home**

**Violent crimes by strangers**

Place of occurrence	% crimes of violence (rape, robbery, assault)	% personal larceny with contact
On street, in a parking lot	36%	28%
On public transportation	1	15
Inside commercial building	7	22
Inside restaurant	6	12
Inside own home	13	3
Near own home	13	4
Inside school	9	1
Friend's or neighbor's home	8	1
Elsewhere	8	1
Total	100%	100%

\*By definition, personal larceny without contact cannot occur in these locations. Thiefs from home are household larcenies.

Source: *BJS Criminal Victimization in the U.S., 1985, May 1987*

In May 1988, *USA Today* quoted a Roper poll that claims crime as the number two national issue (33%), with drugs third at 32%.

■ In a 1986 *U.S. News and World Report*—CNN poll, 86% of respondents rated drugs the top national problem, and the need to reduce crime a close second. Crime was second to community development “as a most important problem” facing Florida in 1988. Cities as diverse as New York (*New York Times*, 1985) and Portland, Oregon (*Oregonian*, 1987) call crime their number one problem. In Fairfax County, Virginia, buyers state that low crime rates are a major incentive to purchasing homes (*The Journal*, 1985). *Rolling Stone* magazine, in 1988, stated that the most attractive causes

for younger Americans (ages 18-44) were anti-drunk driving crusades and neighborhood watch programs. Finally, some national surveys which focus on the respondent's local community state that drugs and crime are major concerns. Additional statistics on fear of crime include:

■ Fear of crime appears to have increased from the late 1960s to the mid-1970s, then to have decreased. In a Gallop poll, 44% of women and 16% of men said they were afraid to walk alone at night. When a similar question was asked in 1977, 61% of the women and 28% of the men reported they were afraid to walk alone at night—an increase of 17% for women and 12% for men. In 1975, a Harris poll found that 55% of all adults felt “uneasy” walking down their own streets. In 1985, this number had fallen to 32%—a significant decline.

Source: *Policing and the Fear of Crime*. National Institute of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice, 1988.

While the data show that there is national concern about crime in general, many polls indicate that Americans feel their own neighborhoods are relatively safe.

■ According to one national study, one in ten of those interviewed felt that their neighborhood was unsafe. Fifty-nine percent felt their neighborhood was fairly safe. Thirty-two percent of the respondents felt that their neighborhood was very safe from crime.

Source: *Crime Prevention Measures*. Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, 1986.

Particular groups—for instance, high school seniors and the elderly—have more concern about crime than does the population as a whole.

■ A Media General—Associated Press Poll in 1986 reported that 53% of people 65 or over feel it is unsafe to walk in their communities after dark, compared with 35% of the population as a whole.

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**Six out of ten Americans feel it is safe to walk within a mile of their homes.**

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■ Nationally, 79% of 1986 high school seniors state that they "worry about crime and violence." The Institute for Social Research reports that concern over crime and violence leads ten other categories, including drug use, nuclear war, and pollution. Crime and violence have been the primary concerns of high school seniors since 1975, beaten only once by the energy shortage in 1980.

■ In 1987, the Roper Public Opinion Research Center reported that 68% of Americans feel that too little is being spent on "halting the rising crime rate." More people were concerned about spending too little on crime than on drug addiction, education, the conditions of blacks, and welfare.

■ Nationwide, 72% of respondents feel that their homes are secure against crime. The 1986 Media General-Associated Press poll also stated that 88% of Americans say they regularly lock their doors.

■ The same poll states that 78% of citizens feel it's safe to walk on their streets after dark, and 64% feel it's safe to walk in their communities after dark.

■ Sixty-one percent of Americans in 1987 felt that it was safe to walk within a mile of their homes. The same Roper Public Opinion Research Center poll stated that a low point for this question was reached in 1982, when only 53% felt it was safe to walk within that mile radius.

*Source: Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics, 1987. Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice.*

■ According to one national study, one in ten of those interviewed felt that their neighborhood was unsafe. Fifty-nine percent felt their neighborhood was fairly safe. Thirty-two percent of the respondents felt that their neighborhood was very safe from crime.

*Source: Crime Prevention Measures. Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, 1986.*

### Victim Characteristics

■ Overall, violent crime rates in 1987 were approximately 65% higher for males than for females.

Generally speaking:

■ Younger persons are more likely to be victims than older persons.

■ Lower-income persons are more likely to be victims of violent crimes and burglaries.

■ Elderly persons (age 65 and older) have the lowest victimization rates for both violent and theft crimes.

■ Blacks have higher violent crime victimization rates than whites.

■ The overall rate for violent crime victimization was greatest for divorced or separated persons, and persons never married. Widowed persons had the lowest violent crime rates.

■ Households headed by females, children under 18, and non-relatives had the highest victimization rate for crimes of violence.

■ Individuals residing in cities had higher victimization rates for violent and theft crimes than individuals living in suburban or rural areas.

■ Crime is essentially intraracial. Eighty-four percent of black victims said their attackers were black. Eighty percent of white victims identified their attackers as white.

*Source: Criminal Victimization in the United States, 1987. Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice.*

■ During 1984, unemployed persons, whether male, female, white, or black, had a higher violent victimization rate than their employed counterparts.

*Source: Criminal Victimization in the United States, 1984. Bureau of Justice Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice.*

### Crime Reporting

■ In 1986, 50% of all *violent* crime victimizations were reported to the police. Approximately 28% of *personal theft* victimizations and 41% of *household* crimes were reported to the police.

■ Thirty-seven percent of *all* crimes in 1986 were reported to police agencies, according to the National Crime Survey.

■ As to the reasons for not reporting personal crime victimizations to the police, 20.4% recovered their property or reported that the offender was unsuccessful, 15.1% reported the incident to somebody else, and 12% felt that there was lack of proof.

■ Fear of reprisal was the least cited reason for not reporting *personal* crimes to police. Overall, a total of 1.4% did not report crimes to police due to fear of the offender; 5.3% of *violent* crime victims gave this reason for not reporting victimization.

■ In 1986, the most frequently cited reasons for reporting a violent crime to the police were a desire to recover property, to keep the incident from happening again to the victim or to others, to intervene in the current incident, and to punish the offender.

■ Females, older persons, and those victimized by strangers report *violent* crime more often than their counterpart groups. Those who own their households, and those in the highest income brackets, report household crimes more often to police than their comparison groups.

*Source: Criminal Victimization in the United States, 1986. Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice.*

■ Reporting of crime was 14% higher in 1987 than in 1973.

*Source: Criminal Victimization 1987. Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice.*

### Violent Crime

While this fact sheet includes data on individual violent crimes, it is useful and necessary to view violent crime as a whole. Some national violent crime figures include:

#### Probability of Victimization

■ Three percent of Americans each year are the victims of violent crime. This represents an average of 6 million victims of violent crime each year.

*Source: The Risk of Violent Crime. Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, 1985.*

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### Approximately six million Americans are victims of violent crime each year.

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■ Rape, robbery, and assault, the most serious of crimes measured by the National Crime Survey, made up 16% of the victimizations reported to the NCS.

■ Approximately 37% of all violent crimes reported to the National

Crime Survey are completed offenses; that is, the offender achieves his objective.

Source: *Criminal Victimization in the United States, 1986*. Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice.

### Perceptions of Violence

■ Most Americans believe that crime with the use or threat of force is more serious than crime that does not involve the use or threat of force, even if the value of the loss is the same.

Source: *The National Survey of Crime Severity*. Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, 1985.

### Injury by Strangers

■ Robberies and assaults involving strangers were less likely to result in injury (28.2%) to the victim than crimes involving non-strangers (37.8%).

Source: *Criminal Victimization in the United States, 1986*. Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice.

### Violent Crime Trends

■ Violent crimes, especially those committed by strangers, were no more violent during 1985 than they were during 1973. About one-fourth of all victims of violent crimes by strangers were injured each year.

■ During the same period, the percentage of violent crimes committed by relatives increased from 6% to 9% of all such offenses.

■ People living in cities experienced greater decreases in violent crime rates since 1981 than did people living in suburban or rural areas.

Source: *Violent Crime Trends*. Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, 1987.

### Lifetime Victimization

The following data are *estimates only*, based on current rates in the National Crime Survey. They should be interpreted only as indications of approximate magnitude, not as exact measures.

■ About 80% of the people now 12 years old in the U.S. will become victims of completed or attempted violent crimes during their lifetimes, if current crime rates continue unchanged. About one-half of them will be victims two or more times.

■ An estimated 3 of 10 of those now 12 will be victims of completed or attempted robbery in their lifetimes. The lifetime

chances of being the victim of rape or attempted rape are estimated to be 1 in 12 for a white female, and 1 in 9 for a black female.

■ About two-fifths of those now 12 years old are likely to be injured during a robbery or an assault in their lifetimes.

■ At recent homicide rates 1 out of every 133 Americans will become a murder victim. For black males, the proportion is estimated to be 1 of 30.

Source: *Lifetime Likelihood of Victimization*. Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, 1987.

### Weapons Use and Crime

■ Almost 13% of the estimated 65.3 million rapes, robberies, and assaults that occurred during the decade from 1973 through 1982 involved guns. Knives were used in 11% of such attacks, other weapons in 13%, and unknown types of weapons in another 2%.

■ Armed assailants (carrying guns, knives, or other weapons) were responsible for an estimated 24 million violent crimes between 1973 and 1982, or about 37% of all violent crimes. Specifically, one-half of all the robberies, one-third of all the assaults, and one-fourth of all the rapes that occurred were committed by armed criminals.

■ The offender fired a gun in about 25% of the violent crimes that involved only firearms during the same period. Less than 4% of victims were actually shot. Assailants armed only with a knife cut or attempted to cut about 22% of their victims.

Source: *The Use of Weapons in Committing Crime*. Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, 1985.

■ Fifty-two percent of commercial robberies involved the use of firearms in 1976. Seven percent of commercial robbers used knives, and 35% were unarmed.

Source: *Robbery in the United States: An Analysis of Recent Trends and Patterns*. National Institute of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice, 1983.

### Repeat Offenders

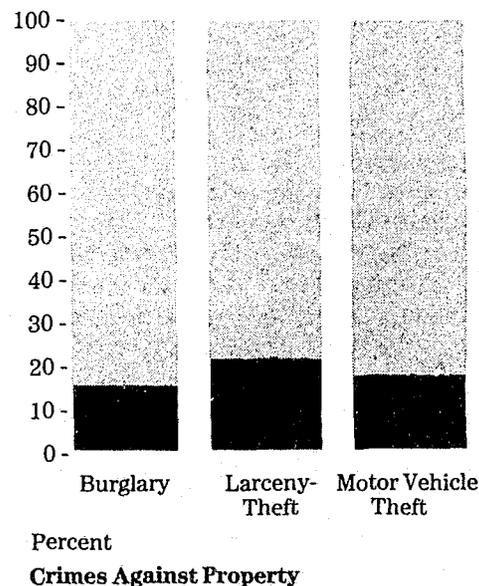
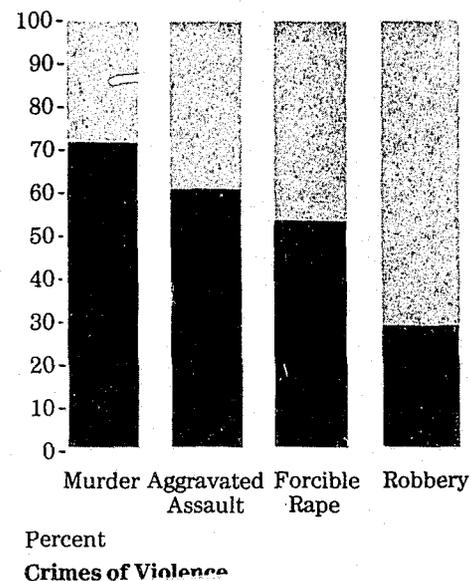
An emphasis in recent years is to target repeat offenders for incarceration. High-volume or habitual offenders, according to some studies, are responsible for the majority of the crime problem.

Selected national repeat offender statistics include:

■ According to a survey of 13,700 inmates, almost 80% had served a prior term of probation or incarceration as a juvenile or an adult.

■ More than 60% had been incar-

### Crimes Cleared by Arrest 1987



■ Not Cleared  
■ Cleared

cerated or on probation at least twice before. Almost 20% had served six or more prior terms.

■ Two-thirds of the inmates were serving a sentence for a violent crime or had previously been convicted of a violent offense.

Most of the 1986 prisoners (55%) were presently serving a sentence for a current violent crime.

Source: *Profiles of State Prison Inmates, 1986*. Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice.

■ Recidivists entering prison for robbery, burglary, or auto theft returned to prison more rapidly than those who entered for other crimes.

Source: *Bureau of Justice Statistics Annual Report, Fiscal 1985*. U.S. Department of Justice.

## Assault

By a substantial margin, assault is the most common violent crime. Some national assault figures include:

■ In 1987, according to the National Crime Survey, there were 4.5 million assaults in the United States.

■ There were 22.7 assaults per 1,000 citizens in the United States in 1987.

Source: *Criminal Victimization 1987*. Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice.

■ According to the National Crime Survey in 1986, males were almost twice as likely as females to be assaulted. The male assault rate was 28.8 per 1,000, and the female assault rate was 16.3 per 1,000.

■ Assault is the most common form of violent crime. As an example, those in the 16 to 19 age group had an assault rate of 50.6 per 1,000, the highest of any age

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### Assault is the most common form of violent crime.

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group. The high rate of assault is contrasted with 7.8 robberies per 1,000 and 2.2 rapes per 1,000 for the same age group.

■ Assaults are split almost evenly between those incidents involving strangers (53%) and those involving nonstrangers (47%).

■ The most common location for assaults was streets (20%). A total of 13.2% of assaults happened inside the victim's home or another building on the property,

12.4% of assaults occurred near the victim's home, and 9.8% occurred inside a school or on school property.

Source: *Criminal Victimization in the United States, 1986*. Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice.

■ Collectively, law enforcement agencies nationwide identified or arrested an offender in 59% of the reported cases of aggravated assault in 1987.

Source: *Crime in the United States, 1987*. Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Department of Justice.

## Rape

It is not unknown for a neighborhood to begin community-based crime prevention programs because of a local problem with rape.

■ In 1987, according to the National Crime Survey, there were 141,000 rapes.

Source: *Criminal Victimization 1987*. Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice.

■ Although women of all ages, races, and income levels are victims of rape, victims are more likely to be young and unmarried. Victims are disproportionately from low-income families.

■ Rapists usually operate alone, and most are unarmed. Most rapes are attempts rather than completed rapes.

■ There is approximately one rape per year for every 600 females age 12 and over.

The locations of rapes and rape attempts vary.

■ One-third of *completed* rapes occurred in the home. Nearly half of the rest occurred on the street or in a park, field, playground, parking lot, or parking garage.

■ One-fourth of the *attempted* rapes occurred in the home. Well over half of the rest occurred on the street or in a park, field, playground, parking lot, or parking garage.

■ Two-thirds of all rapes and rape attempts occur at night, with the largest proportion occurring between 6 p.m. and midnight.

■ An attack by a total stranger is the most common form of sexual assault. A woman is twice as likely

to be attacked by a stranger than by someone she knows.

■ More than three-fourths of all rapes involve one victim and one offender.

Source: *The Crime of Rape*. Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, 1985.

■ Law enforcement agencies identified or arrested an offender in 53% of known forcible rapes in 1987.

Source: *Crime in the United States, 1987*. Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Department of Justice.

■ In 1986, the percentage of rapes reported to the police (48.1%) was similar to the percentage reported for all violent crimes (49.6%). Fifty-eight percent of robberies and 47.6% of assaults were reported to law enforcement agencies.

■ There are larger differences, however, for the reporting of *completed* violent crime. For example, only 39.3% of completed rapes were reported, versus 69.7% of completed robberies.

Source: *Criminal Victimization in the United States, 1986*. Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice.

## Robbery

Robbery has been called by some the most destructive of urban crimes. The chance of a direct stranger confrontation with a possibility of injury produces considerable fear in urban residents.

■ According to the National Crime Survey, there were 1,030,000 personal robberies in 1987.

■ There were 5.2 personal robberies per 1,000 people age 12 and over in the United States in 1987.

Source: *Criminal Victimization 1987*. Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice.

■ The robbery problem (based on reported crimes) is highly concentrated in urban areas. One-third of all reported robberies occurred in the six largest cities in 1981. New York City alone had 18%.

■ The number of bank robberies has been growing rapidly in the last 25 years. The 56% increase between 1975 and 1980 represents its *slowest* rate of growth since 1957.

■ The most active robbers commit approximately 86 robberies a year each.

■ Most robbers reside in low-income areas and typically stick close to home when committing their crimes.

■ The most lucrative targets are in commercial areas of the city, and robbers who do travel tend to seek out such targets.

■ Most robberies involve two or more offenders (58%). The overwhelming majority of robberies involve a single victim (92%).

*Source: Robbery in the United States: An Analysis of Recent Trends and Patterns.* National Institute of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice, 1983.

■ Between 1973 and 1984, there were approximately 1.2 million robbery victims a year. The average annual rate was 6 per 1,000 persons for whites, and 14 for blacks.

■ One-third of all robberies that happened at or in the victim's home were committed by offenders with the right to be there, such as guests, relatives, repair personnel, etc.

■ About half of all completed robberies involve losses of \$82.00 or less. The average loss is \$447.00.

■ Guns were used in about one of every five robberies.

■ Robbery victims were more likely than rape or assault victims to encounter multiple offenders, strangers, or offenders with weapons.

■ Fifty-five percent of robberies took place in full or partial darkness.

■ Two-thirds of robbery victims lost money or property, one-third were injured, and almost one-fourth suffered both injury and property loss. About 1 in 12 robbery victims experienced serious injuries.

■ More than one-half of robbery victims were attacked, that is, were shot at, knifed, hit, or otherwise grabbed or held.

■ Three percent of all robbery victims also suffered a completed or attempted rape, and 8% were robbed during a burglary.

■ Persons 65 years of age and older were somewhat more likely

to be attacked during a robbery than victims of other age groups.

*Source: Robbery Victims.* Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, 1987.

■ In 27% of reported robberies in 1987, an offender was identified or arrested.

*Source: Crime in the United States, 1987.* Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Department of Justice.

## Burglary

Burglary, along with stranger violent crime, is judged to be a crime of high concern by the Bureau of Justice Statistics. The burglary incident has great potential for violence, and can cause considerable psychological damage to victims.

■ In 1987, according to the National Crime Survey, there were 5,623,000 burglaries in the United States.

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## The most common burglary is through unlocked doors or windows.

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■ Burglary occurs at the annual rate of 61.3 per 1,000 households in the United States.

*Source: Criminal Victimization 1987.* Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice.

■ In a study of burglary between 1973 and 1982, approximately 73 million burglaries occurred. A total of 2.8 million of these events resulted in violent crimes. Three-fifths of all rapes and robberies in the home and one-third of all household assaults are committed by burglars.

■ Burglaries are categorized in three ways by the NCS. The first is forcible entry. The second is attempted forcible entry. The third is an unlawful entry, in which someone with no legal right to be on the premises gains entry even though force is not used. Unlawful entry (i.e., through open doors or windows) or non-forcible burglaries accounted for 45% of all events. Forcible burglary made up 33%, and attempted forcible entry accounted for 22% of all burglaries.

■ The household characteristics of burglary events show that

black households with incomes less than \$7,500 per year, renters, those households with five to nine occupants in the unit, and urban dwellers suffer the highest rates of burglary.

■ When the time of the occurrence was known, burglaries were evenly divided between day and night for each type of burglary.

■ In terms of reporting burglaries to police agencies, 72.1% of the forcible entries were reported, 39.6% of unlawful entries were reported, and 34.1% of attempted forcible entries were reported.

■ A household member is at home during 13% of all burglaries. Three out of ten of these incidents result in a violent crime.

*Source: Household Burglary.* Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, 1985.

■ In 1987, an offender was identified or arrested in 14% of all burglaries.

*Source: Crime in the United States, 1987.* Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Department of Justice.

■ Over a 20-year period, about seven of every ten households will be burglarized at least once.

*Source: Lifetime Likelihood of Victimization.* Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, 1987.

## Motor Vehicle Theft

Motor vehicle theft is one of the most reported crimes to police agencies. It is also a crime that produces one of the highest work-time losses when it occurs (23.7% of completed thefts result in loss of time from work). A summary of NCS data includes:

■ Annually, 949,100 vehicles are stolen; there are 545,900 attempted thefts.

■ Motor vehicle thefts from 1973 through 1985 cost about \$52 billion (in 1985 dollars). The net loss to owners after recoveries and insurance payments was \$16.1 billion.

■ The number of completed motor vehicle thefts per 1,000 households fell 21% from 1973 (13.3) to 1985 (10.5). As measured by the rate per 1,000 registered motor vehicles, completed thefts per year during the same period fell 33%. There are 7 completed thefts and 4 attempted

thefts each year for every 1,000 registered motor vehicles.

*Source: Motor Vehicle Theft.* Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, 1988.

■ In 1987, 15% of reported motor vehicle thefts resulted in an offender being identified or arrested by police agencies.

*Source: Crime in the United States, 1987.* Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Department of Justice.

## Vandalism

Some surveys of citizens indicate that vandalism is one of their most feared crimes. Some vandalism statistics include:

■ The annual cost of vandalism in the United States is estimated at \$5 billion.

*Source: Vandalism: Research, Prevention, and Social Policy.* U.S.D.A. Forest Service, U.S.D.I. National Park Service, 1989 (in progress).

■ Eleven percent of respondents in a national Gallup poll reported that their homes had been vandalized in 1983. The percentage of those surveyed reporting that their homes had been vandalized has stayed at 10% to 11% since 1975.

*Source: Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics, 1984.* Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice.

■ A 1985 University of Michigan poll of high school seniors reporting victimization experiences within the last 12 months stated that 68.9% *did not* suffer deliberate damage to their cars, clothing, or other property. The percentage has remained relatively constant since 1976.

*Source: Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics, 1986.* Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice.

■ There were 273,500 arrests for vandalism in 1987. Arrests for vandalism increased 13.8% between 1978 and 1987.

■ For the same period, arrests for those under 18 years of age decreased 17.5%, while increasing 55.3% for those 18 years of age and older. For the same period, male vandalism arrests increased by 11.3%. Female arrests increased by 40.6%.

*Source: Crime in the United States, 1987.* Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Department of Justice.

## Crimes Against Business

Crimes against business affect all Americans. Jobs are lost due to business closings, retail districts that are vital to neighborhoods are damaged, citizens pay more for products, etc. There are few systematically collected figures for crimes against business.

■ Estimates of the economic cost of crime against business range from \$67 to \$300 billion a year.

*Source: Crime and Protection in America.* Hallcrest Systems, Inc., funded by the National Institute of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice, 1985.

■ Private security plays a major protective role in the United States. It employs an estimated 1.1 million persons, and total expenditures for its products and services were estimated at \$22 billion in 1980. In 1979, federal, state, and local law enforcement expenditures were only \$14 billion.

■ In retailing, the U.S. Department of Commerce estimates that the combination of shoplifting by customers and internal pilferage by employees adds as much 15% to consumer retail prices.

■ Incidents of employee thefts, insurance frauds, industrial espionage, commercial bribery, and computer crime tend not to be reported to police agencies.

*Source: The Growing Role of Private Security.* National Institute of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice, 1985.

■ The percentage of victimizations resulting in the victim's loss of time from work ranged from attempted robbery with injury (42.8%) to completed motor vehicle theft (23.3%) to rape (19.3%).

*Source: Criminal Victimization in the United States, 1986.* Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice.

■ In 1980, retailers lost approximately \$11.77 billion to shoplifting and employee theft. Losses due to employee dishonesty were more than twice as costly (\$8.08 billion) as those due to customer theft (\$3.69 billion).

*Source: Combatting Retail Theft: Programs and Strategies.* Butterworth Publishers. Original study financed by the National Institute of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice, 1984.

■ The robbery rate for businesses is ten times higher than that for private citizens.

*Source: Violent Crime in the United States,* Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, 1981.

## Blacks As Crime Victims

Crime against blacks has received considerable public attention in recent years. The following data represent some highlights of current research.

If current rates continue:

■ One of every 30 black males will be the victim of homicide. For the general population, the rate is 1 in 133.

■ Two in five black males will be victimized by violent crime *three or more times* during their lifetimes. This is almost double the likelihood for black females and more than triple the likelihood for white females.

■ On a lifetime basis, blacks are almost twice as likely to be robbed as whites. About one-half of blacks will be the victims of a completed or attempted robbery.

■ The lifetime chance of being the victim of a rape or attempted rape is estimated to be 1 in 12 for a white female, 1 in 9 for a black female.

*Source: Lifetime Likelihood of Victimization.* Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, 1987.

■ Blacks experience a higher rate of burglary (137.1 per 1,000 households) than whites (89.6). They also have twice the rate of forcible entry (59.7 per 1,000 households) than whites (27.9).

*Source: Household Burglary.* Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, 1986.

■ Blacks report a higher percentage of households with a Neighborhood Watch program *in their area* (23%) than whites (19%) or Hispanics (16%). Forty-two percent of black households *participate* in Neighborhood Watch programs where they exist, compared with 38% of white, and 29% of Hispanic households.

*Source: Crime Prevention Measures.* Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, 1986.

■ Homicide is the leading cause of death for blacks 15 to 35 years of age in the United States.

■ Homicide rates for blacks decreased by 21.7% from 1970 to 1983, whereas homicide rates for

whites increased by 30.2%. Despite these trends, homicide rates for blacks were still 5.3 times greater than for whites in 1983.

## Homicide is the leading cause of death for young blacks.

■ Most homicides occurred during the course of an argument or other nonfelony circumstance, and most victims knew their assailants.

Source: "Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report," October, 1987, *Homicide Surveillance: High Risk, Racial and Ethnic Groups—Blacks and Hispanics, 1970 to 1983*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control.

## Hispanics As Crime Victims

The National Crime Survey compiles rates on Hispanics compared with non-Hispanics, rather than separate Hispanic, black, and white categories. Some of the findings include:

■ In 1986, Hispanics had lower rates for crimes of violence (26.5 per 1,000) than non-Hispanics (28.2 per 1,000). The exception is robbery: 8 per 1,000 for Hispanics, compared with 4.9 per 1,000 for non-Hispanics.

■ Hispanics experience lower rates of crimes of theft (64.1 per 1,000) than those for non-Hispanics (67.6 per 1,000).

■ Hispanics have much higher rates for household crimes (232.3 per 1,000 households) than non-Hispanics (166.2 per 1,000). For instance, Hispanics have a burglary rate of 84.5 per 1,000 households, compared with 59.9 per 1,000 for non-Hispanics.

Source: *Criminal Victimization in the United States, 1986*. Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice.

## Elderly As Crime Victims

The elderly are often seen as vulnerable, potential victims of violent crime, yet they generally record low rates of victimization. However, for some NCS categories, the rates of victimization for the elderly are equal to or higher than those for younger persons. Their potential for injury and fear of

street crime lead some elderly to restrict their activities. Although not well documented, many believe that the elderly suffer high rates of fraud.

■ Americans 65 years old or older are considerably less likely to become crime victims than younger people. But crimes against the elderly tend to be more serious when they do occur. For example, elderly violent crime victims are more likely to face offenders with guns, and are more likely to be attacked by strangers than younger victims.

■ The rate of violent crimes per 1,000 people in 1987 was 6 for those 65 and older, compared with 67.5 for those age 12-24 years.

■ The 1985 violent crime rate for the elderly was 50% lower than the rate for 1973.

■ Violent crimes against the elderly are more likely to occur at or near their homes than offenses involving younger victims.

■ Among men and women at least 65-years old, males, blacks, divorced, separated people, and the residents of central cities had higher rates of victimization than their counterpart groups.

■ About 45% of violent crimes against the elderly were robberies, compared with 17% of violent crimes against teenagers and young adults, and 18% of violent crimes against all victims under the age of 65.

Source: *Elderly Victims*. Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, 1987.

## Teens As Crime Victims

Do teenagers suffer higher rates of crime than other groups? Where do crimes against teenagers occur? Are teens more likely to be victimized?

## Teenagers are more frequent targets of crime than any other age group.

Teenagers are clearly the most victimized age group in the United States. The findings include:

■ Teenagers are violent crime victims more than twice as fre-

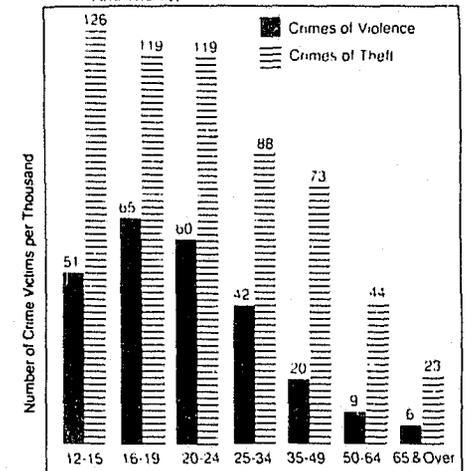
quently as adults. The average teen violent crime victimization rate for 1982 through 1984 was 60.1 per 1,000 people, compared with 26.9 for adults in general, and 4.9 for those age 65 and older.

■ For thefts, the teenage victimization rate is 123.5 per 1,000, compared with 65.6 for adults.

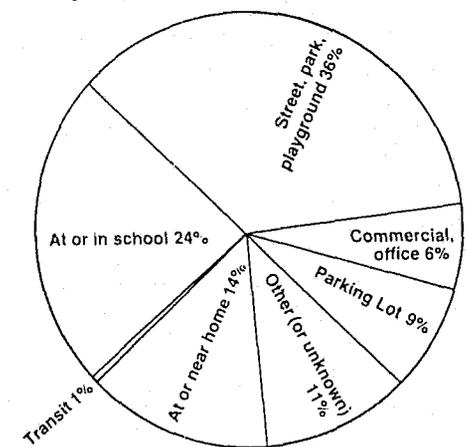
■ Teenagers are more likely to be victimized by someone they know than are adults. Violent crimes against teenagers are more likely to be committed by other teenagers than by adults.

### Who's Most Frequently Victimized?

Comparing Crime Victims By Their Ages And The Type of Crime Involved



Age Groups In Years



Where Violent Crimes Against Teens Occur

(1983 Victimization)

■ Crimes against teenagers are less likely to be reported to the police than are crimes against adults.

■ About one-third of all violent crimes against younger teenagers, and 83% of thefts, occur at school. Older teenagers suffer 42% of their theft losses and 14% of violent crime victimizations at school.

■ Thirty-five percent of violent crimes against older teenagers occur in streets or parks.

■ Teenagers are more likely than adults to be attacked during a violent crime.

Source: *Teenage Victims*. Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, 1986.

## Missing and Exploited Children

There is no official national register of missing children that might compare with the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports. There are no surveys currently available that would be comparable with the National Crime Survey. The estimates now available vary sharply depending on the definition of "missing child" and "exploited child."

Congress has mandated formal studies now being conducted through the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). These studies will investigate various definitions of "missing child," the best ways to measure at a national level the number of children who are missing, and the best estimates that can be made.

Although there is not a unanimous agreement on numbers, national authorities do concur that the largest category of missing children consists of runaways (young people who voluntarily leave home) and "throwaways" (young people forced by their parents or guardians to leave home). Many runaways return home on their own after only a few hours or days. Some experts suggest that runaways and throwaways be counted separately.

The next largest category of missing children, according to most authorities, consists of children abducted by a family member (usually the noncustodial parent) from the parent holding legal custody.

The smallest category numerically is that of children missing because of abduction by non-family members. The abductor may be known to the child or may truly be a stranger. Within this category, some children are murdered by their abductors; others

are physically or sexually abused or exploited.

## Children Kidnapped and Murdered by Strangers

Research just released by OJJDP finds that "the risk of a child being kidnapped and murdered by a stranger [is] much lower than early advocates of this issue thought it to be."

The study has found "... the number of stranger abduction homicides of children to be between 52 and 158 annually. These figures represent at most an average of less than two stranger abduction homicides per million children under the age of 18 each year, with teenagers between the ages of 14 and 17 years old being at much greater risk than younger children."

The researchers concluded that adolescents represent seven out of ten cases of suspected stranger abduction homicides, and the highest per capita rate of all age groups studied. For children ages infant to nine years, the rate is less than one per million.

For homicides in general, boys are twice as likely as girls to be the victims. But for stranger abduction homicides involving other known or suspected felonies, there are nearly two female victims for every male victim. Other studies have noted that girls are four times more likely than boys to be victims of abduction in general.

Proportionally, minority children are at greater risk than white children. The OJJDP study points out that the stranger abduction homicide rate for white children is "three times lower than the rates for blacks, twice as low as for Asian, and lower than for Native Americans."

The geographic distribution of this type of homicide varies from that of youth homicide in general. Youth homicides are statistically highest in the South; stranger abduction homicides are highest in the Northeast, followed by the West, with the Midwest and South roughly equal and significantly lower than the other two regions.

## Other Studies Under Way

The congressionally mandated studies are continuing, with data

expected in the next year on runaways and other categories of missing children. These will be released through the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Source: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice, September 1988.

## Child Abuse and Neglect

Over the past 20 years our understanding of the complex problems of child abuse and neglect has increased dramatically. This knowledge has improved our ability to help troubled families. Similarly, we have a better grasp of what we can do to prevent child abuse and neglect.

Just what have we learned? We have learned that a child of *any* age, sex, race, religion, or socioeconomic background can fall victim to abuse or neglect. We know that large numbers of children who are abused and neglected are never reported to the authorities. We have learned that we need to provide help and support to abused and neglected children as well as to their parents. Most importantly, we have learned that preventing child abuse and neglect is a community task. No one agency or professional alone can prevent and treat the problem; all citizens must work together to effectively identify, prevent, and treat the problems. The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act defines child abuse and neglect as "the physical or mental injury, sexual abuse or exploitation, negligent treatment, or maltreatment of a child under the age of 18" [definition shortened].

What makes child abuse and neglect *different from* crimes against children by strangers is that the person who harms the child is almost always the very person responsible for caring for and protecting the child.

Child abuse and neglect is categorized into four types: physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, and mental injury (also referred to as emotional/psychological abuse).

## Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is characterized by physical injury from punching, beating, kicking, biting, burning, or otherwise harming a child.

Although the injury is not an accident, the parent or caretaker typically has not intended to hurt the child. The injury may result from over-discipline or physical punishment that is inappropriate to the child's age.

### Child Neglect

Child neglect is characterized by failure to provide for the child's basic needs for food, clothing, shelter, supervision, education, and medical care. It is important to distinguish between willful neglect and a parent's or caretaker's failure to provide the necessities of life because of poverty or *cultural norms*.

### Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse includes fondling a child's genitals, intercourse, incest, rape, sodomy, exhibitionism, and sexual exploitation. To be classed under law as child abuse, the act must be committed by a person responsible for the care of the child (for example, a parent, a babysitter, or a day care provider). If a stranger commits the act, it is generally considered sexual assault and handled solely by the police and criminal courts.

Many experts believe that sexual abuse is the most underreported form of child maltreatment because of the secrecy or "conspiracy of silence" which so often characterizes these cases. Children are implored or threatened not to tell, frequently through blackmail or bribery.

### Mental Injury (Emotional/Psychological Abuse)

This form of child abuse includes acts or omissions by the parents or other persons responsible for the child's care that have caused, or could cause, serious behavioral, cognitive, emotional, or mental disorders.

Although any of the forms of child maltreatment may be found alone, we often find them occurring in combination. Emotional abuse is almost always present when other forms are identified.

### How Widespread is the Problem?

The most recent national study estimates that over 1.5 million children were abused or neglected nationwide in 1986. This represents a 74% increase in reported child maltreatment since 1980. An estimated 1,100 children died as a

result of abuse or neglect in 1986. Only 40% of maltreated children were officially reported to and investigated by child protective services agencies, even though reports have increased 57% since 1980.

### Which Type of Child Maltreatment Occurs Most Often?

The 1986 National Incidence Study found that the majority of cases (63%) involved neglect (1,003,600 children) and less than half (43%) involved abuse (675,000 children).

■ **Physical Abuse.** An estimated 358,300 children were physically abused in 1986 in this country (5.7 children per 1,000).

■ **Emotional Abuse.** The next most frequently occurring abuse is emotional abuse, involving approximately 211,100 children (3.4 children per 1,000).

■ **Sexual Abuse.** While sexual abuse remains the least frequent, its incidence is not far behind that of emotional abuse. The National Incidence Study found that 155,900 children nationwide experienced sexual abuse in 1986 (2.5 children per 1,000). It is important to note that the *reported* incidence of sexual abuse has more than tripled since 1980.

■ **Neglect.** The different types of neglect have different incidence rates. Physical neglect is the most frequent, involving 571,600 children (9.1 children per 1,000). The second most frequent type is educational neglect, involving 292,100 children per year (4.6 children per 1,000). The least frequently cited is emotional neglect, involving 223,100 children per year (3.5 children per 1,000).

*Source: Child Abuse and Neglect: A Shared Community Concern.* National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1988.

## Family Violence

The following data come from a National Crime Survey special report. The information *should not* be used as an indication of the total level of family violence in the United States. It is an estimate of the amount of family violence that people *consider* to be criminal and that victims *choose* to and are *able* to relate to interviewers. Despite its limitations, the infor-

mation is useful in describing statistically the general characteristics of family violence.

■ Crimes by spouses or ex-spouses make up the majority (57%) of all crimes committed by relatives, as measured by the National Crime Survey.

■ About one-fourth of the victims attacked by their spouses or ex-spouses reported that they had been a victim of a series of similar events (at least three) within the previous six months.

■ The most common reason (59%) for not reporting the crime to the police was a belief that the crime was a private or personal matter. The next most common reason, fear of reprisal, was indicated by 13% of those not reporting to the police.

■ Of all *spousal* violent crimes reported to the National Crime Survey, 91% were victimization of women by their husbands or ex-husbands.

■ Judging from incidents reported to interviewers, lower-income persons and those in the 20 to 34 age group were more likely than other age or income groups to be victims of family violence.

■ Although divorced or separated people make up only 7% of the population age 12 and over, about 75% of the spousal violence reported in the survey involved persons who were divorced or separated.

■ Reports to survey interviewers indicate that weapons (guns, knives, bottles, etc.) were used in about 30% of all violent crimes committed by relatives.

■ About half of the victims of family violence (49%) reported being injured in the attack, although 80% of those injured said that they suffered no worse than cuts and bruises.

■ In the nine-year period of this study, 4.1 million family victimizations were reported. A substantial number of these occurred at least three times within a six-month period.

*Source: Family Violence.* Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, 1984.

■ Calling the police following an act of domestic violence seems to reduce the risk of a husband

attacking his wife again within six months by as much as 62%.

Source: *Preventing Domestic Violence Against Women*. Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, 1986.

## Cost of Crime

### Cost of Crime

What is the cost of crime? While total costs are unknown, the following data represent the best available information:

■ Direct expenditures due to crime and crime prevention were approximately \$100 billion in 1983.

Source: *Making Confinement Decisions*. National Institute of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice, 1987.

■ Less than 3% of all government spending in this country goes toward crime and justice.

Source: *BJS Data Report, 1987*. Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice.

■ The median (midpoint) loss was \$80.00 for a violent crime victim and \$40.00 for a personal theft victim. The median loss for robbery was \$75.00. For burglary, the median loss was \$200.00.

Source: *Bureau of Justice Statistics Annual Report, Fiscal 1985*. U.S. Department of Justice.

For security expenditures and estimates of costs of crimes against businesses, see the Crimes Against Business section.

## Locations of Crimes

Citizens and criminologists often are interested in determining the locations of crime. By locating places of occurrence of high frequencies of crime, we can formulate better responses to the crime problem. Where do crimes of violence occur most frequently?

■ The most frequent location of crimes of violence is on the streets (22.5%).

■ The second major category for violent crime is inside one's own home or another building on the property (14.4%), with a location near one's own home a close third (12.3%).

■ Many people believe that the majority of violent crimes are committed in public settings, such as streets, parking lots, or playgrounds. While this belief may

apply to robbery, it is not true for rape and assault. Most rapes occur in "residential settings" (inside own home or other building on the property; near the victim's home; or at a friend's, relative's, or neighbor's home). The following represent the distribution of violent crime incidents according to place:

	Public Settings	vs.	Residential Settings
Rape	25.4%	vs.	57.2%
Robbery	49.3%	vs.	32.8%
Assault	32.6%	vs.	35.5%

■ Private settings (restaurants, bars, commercial buildings, schools, public transportation or stations) account for 7.2% of rapes.

■ Thirty-nine percent of stranger rapes occur in a residential setting. Seventy-five percent of non-stranger rapes occur in similar locations.

Source: *Criminal Victimization in the United States, 1986*. Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice.

■ When one compares violent crime rates for urban, suburban, and rural areas, one finds that violent crime rates are higher in cities (36.3 per 1,000) than in suburbs (23.8 per 1,000) or non-metropolitan areas (25.6 per 1,000).

Source: *Criminal Victimization in the United States, 1986*. Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice.

■ There is a connection between violent crimes in the home and burglary. Burglars commit three-fifths of all rapes and robberies in the home, and one-third of all household assaults. Someone is at home during 13% of all burglaries, and 30% of those incidents end in a violent crime.

Source: *Household Burglary*. Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, 1985.

■ The vast majority of crime committed against city, suburban, and rural residents in 1983 occurred in the general area where the victims lived. However, suburban dwellers were more likely to be victims of crimes of violence within the limits of nearby cities (12%) than were residents of cities to become victims in surrounding suburban areas (5%).

Source: *Locating City, Suburban, and Rural Crime*. Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, 1985.

## Persons who live in central cities are more likely than suburban or rural residents to be victimized

Victimization rates for persons age 12 and older

Place of residence and population	Crimes of violence	Crimes of theft
<b>Total all areas</b>	31	57
<b>All central cities</b>	36	62
50,000-249,999	35	60
250,000-499,999	37	62
500,000-999,999	41	65
1,000,000 or more	42	66
<b>All suburban areas</b>	29	52
50,000-249,999	28	51
250,000-499,999	30	53
500,000-999,999	30	56
1,000,000 or more	33	59
<b>Nonmetropolitan areas</b>	22	50

Note: Rates are per 1,000 population age 12 and older. The population range categories shown under the "all central cities" and "all suburban areas" headings are based only on the size of the central city and do not include the population of the entire metropolitan area.

Source: *Report to the Nation on Crime and Justice, Second Edition*. Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, 1988.

## Drugs, Alcohol, and Crime

■ Compared to 40% of the general U.S. population, 78% of state prisoners and 75% of all jail inmates reported having used drugs at some time in their lives. Marijuana is the most commonly used drug by state prisoners and jail inmates.

■ Habitual offenders and persons convicted of assault, burglary, and rape were more likely than other state prisoners to have been very heavy drinkers. Alcohol was most likely to have been used by jail inmates convicted of public order offenses and violent crimes, particularly manslaughter and assault.

Source: *Bureau of Justice Statistics Annual Report, Fiscal 1986*. U.S. Department of Justice.

■ From 53% to 79% of the men arrested for serious offenses in 12 major cities tested positive for recent use of at least one illicit drug, according to a Department of Justice-sponsored study in 1987. Most of those voluntarily tested were charged with such crimes as burglary, grand larceny, or assault.

Source: *Drug Use Forecasting*. National Institute of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice, 1988.

■ A quarter of interviewed state prison inmates said that they had drunk very heavily almost every day for the entire year before they entered prison.

*Source: BJS Data Report, 1986.* Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice.

■ Most violent (53.5%) and property (56.6%) offenders were under the influence of drugs or alcohol during the commission of the offense.

■ More violent offenders are under the influence of alcohol alone (20.1%) than of drugs alone (13.4%) at the time of the offense. Twenty percent were under the influence of both while committing violent crime.

*Source: Profile of State Prison Inmates, 1986.* Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice.

## Drugs, Alcohol, and Society

■ Drug abusers are four times as likely to be involved in an accident on the job as nonabusers. They're far more likely to have auto accidents and extensive hospitalizations.

■ Workers who abuse drugs and alcohol have absenteeism rates at least four times higher than nonabusers.

■ Recent reports show that drug users function at about 65% of their work potential.

■ The National Institute of Drug Abuse estimates that nearly two-thirds of the people now entering the workforce have used illegal drugs and one out of every ten Americans has tried cocaine.

■ Cocaine-related deaths rose 91% in the United States between 1980 and 1983.

■ Estimates indicate that one in every ten employees has a serious drinking problem.

■ In families with at least one alcoholic spouse, the rate of separation and divorce is seven times that of the general population. Alcohol is also a contributing factor in many child and spouse abuse cases.

■ Alcohol-related traffic accidents are the most common cause of death among teenagers.

■ Alcohol is involved in 55% of all arrests, 65% of all homicides, 69% of all assaults.

*Source: Working Together To Take A Bite Out of Crime: A Corporate Action Kit.* The National Crime Prevention Council, 1986.

## Young Persons' Use of Drugs

The National Adolescent School Health Survey was conducted in the fall of 1987 and included approximately 11,000 8th and 10th grade students from public and private schools. The survey included questions on illicit drug use, cigarette and alcohol use, suicide and depression, violence, AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases, and nutrition. Highlights of findings on drug, cigarette and alcohol use include:

■ Fifteen percent of 8th grade students report having tried marijuana and, of these, 44% report first use by grade 6. Thirty-five percent of 10th grade students report having tried marijuana, with 56% of them reporting first use by grade 8.

■ Twenty-one percent of both 8th and 10th grade students reported trying inhalants (glues, gases, sprays). Sixty-one percent of the 8th grade students reported first use by grade 6; 78% of the 10th grade students reported first use by grade 8.

■ A quarter of 8th grade students and 38% of 10th grade students reported having five or more drinks on at least one occasion during the two weeks prior to the survey.

■ Of those students who have tried cocaine, 62% of the 8th grade students reported first trying it in grades 7 or 8. Seventy-six percent of 10th grade students first tried it in grade 9 or 10.

■ Of those students who have tried cigarettes, 72% of 8th grade students and 41% of 10th grade students reported first use by grade 6 or before.

■ Four out of five students saw a moderate or great risk from occasional use of marijuana; 88% from cocaine powder; and 77% perceive a moderate or great risk from occasional use of inhalants.

Since 1975, the University of Michigan has conducted an annual sur-

vey of drug use among high school seniors, college students, and young adults, for the National Institute of Drug Abuse. The following are a few of the most important findings to emerge in the 1987 survey.

■ Over half (57%) of last year's high school seniors had tried an illicit drug, and over a third had tried an illicit drug other than marijuana.

■ Although overall drug use among young people continued a trend of gradual decline, the United States still has the highest rate among the world's industrialized nations.

■ The first substantial decline in cocaine use among American high school seniors, college students, and young adults was detected in 1987.

■ Cigarette smoking—which researchers say will take the lives of more young people than all drugs combined—has not dropped among high school seniors since 1984.

■ The use of alcohol was little changed. Nearly all (92%) high school seniors have experienced alcohol, and nearly two-thirds are current users.

*Source: University of Michigan Press Release on "Illicit Drug Use By American High School Seniors, College Students, and Young Adults," January 12, 1988.*

## Crime and Schools

The educational process cannot be effective in an atmosphere of violence. In some school districts, students, teachers, and parents are creating crime prevention programs and educational projects (Law-Related Education) that help reduce crime rates. Please note that NCS data include victimization rates only for those age 12 and above. Some selected findings from the national data include:

■ According to the National Crime Survey, 8.6% of violent crimes in the United States occur inside schools or on school property; 12.4% of simple assaults in the United States happen in schools or on school property; and 4.8% of robberies and 1.6% of rapes nationally occur in schools or on school property.

■ The majority of school crimes involve nonstrangers; 61.1% of

crimes of violence in or around schools involve nonstrangers. A similar percentage holds true for assault. One hundred percent of rapes were reported to have involved nonstrangers. However, most robberies (62.9%) were committed by strangers.

*Source: Criminal Victimization in the United States, 1986.* Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice.

■ According to a study conducted in 1981 by the National Education Association, 95.3% of public school teachers reported they were *not* physically attacked by a student in the last 12 months.

■ About one-third of all violent crimes against younger teenagers and 83% of thefts occurred at school. Older teenagers suffered 42% of thefts and 14% of violent crimes at school.

*Source: Teenage Victims.* Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, 1986.

■ In a recent Practicum on Schoolyard Bullies sponsored by the National School Safety Center, participants suggested that 15% of school children are involved in bully-victim problems. One in ten students is regularly harassed or attacked by bullies. Bullies have a 1 in 4 chance of having a criminal record by age 30. Other children have a 1 in 20 chance. A 1984 study by the National Association of Secondary School Principals found that 25% of students have serious concerns about bullies.

*Source: "Notable School Crime and Violence Statistics Since 1978."* National School Safety Center.

■ The Safe School Study, conducted by the National Institute of Education in 1978, is the most recent comprehensive school crime study available. It reported that over 61,000 teachers were physically assaulted in 1976. Each month an estimated 282,000 junior and senior high school students are attacked and 112,000 are robbed.

■ The same study indicated that only 8% of all school administra-

tors report serious problems, and most administrators believe that the problem of violence and vandalism, which increased during the 60s and the 70s, has leveled off in the last five years. The same study also indicated that outsiders *are not* responsible for most problems of violence in the school, and that fear of crime is more pervasive and damaging than the actual criminal acts. A major point of the study was that program and policy changes can and do bring about a reduction in the problem.

*Source: School Crime: The Problem And Some Attempted Solutions.* National Institute of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice, 1979.

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### **The majority of school crimes involve nonstrangers.**

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■ In addition to estimating the number of incidents by type, researchers have attempted to document other characteristics of school crime.

—Location. There is general agreement that classrooms are the safest places in school, considering the amount of time spent in them. The greatest risks are posed in hallways and on stairs.

—Timing. The risk of personal violence, personal theft, and disruptive/damaging acts is highest during regular school hours, and especially during midweek. A number of school principals found that thefts of personal property are highest during the lunchtime break.

—Weapons. A relatively small percentage of school offenses involve weapons. Most have found that knives are far more prevalent than guns on campus, while sticks or bats may also be used in school robberies and assaults.

—Reports to Police. Only a small percentage of the incidents that occur on school grounds are ever reported to the police.

*Source: Reducing School Crime and Student Misbehavior: A Problem-Solving Strategy.* National Institute of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice, 1986.

### **Sources**

Most of the titles mentioned in this report are available from

The National Institute of Justice/  
NCJRS  
Box 6000  
Rockville, Maryland 20850  
800-851-3420  
301-251-5500

Several useful documents containing statistical information are available free through NCJRS:

*Criminal Victimization in the United States*

*Report to the Nation on Crime and Justice* (1988)

*Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics*

In addition, you can be placed at no charge on an automatic mailing list for future National Crime Survey documents.

The FBI Uniform Crime Reports annual summary, *Crime in the United States*, can be obtained from:

The U.S. Government Printing Office  
Document Order Section  
Washington, D.C. 20402

*Crime in the United States, 1987*, costs \$16.00. The order number is 027-001-0047-5. Payment must accompany your order.

If you have questions about cited reports, or need further information on crime prevention activities, get in touch with:

National Crime Prevention Council  
1700 K Street, N.W.  
Second Floor  
Washington, D.C. 20006  
202/393-7141

Please include a daytime telephone number with all correspondence.

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# MARCH AGAINST FEAR

## Introduction

Is your community plagued by the growing crisis of violent crime and victimization? Are citizens fed up with gaps in the criminal justice system that allow our neighborhoods and homes to become bastions of crime? If so, it's time for you to consider organizing a community-wide *March Against Fear* in conjunction with National Victims' Rights Week.

The concept of the *March Against Fear* emerged in Fort Worth, Texas--home of the *National Victim Center*--in 1989. The impetus for the *March* and corresponding rally was the abduction, rape and murder of 14-year-old Amy Lynn Thatcher, who was kidnapped while walking to school on September 16. Amy's alleged murderer was a parolee who was free on bail despite his involvement in two other sexual assault investigations.

A coalition of women's organizations was joined by our *Center* and other programs to plan and implement the *March Against Fear*. The highly successful event was pulled together in about a week, relying on local news media and "word of mouth" to publicize the event. Over 1,000 citizens--women, children and men--attended the *March* and rally.

The *Center* encourages you to organize a similar *March Against Fear* and rally in your community to "kick-off" National Victims' Rights Week on Sunday. The theme we have selected--"*Victory Over Violence*"--supports our conviction that only with the support and involvement of all citizens can we deter criminals, strengthen our criminal justice system, and support improved victims' rights and services.

## "March Against Fear" Checklist: A Description of Tasks

### COORDINATION OF TASKS

#### Determine Sponsorship:

Your *March* should look for co-sponsors far beyond the traditional criminal justice and victim service organizations with whom you usually commemorate National Victims' Rights Week. Suggestions for potential co-sponsors include, but are not limited to:

- Elected officials (national/state/local);
- Civic organizations;
- Chambers of Commerce;
- Community service agencies;
- Women's organizations;
- Labor unions;

- Law enforcement agencies, unions and related organizations;
- Political parties;
- Print and broadcast news media;
- Schools (elementary/secondary/colleges/universities);
- Student groups;
- Parent Teacher Associations; and
- Teachers' organizations and unions.

### **Planning Sessions:**

Once you've secured co-sponsors, plan on hosting at least three planning sessions prior to your *March*. It's helpful if your meetings are scheduled on the same day of the week at the same time, preferably in the evening to allow co-sponsors with full-time jobs to attend.

Your planning sessions should result in: a "countdown calendar" leading up to your *March*; identifying logistics related to the *March*; and delegating tasks.

### **Delegating Tasks:**

It's helpful to organize a *Coordinating Committee* with one representative from each co-sponsoring organization. The following logistics require sub-committees whose Chairperson will report back to the *Coordinating Committee* at each planning session: *Correspondence Committee*; *Program and Agenda Committee*; *Logistics Committee*; and *Media Committee*. You should also consider establishing a *Victims Committee* that will work with criminal justice and victim service programs to encourage crime victims' participation in and support of the *March*.

It's a good idea to also assign one co-sponsor to be the Chairperson of the project. His or her responsibilities will include chairing each planning session and coordinating the various activities of the Committees mentioned above.

### **Volunteers:**

Each Committee Chairperson should assume responsibility for securing volunteers to assist him or her in accomplishing tasks. It's a great idea to "mix and match" volunteers from each co-sponsoring organization so everyone can make new friends and professional contacts.

## **COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Correspondence Committee**

#### **Letters to Potential Co-sponsors:**

(7 weeks in advance)

The sample co-sponsor letters included in this section should be sent to all organizations, businesses and individuals concerned with crime and victimization (refer to *Determine Co-sponsorship* above for suggestions).

**Letters to Elected Officials and Dignitaries:**

(6 weeks in advance)

Think big! You should invite city, county and state officials (including your Attorney General and Governor), along with your Congressman and U.S. Senators. When considering dignitaries, some suggestions include: local network news anchors; professional athletes (where applicable); and local celebrities.

A sample letter inviting elected officials and dignitaries to the *March* is enclosed.

**Letters to Potential Speakers:**

(5 weeks in advance)

You should have one speaker "kick-off" your *March Against Fear*, with several speakers to inspire the crowd at the rally ending the *March*. Some suggestions include: a key elected official; your police chief; a crime victim; and a local dignitary or celebrity.

A sample letter inviting speakers to participate is enclosed.

**Letters to Victims and Victims' Families:**

(5 weeks in advance)

This correspondence (sample enclosed) should be coordinated by the Chairperson of the *Victims Committee*. It's very important to have as many crime victims as possible participate in the *March* to draw attention to National Victims' Rights Week.

**Thank-you Letters:**

(week after event)

The enclosed sample thank-you letter will recognize all those who made your *March* a big success, and help encourage their continued support for victims' programs and services in your community.

**PROGRAM AND AGENDA COMMITTEE**

**Determine Color Coordination:**

(6 weeks in advance)

At the 1989 *March Against Fear* in Fort Worth, participants wore red to express their outrage at crime and victimization. Designating one color for both attire and props (balloons, flowers, etc.) will enhance the visual effect of your *March* for the media.

**Secure Color Guards:**

(3 weeks in advance)

Securing color guards from local and state law enforcement agencies will clearly indicate police support for your *March*, and will also add to the overall visual effect. Color guards can march together, or lead and follow the participants.

At the rally, your color guards should stand at attention surrounding the lecturn.

**Secure a Choir:****(4 weeks in advance)**

A choir or choral group can commence your *March* and/or lead the participants in song at the corresponding rally. Check with local high schools, colleges, universities, churches or choral organizations to secure a choir.

Some suggestions for songs include: *Kumbaya*; *Amazing Grace*; *Blowing in the Wind*; *America the Beautiful*; and/or the *Star Spangled Banner*.

**Logistical Considerations:****(4 weeks in advance)**

You may wish to have all participants do something in unison, depending on the props you make available, such as: joining hands; releasing balloons; carrying signs; carrying flowers; singing songs; and/or wearing buttons.

**Producing Buttons:****(4 weeks in advance)**

The enclosed camera-ready art for buttons features the *March* slogan, "*Victory Over Violence*." The 2-inch buttons should be printed in the *March* color designated by this Committee.

Buttons can be reproduced inexpensively. Check with your local political parties or labor unions to see if they have a button machine you can borrow, or if they are willing to donate labor to make buttons. Also, look in your *Yellow Pages* under "buttons" for companies that specialize in this activity.

**Design Program:****(2 weeks in advance)**

Your program should be printed on 8 1/2" by 11" paper (an attractive 80-pound stock is best) in the *March* color chosen by this Committee. Camera-ready artwork for your cover is included in this kit. Folding each program in half will give you four panels to fill:

- Panel 1: Title; Date; Time; and Location;
- Panel 2: List of Co-sponsors;
- Panel 3: Agenda for *March* and Rally; and
- Panel 4: Appreciation to Donors.

**Print Programs:****(2 weeks in advance)**

Check with local printers to see if one will donate his or her services. An alternative is to ask one of the co-sponsoring organizations in your business or civic community to cover the cost of printing. Make sure you print enough programs for all participants and for the media kits.

**Prepare Sign-in Sheets:****(1 week in advance)**

All *March* participants should sign-in prior to your event. Provide volunteers with clipboards and plenty of pens or pencils. Also, designate special sign-in sheets for: elected officials; dignitaries; speakers; victims; and the media.

A sample sign-in sheet is included in the *Candlelight Vigil/Balloon Lift* section of this kit.

## LOGISTICS COMMITTEE

**Plan Route of March and Site for Rally:** (7 weeks in advance)

It's a good idea to begin your *March* at a location with plenty of space for a large group of participants. A park, convention center or shopping mall parking lot provides a good starting point.

The *Center* recommends that you conduct the rally at your county courthouse. Limit your *March* to 10 or 12 blocks at the most, since young participants may tire easily.

**Obtain Permits:** (7 weeks in advance)

Permits are required for both your *March* and rally. Obtain official permission in writing, and make sure your *Logistics Committee* Chairperson possesses copies at your events. Also, ask for the name and telephone numbers of permits contact persons who can assist you on the day of your events.

**Secure Street Closures for March Route:** (6 weeks in advance)

Check with your municipal offices and/or police department to obtain permission to close off the *March* route to traffic. Assign a volunteer to coordinate this project with the law enforcement agency that will be putting up blockades.

**Arrange for Security:** (3 weeks in advance)

Local law enforcement agencies and their respective officer associations should be willing to donate security services. Security volunteers should provide assistance with crowd control, be able to provide guidance and directions, and maintain a safe environment.

**Arrange for Refreshments (optional):** (3 weeks in advance)

With a large number of people gathering for several hours, it's a nice idea to offer refreshments at the beginning of the *March* and end of the rally. Depending on the weather, you should ask a local fast food restaurant to provide coffee, juice or soda (along with cups). Make sure you have volunteers to serve the beverages, along with trash cans for dirty cups.

**Prepare a Banner:** (2 weeks in advance)

An excellent visual tool to lead your *March* is a large banner proclaiming "*March Against Fear*" (see example on page B-9). An additional banner with the *March* theme, "*Victory Over Violence*," would also be excellent. Check your *Yellow Pages* under "signs" for companies that produce such banners and, of course, ask for donated services. An alternative is to make your own banners out of felt or paper (felt banners can be retained for future *Marches*). Remember, use the color(s) selected by the *Program and Agenda Committee*.

**Prepare Other Visuals:****(4 weeks in advance)**

Additional visual props will make your *March* colorful, exciting and attractive to newspaper and television cameras. Some suggestions for visual props which should be secured in advance include:

- Balloons;
- Flowers;
- Signs; and
- Small American Flags.

All visual props should be color coordinated. Co-sponsoring organizations should be encouraged to bring a sign or banner with their name on it. Likewise, all participants should be encouraged to bring smaller signs with their personal messages. Consider sponsoring a poster party the day before your *March* to "mass produce" smaller signs for participants to carry, utilizing themes relevant to violence, victims' rights and services, and crime prevention.

**Secure Tables:****(2 weeks in advance)**

You should have two 6-to-8 foot tables at both the starting point of the *March* and at the rally site. Your tables should be staffed with volunteers to: serve as a central location for volunteers who are signing in participants; sign-in media representatives; and provide information upon request.

**Secure Lecturn and Public Address System:****(2 weeks in advance)**

If your *March* ends at your county courthouse, ask a friendly judge to help you secure a lecturn for the rally. You might consider hanging a small banner proclaiming "*March Against Fear*" or "*Victory Over Violence*" on the front of the lecturn.

Contact local churches, civic organizations or schools to obtain a public address at no cost. A portable P.A. system will allow you to transport it easily from the beginning of the *March* to the rally site. Make sure you double-check your P.A. system immediately prior to your *March* and rally for sound levels and static.

**Secure American and State Flags:****(2 weeks in advance)**

Flags provide good visuals for both the front of the *March* and the rally (positioned on each side of the lecturn). Again, ask a friendly judge to loan your coalition his or her courtroom flags for both events. Make sure you have two volunteers to carry each flag and make sure they are returned in excellent condition.

**Arrange for Clean-up:****(2 weeks in advance)**

Plan to have at least 10 volunteers to help with cleaning duties prior to the *March*, covering the entire *March* route, and following the rally. Provide them with large trash bags (the brand with built-in ties are best). Make sure they leave all event sites as clean as when you began so you'll be welcome back in the future.

## **MEDIA COMMITTEE\***

### **Public Service Announcements:**

**(5 weeks in advance)**

The **sample public service announcements** included in this kit should be mailed to the public service directors of both radio and television stations in your community (*news directors* may handle PSA's at some stations). Follow-up with telephone calls to insure that the stations received the PSA's, and answer any questions, upon request. Also, ask public service and news directors for other opportunities to promote your *March*, such as news and talk shows. Provide articulate spokespersons for these tasks.

### **Press Release:**

**(10 days in advance)**

The **sample press release** can be tailored to meet your individual needs. Double-space your release, and designate one contact person to handle all media inquiries.

### **Follow-up Phoning:**

**(1 week in advance)**

Please refer to the *Candlelight Vigil/Balloon Lift Description of Tasks Media Section* for guidelines on phone calls relevant to both public service announcements and your press release.

### **Editor's Advisory:**

**(1 week in advance)**

Your editor's advisory is the final reminder to local news media about the *March*, and should be mailed to journalists who confirm that they "will" or "might" attend your event. Your advisory should contain the "who, what when, where and why" concerning the *March*. Please refer to the *Candlelight Vigil/Balloon Lift Description of Tasks Media Section* for proper format and content.

### **Compile Materials for Media Kits:**

**(1 week in advance)**

You should have at least 20 media kits available on the day of your *March*. Your kit should be in pocket folders in the designated *March* color with a cover glued or imprinted on the front which features the *March* camera-ready logo artwork (**sample enclosed**). Your kits should include: a program; a copy of your press release; copies of remarks by key speakers (double-spaced); and brochures or other brief information about the primary co-sponsors of the *March* (optional).

### **Collate Media Kits:**

**(day before event)**

Two or three volunteers can collate your media kits the day before or morning of the *March*. Kits should be available prior to and during the *March*, and at the rally.

\* Make sure your media list is updated (with contacts' complete names and titles prior to accomplishing these tasks.

## VICTIMS COMMITTEE:

### General Responsibilities:

This ad-hoc committee should consist of representatives from all *March* co-sponsors that provide direct services to victims of crime. Responsibilities include:

- Personally inviting crime victims and survivors--either by letter (sample enclosed) or telephone--to participate in the *March*;
- Publicizing the *March* in their respective newsletters; and
- Providing support to victims and survivors on Sunday, upon request.



Fort Worth Star-Telegram: RON T. ENNIS

Stretching across Main Street, marchers make their way to the Tarrant County Courthouse

## Marchers a thousand strong unite to denounce violence

BY HOLLACE WEINER  
Fort Worth Star-Telegram

FORT WORTH — Wearing red to express their outrage, about 1,000 people silently marched down Main Street yesterday to focus attention on the violence that has touched women and children across Tarrant County.

Dubbed a March Against Fear, the hour-long rally that ended with a chorus of *Amazing Grace* was filled with speeches and tributes delivered from the granite steps of the Tarrant County Courthouse.

"Violence in our society and in our cities

is touching every one of us, young and old alike, and this monster — fear — haunts every neighborhood," said Fort Worth City Council member Kay Granger.

"We march today recognizing this is not a women's issue. It is a community issue. We have asked that men of good will fight against this menace," she said.

The march began at 2 p.m., nine blocks south at the Fort Worth-Tarrant County Convention Center where people variously attired in red T-shirts, red ties, red shoes and red dresses signed on as part of a

(More on MARCH on Page 4)

## March / From Page 1

coalition against violence.

Many picked up long-stemmed carnations from a large floral boy and began quietly marching down Main Street.

Seven-year-old Douglas Mavey of Euless carried a placard that asked, "Why can't I play outside?"

Ray Stewart, whose daughter, Sheri Stewart Coulson of Watauga, was murdered five years ago by an intruder now serving a life sentence, carried a sign bearing the name of his organization, Families of Murder Victims.

Stewart, whose 25-year-old daughter left two young children, said: "This march is a good representation of the frustration the public is feeling right now. This is a beginning."

The impetus for yesterday's rally — organized by a coalition of women leaders — was the kidnap, rape and murder of Amy Lynn Thatcher, a 14-year-old abducted while walking to school Sept. 16. The man indicted in her slaying is a parolee who at the time was involved in two other rape investigations.

"When she died, she became everyone's child and every parent's nightmare," said Joanne Shaffer, outreach coordinator for the National Victim Center, whose headquarters are in Fort Worth.

Among the packed crowd on the courthouse steps listening to Shaffer was the Thatcher family, each wearing a T-shirt bearing the slain girl's picture and the admonition, "Let's not forget Amy Lynn Thatcher."

"The randomness of this crime. The innocence of this victim. The courage of her family riveted our attention and

Granger said people who signed their names to membership lists at the start of the march would be asked to work on campaigns calling for harsher sentences for violent offenders; mandatory counseling for sexual offenders; tighter school security; more parole and probation officers, and more attention to victims' rights.

Also on the granite steps of the courthouse were Fort Worth Mayor Bob Bolen, County Judge Roy English, state Rep. Doyle Willis, state Sen. Hugh Parmer and Rep. Pete Geren. The congressman helped hold a white banner with red lettering that declared: "March Against Fear."

The afternoon rally also drew protesters with placards advocating other causes such as ending abortion ("Stop the Violence of Abortion"), gun control ("No Time For 911 — Use 9 mm") and capital punishment ("Hang 'em High on Public Gallows").

"You guys with your signs of hate are out of line in this crowd," said Karen Perkins, director of Tarrant County Women's Center. "We must console each other and unify, but never as vigilantes, never as perpetrators of hatred and violence."

County Commissioner Dionne Bagby said: "This march came from those people who said love and care . . . not hang and shoot."

Andy Anderson of Fort Worth, who carried a sign reading "Hang Savages," explained: "This is a time-honored tradition here in Tarrant County. They used to solve problems this way. I think it's time we honored that tradition in our community. Hang savages. Hang

that when they come up for re-election the public will be aware of their record.

"We the people are being held prisoner by the fear of crime," Shaffer said. "We the people deserve the right to be protected from violence."

She urged the crowd to vote Nov. 7 for Proposition 13, a Texas constitutional amendment that would add crime victims' rights to the state Bill of Rights.

"The only right victims have is to be present when the crime is committed," she said. "There have been far too many Amy Lynn Thatchers."

Deborah Caddy, director of the Rape Crisis Program, said that in 1988 there were 751 reports of rape in Tarrant County involving women and children from 5 months to 90 years of age.

Perkins recalled that it was at the courthouse in August where Juanita Hermosillo was taken hostage by her former boyfriend, who killed her, then turned the gun on himself.

"The courthouse has become a symbol of the overburdened criminal justice system in deep trouble," Perkins said.

Katie Sherrod, *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* columnist, whose work as a reporter in the early 1970s led to the creation of both the Rape Crisis Program and Women's Haven, a shelter for battered women, urged the crowd to join hands to show its unity.

"Let's connect," Sherrod told the crowd.

As Sherrod continued speaking, people with red carnations clasped hands with one another and raised their arms against the blue sky.

## SAMPLE LETTER TO POTENTIAL CO-SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS

Name/Title  
Organization/Agency/Business  
Street Address or P.O. Box  
City/State/Zip Code

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ :

The annual commemoration of National Victims' Rights Week is scheduled for (dates). During this special week, crime victims and their advocates nationwide will join forces to draw attention to the devastation caused by crime and victimization. Americans are fed up by violence, and too often experience lives full of fear resulting from the threat of violence.

Here in (your city), a number of social service programs, along with civic groups and businesses, is joining together to sponsor a "March Against Fear" and rally to kick-off National Victims' Rights Week on Sunday, (date), at (time) at (location). The theme of our March is "Victory Over Violence." We believe the time has come for us to take back our streets, and send a strong message to criminals that they are not welcome in (your city).

I would like to invite you to co-sponsor the "March Against Fear." With broad-based community support, we can bring together hundreds--even thousands--of citizens to take a united stand against crime and victimization. The support of you, your staff and (constituents/members/customers) will make this possible.

The first planning session for the "March Against Fear" co-sponsors is scheduled for (day/date), at (time) at (location). I hope you or a representative of your (organization/staff) can attend.

Please let me know if your (organization/agency/business) will be able to join this worthwhile effort. I can be reached at (area code/telephone number).

I look forward to seeing you on (date of planning session)

Sincerely,

## SAMPLE LETTER TO DIGNITARIES AND ELECTED OFFICIALS

Name/Title  
Agency  
Street Address or P.O. Box  
City/State/Zip Code

Dear :

I am aware of your ongoing commitment to fight crime and help innocent victims in our (community/state). Many citizens share your concerns, along with a growing frustration about how violence is tearing away at our community and devastating individual citizens--young and old.

On (day/date), (list of co-sponsors) are sponsoring a community-wide "March Against Fear" beginning at (location) at (time). You are cordially invited to attend.

The March will kick off our community's activities to commemorate National Victims' Rights Week, scheduled for (dates). Similar "Marches Against Fear" will be co-sponsored across the nation on (date) by the National Victim Center of Fort Worth, Texas, a resource agency that serves thousands of criminal justice and victim service organizations in the United States.

The purpose of the "March Against Fear" is to bring together the citizens of (city) and send a strong message that only by joining forces will we ever be able to achieve "Victory Over Violence"--the theme of the March.

Unfortunately, time limitations prevent us from having many public speeches presented at the March and corresponding rally. However, if you would like to submit a brief statement indicating your views of violent crime and victimization, please mail it to me no later than (one week before the March). We will include a copy of your remarks in our media kit.

All participants are encouraged to wear (designated March color). You may also wish to bring a sign or other visual statement of your concern.

We have received a heartening response to the March from businesses, civic and community organizations, and individuals from throughout (city). I hope you, your family and friends can make a special effort to join us on (date). Your participation will help make our "March Against Fear" a big success.

If you are able to join us, please call me at (area code/telephone number) so that we may acknowledge your presence at the March.

On behalf of the March co-sponsors, I look forward to seeing you on (date).

Sincerely,

## SAMPLE LETTER TO POTENTIAL SPEAKERS

Name/Title  
Street Address or P.O. Box  
City/State/Zip Code

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ :

The annual observance of National Victims' Rights Week is scheduled for (dates). To commemorate this special week, a number of (city) organizations, businesses and citizens are sponsoring a community-wide "March Against Fear" on (day/date) at (time) at (location).

The theme of the "March Against Fear" is "Victory Over Violence." The March co-sponsors hope to send a strong message that (city) is fed up with crime and victimization, and that our citizens are joining forces to take back our streets and neighborhoods.

March co-sponsors include: (list co-sponsoring organizations, agencies and businesses).

We would be honored if you could join us on (date) and present brief remarks (5 to 7 minutes) to our participants (prior to the March/at the rally following the March). Your comments about crime and victimization will, undoubtedly, inspire March participants to continue their commitment to address these important issues. If you can provide me with a copy of your remarks (one week before event), we would like to include it in our media kits.

Please let me know by (one month prior to event) if you will be able to join us on (date).

Your support of this special event will be truly appreciated. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

## SAMPLE LETTER TO VICTIMS AND VICTIMS' FAMILIES

Name  
Street Address or P.O. Box  
City/State/Zip Code

Dear :

You may be aware that National Victims' Rights Week is scheduled this year for (dates). To commemorate this special week, a number of community, civic and victim service organizations--along with the (city) business community and elected officials--are sponsoring a "March Against Fear" on (day/date) at (time) at (location).

The theme of the March--"Victory Over Violence"--focuses on the fact that only with widespread support from all citizens of (city) will we ever be able to combat violence and the tragedy of victimization. You know better than anyone what a devastating impact crime has had on our community.

We would like to invite you, your family and friends to join us for the "March Against Fear" and rally on (date). All participants are encouraged to wear (designated March color). You may wish to bring a photo, sign or other visual statement to remind us all of the crime victim experience.

Your participation, and that of your loved ones, will be a welcome addition to our March. Please make a special effort to join us, and help send a strong message to criminals that the citizens of (city) are ready to take back our streets and neighborhoods.

If you have any questions regarding the "March Against Fear," or if you need additional information, please call me at (area code/telephone).

I hope to see you on (date).

Sincerely,

## SAMPLE THANK YOU LETTER

Name  
Street Address or P.O. Box  
City/State/Zip Code

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ :

On behalf of the co-sponsors of the (year) "March Against Fear," I would like to thank you for (describe contribution or donation). We are very pleased with the success of the March, and hope to make it an annual event.

Your support of this worthwhile community effort contributed to its success. We sincerely appreciate your commitment to fight crime and aid victims in (city).

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

## SAMPLE PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

:30

Are you fed up with violent crime in (city)? Do you think it's time to take back our streets and neighborhoods from vicious criminals?

If so, please join the citizens of (city) on (day/date) at (time) at (location) for a "March Against Fear." Together, we can send a strong message that violence will not be tolerated.

Help us begin to achieve "victory over violence" in our community. Join the "March Against Fear" on (date). And please, wear (designated color) as a display of unity with the many citizens who will march against fear on (date).

For additional information, please call (area code/telephone number).

# # #

:20

Please join with the citizens of (city) on (day/date) at (time) at (location) for a "March Against Fear" to kick off (year) National Victims' Rights Week. Let's send a message to violent criminals that we're joining forces to take back our streets and neighborhoods. Bring your family and friends and please, wear (designated color) for this special event.

For more information, please call (area code/telephone number).

# # #

:15

If you're sick and tired of violent crime in (city), join a community "March Against Fear" on (day, date) at (time) at (location). Please wear (designated color), and bring your families and friends. It's time to take back our streets and neighborhoods from the criminals! It's time to fight for "victory over violence."

For more information, please call (area code/telephone number).

# # #

## SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE\*\*\*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
(Date)

CONTACT: (Name)  
(Telephone Number)

### "Marchers to Lead Efforts Toward Victory Over Violence"

(City)--A coalition of (city's) civic, social service and business communities is sponsoring a "March Against Fear" on (day), (date), at (time) at (location). The March will kick off our community's observance of National Victims' Rights Week, scheduled for (dates).

After gathering at (location), participants will walk (#) blocks to the (county) courthouse for a rally.

According to organizers, the "March Against Fear" will bring together citizens of (city) to denounce violence and the tragedies caused by victimization.

"The U.S. Department of Justice tells us that five out of six of today's twelve-year-olds will be the victim of crime in his or her lifetime," explained (spokesperson). "It's a tragedy that the odds are against our kids to lead safe, productive lives." \*\*\*

"The first annual 'March Against Fear' will bring our community together to let criminals know we're ready to fight back, to take back our streets and neighborhoods," (spokesperson) concluded.

Featured speakers for the March and rally are (list major speakers). Color guards from local law enforcement agencies will join the March, and the (name of choir) will perform at the courthouse rally.

March participants are encouraged to wear (designated color) to display unity with other marchers. Participants will receive [(color) balloons/flowers or flags, etc.] prior to the March.

For additional information about the "March Against Fear," please call (organization) at (area code/telephone number).

-30-

\* Double-space release.

\*\* Attach list of co-sponsors to press release with paper clip.

\*\*\* Update statistics annually.

# SCHOOL SAFETY: INVOLVING STUDENTS AND THEIR COMMUNITIES

## Introduction

Each year in America, almost half a million incidents of violence occur on school campuses. The threat of crime in our nation's schools has become a growing concern among parents, teachers, school administrators, and students themselves.

The *National School Safety Center (NSSC)* in California serves as a resource center for information, curricula and technical assistance concerning crime prevention and victim assistance for America's schools. Each year in October, the *NSSC* leads the effort to promote *National Safe Schools Week*.

In conjunction with this annual observance, *NSSC* publishes *101 School Safety Ideas*. This excellent document includes ideas to involve students, their families, teachers and administrators in special projects, promotions, and public awareness activities to promote crime prevention and victim services in schools.

During National Victims' Rights Week and throughout the year, the involvement of schools, students and the education community is critical to our mutual goals of preventing crime and helping those who are traumatized by violence. The *NSSC* has granted permission for the National Victim Center to include 101 School Safety Ideas in this *Strategies for Action* kit. We're confident you'll find these ideas very useful for planning National Victims' Rights Week activities, along with promoting school safety and victim assistance on a year-round basis. By making these ideas available to schools in your community, you can provide an extremely valuable public service to students, parents and educators.

The *Center* is grateful to the *National School Safety Center* for its contribution to this kit. For additional information about the many programs and publications offered by *NSSC*, please write: *National School Safety Center*, 16830 Ventura Blvd., Suite 200, Encino, CA 91436, or call (818) 377-6200.

# 101 SCHOOL SAFETY IDEAS

## PRIMARY STRATEGIES

There are 12 essential ideas which will help inform, persuade and integrate school safety and public opinion. These strategies will facilitate planning and implementing activities for all your publics.

1. **Convince your school board, superintendent and principals that quality education requires safe, secure and peaceful schools.** Stress the basic concept that school safety is a community concern requiring a community response. School administrators should assume the roles of facilitators and coordinators of community efforts to ensure safe schools.
2. **Develop a school safety clearinghouse for current literature and data on school safety issues.** Much of this material can be obtained from individuals, groups or publications of the *National School Safety Center*. Key topics to include are school crime and violence, drugs, discipline, attendance and drop-outs, vandalism, security, weapons, victim assistance, youth suicide, child abuse and school law.
3. **Help establish a clearly defined, mandatory district policy for reporting disruptive incidents.** This includes a standard form to provide complete, consistent information on accidents, discipline problems, vandalism and security problems, as well as suspected child abuse. After the policy is developed, distribute it to all district personnel and monitor compliance.
4. **Prepare a school safety public information brochure.** It should briefly explain the important issues and the specific roles individuals and groups can play to promote safe and secure schools.
5. **Actively assist district administrators to develop safety policies.** Keep current with trends and exemplary programs in education, public relations and, specifically, school safety. Make plans and implement them with authority and conviction. Confidence and willingness to accept responsibility are persuasive qualities in the minds of district administration and other school employees. In *Rogers' Rules for Success*, public relations authority Henry Rogers stresses the importance of *psycho-relations*, which he describes as "a tool by which we sell ourselves to other people. Psycho-relations is people relations elevated to the highest level."
6. **Develop and regularly update a school safety fact sheet for your district.** Provide current statistics on incidents of crime and violence, discipline actions and suspensions, attendance, vandalism and repair costs. When appropriate, indicate what percentage of the entire student population the problem students represent. Use this to inform and educate the public and media.
7. **Create a school safety advisory group.** This advisory group should include representatives from all publics, especially law enforcers, judges, lawyers, health and human services professionals and the media. Individuals should be able to articulate the desires of the groups they represent and relate advisory group actions back to their peers. Seek out members who can be relied upon for

consistent, continued support and who are seeking solutions rather than recognition and status from their participation. Recruit group members with special qualifications, such as policymaking authority, access to the media, or the ability to mobilize volunteers or raise funds.

8. **Support America's Safe Schools Week.** The third week (Sunday through Saturday) in October is designated annually as "America's Safe Schools Week." The week is sponsored by the *National School Safety Center* and state governors and schools around the country. This national observance recognizes effective programs and groups that promote safe schools, drug abuse prevention and improved student attendance, and it encourages others to replicate them. This week is an appropriate time to initiate many of these 101 school safety ideas.
9. **Develop and maintain a resource file of "shakers and movers,"** community people known for their abilities to shape public opinion and accomplish goals. Rely on advice from community leaders, as well as the local media, to develop a comprehensive list.
10. **Build a public relations team, starting with school employees.** The education of students is a business which must compete with other interests for public support. School employees are the best public relations people because they are inside authorities. Treat these people as your most important team players. Expressing appreciation and confidence helps maintain high morale. Nominate school principals, teachers and staff for recognition programs sponsored by local groups or state and national associations and government agencies. Such recognition reflects positively on the recipients and the schools and districts in which they are employed. For example, *Principals of Leadership* is a program sponsored by the *National School Safety Center* specifically to recognize principals who through their effective leadership promote safe campuses and quality education. The 10 principals selected annually are profiled in a national public service advertising campaign.
11. **Create a comprehensive identity program for your district.** An institution's identity or image is, in many ways, a direct reflection of its administration, school employees and students. Develop a symbol to be used on all printed material and distributed to the media for use when reporting on the district. Special promotional items, using this symbol, can include shirts, hats, lapel pins, coffee mugs and bumper stickers. A slogan, if thoughtfully developed and used, also can have a positive effect on the public's perception of the district.
12. **Publish a district magazine and distribute it as widely as possible.** Include board members, district employees, parents, students, community residents, business and civic leaders, local government officials and the media as recipients. The content should be balanced with specific district news and special features on topical education issues. Give the magazine a real name, not a generic title such as "bulletin," "newsletter" or "journal." Creating this name identity is an obvious opportunity to individualize and distinguish your magazine. Readers are more inclined to relate to a publication if aided by a mental association between the title and the contents. Also, it is important to take the advice of the advertising industry and "package your product as attractively as possible to encourage the public to examine the contents." No matter how important the message, it will go unnoticed if it cannot compete with other "attractive distractions" such as TV, recreational reading, and other magazines and newspapers.

## **WORKING WITH SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS**

Board of education members need to "buy in" to the importance of public support for school safety.

13. **Place board members at the top of your mailing list so they receive copies of every internally and externally distributed communication.** This includes the district magazine, student newsletters, events calendars, teacher memorandums, parent notices, activity announcements, news releases and letters of commendation. For especially significant or controversial issues, try to get board members copies of materials in advance of others on the mailing list.
14. **Invite board members to visit school sites regularly.** Develop a standard itinerary and include lunch with students and staff. This personal contact helps break down barriers and stereotypes.
15. **Arrange for board members to make presentations before service groups and the media.** Help them prepare written and visual materials for these presentations, press interviews and radio and television talk show appearances. Include suggestions on how to respond to anticipated questions.
16. **Continually educate board members about the positive benefits of public relations and school safety.** Maintain a constant flow of news articles, trade journal articles and weekly updates on all district news, good and bad.

## **WORKING WITH SCHOOL EMPLOYEES**

Often school employees are the only contact community residents have with a school. As an inside authority, their attitudes and opinions carry a great deal of weight locally. Regular district communication with school employees can minimize internal conflict and promote teamwork. Take the time to circulate among school employees, asking for advice based on their first-hand experiences.

17. **Coordinate school safety workshops** which outline the relationship of school safety to quality education and emphasize the need for public support for schools. Educate employees about their specific safety responsibilities.
18. **Coordinate school law seminars for school employees.** Invite law enforcers, lawyers, judges, health and human services officials, and probation officers to train school employees about the juvenile justice system and its relationship to effective schools.
19. **Sponsor classroom management seminars.** Use actual case studies, such as student misbehavior problems from local schools, as part of the training. This helps teachers identify more readily with the situation and mitigates "that doesn't happen here" attitudes.
20. **Honor meritorious service of school employees with special recognition days and awards.** The administration, students, parents and community residents can all participate by preparing signs, speeches and awards or plaques. Consider placing a full-page

"thank-you" announcement listing the names of every teacher in the local newspapers. Introduce a monthly "shining apple" award to be presented to the teacher or staff member who contributes most to improving campus climate.

21. **Print business cards for all school employees.** This is a simple and relatively inexpensive expression of the district's respect for its employees and their work.
22. **Encourage teachers to contact parents regularly,** by phone or letter, to inform them about the good things students are going. Develop a system to enable teachers to call or write parents routinely and conveniently. Provide space and time for teachers to meet regularly with parents at school and recommend that teachers initiate these informal meetings as frequently as possible. Monitor the participation.
23. **Print shirts, hats, badges or lapel pins with the district symbol** and award them to teachers and staff for exemplary work which has promoted a positive campus climate.
24. **Encourage teachers to incorporate safety topics into the curriculum.** For instance, social studies or civics classes can discuss *Gallup's* annual school-public attitude polls; physical education courses can include instruction on physical safety; chemistry classes can examine the negative effects of drugs on the human body; English classes can write essays on self-esteem, character education or student misbehavior; and art classes can promote safer campuses by designing posters with safety messages.
25. **Encourage teachers to develop parent-student assignments with safety themes.** For example, teachers can assign an essay discussing current changes in the campus climate or school safety problems compared to those of 20 or 30 years ago. Similar assignments can involve students and grandparents.
26. **Inform teachers and staff of special visitors on campus.** Invite school employees to meet and possibly join special visitors for lunch.
27. **Develop a policy, form or box for suggestions to improve campus climate.** This also can be used as a formal system to recommend students and school employees for recognition for special work. Respond to all messages promptly and, when appropriate, personally thank the individual who offered the advice.
28. **Promote school employee professionalism by helping employees get published.** Provide assistance in drafting and submitting feature and technical articles to newspapers and trade journals. Also invite school employees to participate in a district speakers' bureau.
29. **Include retired school employees on your publications mailing list.** Dispel the "out-of-sight, out-of-mind" attitude. These individuals often can be your most vocal supporters and active volunteers.

## **WORKING WITH STUDENTS**

Students are both the cause and victims of much of the crime and misbehavior on campuses. As a doctor seeks input from a patient, school administrators must listen and respond to the messages communicated by students. Most of the following ideas and

activities require initiation by administrators and teachers. Once students experience the positive results of these activities, however, they likely will assume the responsibility for maintaining many of them.

30. **Initiate programs to promote student responsibility for safer schools.** Create a "student leader" group, representing leaders from all formal and informal campus groups. Work with this representative group as role models to assist and encourage school safety activities among their peers. Also, student government representatives can form a student safety committee to identify potential and present safety problems and their solutions.
31. **Encourage student input in district policy by appointing one or more student representatives to the school board.** These students would participate in discussions and planning but not as voting members.
32. **Create and publicize safety incentive programs.** These programs share a percentage of the district's savings with schools if vandalism is reduced. Such programs encourage students to take responsibility for vandalism prevention. Often students are allowed to help decide the projects on which the funds are spent.
33. **Coordinate student courts.** Student judges, lawyers, jurors, bailiffs and court clerks, trained by local justice system experts, hear and try cases involving fellow students. Student courts are not moot courts--they hear real cases, make real judgments and pass real sentences. Student courts give everyone a chance to learn first-hand about the court system, and they help teach students the importance of laws in a democracy.
34. **Establish local branches of student safety groups,** such as *SADD (Students Against Driving Drunk)* and *Arrive Alive* which sponsors alcohol-free social activities. Consider promoting student and parent groups that provide rides home to teen-agers who have been drinking.
35. **Conduct regular student attitude surveys and print the results in school bulletins.** Provide commentary on results and relevant policy. Clarify prejudices or misconceptions that may appear in the responses. Although ensuring anonymity promotes accurate survey answers, students should be encouraged to propose and take credit for submitting ideas.
36. **Make "idea boxes" for students available in libraries or other neutral locations.** Respond to all signed notes.
37. **Develop a student recognition process** which makes it convenient for teachers to report positive student actions to the administration for appropriate recognition in school and at home.
38. **Develop a "buddy system" for new students** which assigns current students to newcomers to facilitate an easy transition.
39. **Develop an informal system** which assigns older, bigger students to look out for other students who, for whatever reason, seem to be bullied by others.

40. **Institute a "Class Act" project** by which each incoming class plans a special project to be completed during the course of its years on campus. The project could be a special publication, a new school sign, special benches, landscaping, murals, monuments, a multimedia production or some other project the class presents to the school as its "legacy."
41. **Plan a community beautification campaign** for the school and neighborhood using students as a work crew. Graffiti and vandalized areas should be priorities. With professional guidance, students can help maintain campuses, parks and other community areas. Beautification projects serve the dual purpose of enhancing the appearance of the community and developing a strong sense of pride and ownership among participants.
42. **Develop a "Big Student-Little Student" program** between high schools, junior highs and elementary schools. Student participants regularly visit and share thoughts, concerns and advice with one another.
43. **Help students get noticed in the community** by arranging to display art, writing or other works in banks, libraries and various public facilities.
44. **Work with local colleges and universities to arrange faculty seminars and exchange visits by students.**

#### **WORKING WITH PARENTS**

In *Discipline: A Parent's Guide*, the *National PTA* identifies the key parental responsibility: set a good example. Children learn more by how parents act than by what they say. The theme for most of these ideas is to get parents to make a commitment to participate in the education of their children. Parental pride and involvement in the school sets a positive example for children.

45. **Make time for any parent who wants to meet with you.** Treat visiting parents as colleagues in the business of educating children. Always listen before you talk because often they just need to be heard. Try to conclude sessions with a commitment for support from parents.
46. **Encourage parents to communicate openly and regularly with their children about health and safety.** Also, urge parents to translate the negative effects of vandalism, theft, arson and other "impersonal" crimes into terms children can appreciate, such as "our" taxes and "your" special activity dollars going for repair costs.
47. **Establish a welcoming committee to greet new community residents.** Enlist parent volunteers to provide information, answer questions about school activities and encourage participation.
48. **Develop, revive or enhance parent-teacher group participation.** Be persistent in building membership. Plan interesting and useful activities and meetings, such as forums on effective parenting. Consider parent interests first, because whatever it takes to get parents involved in school activities is worthwhile. Fostering friendships between parents can have additional safety-related benefits because these friendships provide positive examples for children.

49. **Develop a parent-on-campus policy which makes it convenient and comfortable for parents to visit the school.** Get the program off the ground by inviting an initial group of participants who can spread the word.
50. **Call parents at home or even at work to congratulate them on their child's special achievement or to thank them for support on a special project.** Short letters of appreciation or thank-you notes also are very well received.
51. **Sponsor a "Generation Day" at school.** In addition to a special tour and presentation, consider arranging for a portrait photographer to take "multiple-generation" pictures.
52. **Organize parent phone banks.** Use the phone bank to solicit volunteers for special school projects, seek participation at meetings or conduct attitude surveys.
53. **Distribute a curriculum calendar to parents.** Keep them informed about topics and courses currently taught or planned for the future.
54. **Initiate breakfast or lunch clubs for working parents.** Flexible meeting times should be used to accommodate working parents.
55. **Help establish a policy in which parents become financially liable for damage done by their children.** Parents and children need to be made aware of the serious consequences of criminal actions. (This already is state law in many parts of the country. In these areas, the responsibility is to inform students and parents).

#### **WORKING WITH COMMUNITY RESIDENTS**

Just as communities work together to prevent crime with *Neighborhood Watch* programs, they can be mobilized to make schools safer and better. Because ideas for working with parents are addressed separately, these suggestions concentrate on community residents without school-aged children. They are designed to communicate to this critical group that they do have indirect, as well as direct, relationships to local schools. Public opinion polls suggest the more people are involved in schools, the more likely they are to have a favorable opinion of them.

56. **Let the community share your concerns.** Hold a series of briefings for community residents to inform them of school problems directly affecting them. Property values are lowered when neighborhood schools have poor reputations and areas suffer from vandalism, crime by truants, drug trafficking and drop-outs who end up dependent on public support. Solicit advice from community residents and conduct follow-up meetings to keep community representatives updated on progress. Residents also can be encouraged to hold "block coffees" for neighbors and school representatives.
57. **Form "School Watch" programs** in which neighbors around the school are asked to watch for and report suspicious activities in the area to school or law enforcement officials. Signs can be posted on the school grounds warning: "This school is protected by a neighborhood School Watch."

58. **Start a "Safe House" program**, which recruits responsible community residents willing to post "Safe House" signs in their windows. Children are taught that houses posting these signs are safe places to go if they are in danger or need assistance. Volunteers need to be closely screened before they are accepted and given a sign.
59. **Use outdoor posters or school marquees to announce school events** to area residents and invite their participation or attendance. Roadside signs declaring, "A community is known by the schools it keeps," have also been used to stimulate community partnerships.
60. **Recruit community residents, particularly retired teachers and senior citizens to prepare school activity packets to distribute to new residents**, including those without school-aged children.
61. **Honor all school volunteers with a luncheon** and give special recognition to three or four people deemed particularly "outstanding" by school employees.
62. **Offer adult education classes on campus during regular school hours.** Courses can range from classes on crafts to income tax preparation. These classes are beneficial to community residents and integrate them into the school community.
63. **Take advantage of special events**, such as county fairs, shopping center promotions and local festivals to set up school district information booths. Propose student participation in such events.
64. **Use school facilities to offer health clinics**, including CPR courses, blood pressure checks, nutrition breaks, exercise and aerobics classes. Encourage senior citizens to participate.

#### **WORKING WITH THE ELDERLY**

The largest growing special interest group in this country is the elderly. Although age is not a reason to deal differently with this group, they do have some special qualities and concerns. Time and experience are prized commodities in all public relations planning, and members of this group often are willing to supply them. The most important benefits of such contact, perhaps, is developing a mutual respect, appreciation and understanding between youth and senior citizens.

65. **Recruit senior citizens in your community to participate at local schools.** Arrange for seniors to make school presentations to history classes about public attitudes and "first hand" experiences during significant times in our country's history. Small group discussions, chaired by senior volunteers, can be especially educational. Seniors also can participate as teacher or staff aides, student advisors and tutors, special activity organizers, playground supervisors and dance chaperones.
66. **Issue "Golden Apple Cards" to senior residents in the community who volunteer time on school projects.** The cards could allow seniors free or reduced price admission to school programs, such as musical concerts, plays and athletic events.

67. **Help integrate students and senior citizens by arranging for students to visit senior centers, convalescent centers or retirement homes.** Students can present plays and musical programs; home economic classes can prepare special meals; art classes can decorate the facilities; and engineering or shop classes can make small repairs. Younger children, particularly, can add a great deal of joy with regular visits to seniors. Some school groups may wish to participate in "adopt-a-grandparent" programs.

## **WORKING WITH SERVICE GROUPS**

Most communities have dozens of service, civic, religious and other special interest groups. Each organization's headquarters office or president's address should be included on the district magazine's mailing list. As you identify groups working in the public interest, try to match their interests with school district needs by developing programs centered around education. For example, a neighborhood association could work with students on a neighborhood clean-up or beautification project.

68. **Use school facilities and available resources to help youth groups.** Scouting organizations, *Campfire* troops, *Boys' and Girls' Clubs*, *YMCA* and *YWCA*, *4-H*, *Red Cross* youth programs, and youth sports clubs are natural groups with strong ties to schools. Since these groups touch many families and often receive support from influential non-parents, schools should make a special effort to develop continuing relationships. One approach is to establish an advisory council of representatives from all the groups to coordinate needs and resources and plan future joint ventures.
69. **Encourage participation of clergy in the development of citizenship education programs.** Character development, self-discipline and respect are appropriate topics for both sermons and classroom lectures. Consider organizing a representative group of parents, educators and religious leaders to develop a booklet which discusses these issues for students.
70. **Coordinate presentations to service groups by members of the school district speakers' bureau.** Arrange for student and staff speakers, providing regular updates on the specific topics and presenters available. Help speakers develop pre-packaged presentations which include a short slide show or videotape, school publications for distribution, background material on topics of special interest to specific audiences and a closing statement which encourages group members to work with the school.
71. **Use service group newsletters to inform members about special school programs.** Submit fillers, including student essays and art, to editors. Use these forums to encourage school volunteerism as part of their public service work.

## **WORKING WITH BUSINESS LEADERS**

The business community is a natural partner for local schools. Businesses have an immediate vested interest in good schools--quality education for the children of their employees. And they have a long range interest--a well-trained work force.

The quality of life and the quality of education in the community are inseparable, and business leaders understand this. These ideas are suggested to take advantage of this vested interest.

The term "business" is used to identify a profession or company generically, and it encompasses both management and labor. In fact, the logical place to start business partnerships is to meet with representatives from the local *Chamber of Commerce* and labor unions.

72. **Arrange regular presentations by business leaders to students, as well as teachers and parents.** Professional, practical advice is valuable in understanding different professions are career opportunities. Coordinate career days at which business leaders participate in seminars, distribute information packets and present demonstrations.
73. **Promote "adopt-a-school" programs.** This trend in school-business partnerships unites a business with a school needing resources the business can supply. These business sponsors can donate equipment or excess supplies and "overage." They can provide company or staff services, such as bookkeeping, transportation, building repairs, maintenance, and professional instruction on computers or other new equipment.
74. **Involve business leaders in study or planning groups** to share with school districts their business problem solving techniques, such as personnel and finance management, resource allocation, building maintenance and marketing, public relations and advertising recommendations. Insights on how the private business sector solves problems can be enlightening and often cost-effective when implemented by schools.
75. **Coordinate field trips to business offices and production plants.** Witnessing the practical application of skills can make students more appreciative and understanding of classroom instruction.
76. **Develop a qualified student employment pool.** Work with business leaders to develop the criteria of a desirable employee. Closely screen applicants for the pool based on the qualifications requested by the prospective employer. Advertise the availability of this conscientious, willing work force to local businesses.
77. **Help realtors sell your schools.** Quality schools are a high priority with prospective home buyers. Work with real estate agents, brokers and boards to promote the positive qualities of your schools. Create a special task force to address problems, such as vandalized property, graffiti, loitering students, unkept school grounds and even low test scores. General information and training seminars, which explain how real estate personnel can "sell" schools, can be added to regular office and real estate board meetings.
78. **Solicit support from local businesses patronized by students and their parents.** Work with them to develop a marketing strategy that provides discounts to students and parents and, at the same time, promotes their products or services. Book and record stores, clothing retailers, arts and crafts shops, sporting goods outfits and even gas stations can benefit from such promotions.
79. **Trade your district magazine advertising space for "in kind" services.** This often is a valuable "foot-in-the-door" with future major donors.

80. **Take advantage of lawyers' pro bono (free public service) responsibilities.** Lawyers can provide law-related in-service workshops for school employees on safety issues and trends. They can make class presentations which introduce students to the practical aspects of civil and criminal law, rights and responsibilities. Lawyers can assist in setting up "experiential learning" situations, in which students learn about the law through field trips to courthouses, city council meetings or the legislature. Many law firms around the country also are "adopting" schools. In fact, a New York based law firm developed the *Mentor* program to identify these lawyer/school partnerships.
81. **Team up with professional sports groups.** Some opportunities include student recognition days at the stadium and free or discount seats awarded for special student achievements. Professional athletes can be great role models. Arrange for them to visit campuses and talk about staying in school, rejecting drugs and alcohol, working hard and obeying the rules to be successful. Often professional team promoters will work with public institutions to produce public service announcements.
82. **Request special printing rates.** Develop an ongoing relationship with one printer. Good customers may be rewarded with preferential treatment and occasional discounts. Sometimes printers will make available paper stock overage and slow press time at reduced rates or no cost. They also may allow you to "piggyback" your job (at no charge) on another press run. Offer to credit the company on your printed material. Commercial designers and typesetters occasionally will offer discount prices on their services.

## WORKING WITH GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES

Unanimous political support for quality education presents schools with a variety of opportunities. Many federal, state and local agencies and officials provide resources and services that can be helpful to schools. Identify the key government officials and political representatives in your area and add their names to your mailing list. At the same time, start a file on materials, resources and services they have to offer. Learn their primary interests in schools and explore means to effectively integrate them with your needs. If top policymakers are not easily accessible, request they assign a regular contact person to work with you.

83. **Establish a school district orientation plan for newly elected government representatives.** By initiating these relationships, you enhance opportunities for future access. Offer to compile data needed by government officials to support education proposals and provide lawmakers with the implications of particular legislation from a practitioner's point of view.
84. **Routinely invite your government representatives to school functions.** Provide them with the opportunity to address the gathering and always recognize them formally when they attend. Give elected representatives advance warning if the audience's attitudes may create conflict. As fellow public servants, although you may disagree with officials over policies, your professional courtesy will be appreciated.

85. **Have government officials sponsor student government days.** Consider teaming government representatives with students to propose solutions to real problems faced by students and schools, including drug abuse, drop-outs, vandalism, personal safety, even fiscal and social problems.
86. **Use your influence to help other public interest groups.** The umbrella of quality education covers many related social causes that also will benefit schools. By helping other groups in their time of need, educators provide an important base for future school efforts. For instance, many senior citizens are losing the battle against inflation. The benefits to senior citizens from schools and the dollars spent to fund them are abstract at best. As school enrollments decline, taxes increase and aid to senior citizens decreases, seniors could become very vocal opponents of increased school budgets. To mitigate this conflict, work with senior groups to pass legislation which provides them with whatever tax exemptions or government support is legally and financially possible.
87. **Sponsor public debates on controversial political issues.** Besides being informative, the debate format typically generates public interest. Invite state and local politicians and recognized experts to participate. Most policymakers appreciate the opportunity to make large group presentations. Notify the news media of your event.

#### **WORKING WITH LAW ENFORCERS**

Law enforcement and schools need one another. Both groups represent highly trained professionals who have the welfare of the students and school community in mind. The respective roles of each must be clearly understood so they can work together effectively to deal with problems of mutual concern. Annual planning sessions and monthly briefings with law enforcement representatives, district administrators and school employees provide the opportunity to brief each other on safety issues and prevention and intervention strategies.

88. **Request a risk management or safety assessment audit of your schools by local law enforcement agency personnel.** This procedure will validate safety concerns and help establish response strategies.
89. **Establish an "Officer Friendly" program at your schools.** Invite local law enforcers to make presentations to students on child safety, drug abuse prevention and other juvenile justice practices and policies. Law enforcers visiting schools can demonstrate tools of their trade, including trained police dogs, breathalizers, first aid and emergency vehicles. The more comfortable students become in relating to law enforcers, the greater will be their appreciation for them and the laws they enforce. Similar programs also can be conducted at the school for community residents.
90. **Coordinate student and staff "ride-along" programs with officers on patrol.** This is an effective means for law enforcers to gain the respect and confidence of youth and school employees.
91. **Work with law enforcers and parents to fingerprint young children as a safety measure.** Fingerprinting is usually done at a school site by law enforcers. The prints then are given to the parent or guardian.

92. **Pair law enforcers with high risk youths, similar to the *Big Brother* program.** Such relationships can be an important step in changing delinquent behavior patterns.

## **WORKING WITH THE MEDIA**

Tapping existing channels of communication is perhaps the most efficient means of information dissemination. Even more important, the media are considered "independent," objective sources of information. Consequently, a school issue reported by the media is likely to have considerably more impact on public attitudes than the same message presented in the district magazine or delivered by the district administration.

The key to successful relations between the media and the school district is developing a working relationship which serves the other's goals. The media need to inform readers, and school district need to provide quality education. Both are vital to a free society and both are considered the cornerstones of a democracy.

Something important to remember is don't argue with those who "buy their ink by the barrel." If you believe information has been incorrectly reported or quoted, take a positive approach. Contact the publication or station and provide the corrected account. Often the media will update their report or offer a correction. Even if this does not occur, the contact may make the reporters more careful with your material and promote accuracy in the future.

93. **Learn all you can about the media's needs, operations, deadlines, services and particularly the reporter and editor covering school news and receiving district news releases and advances.** Know the deadlines and release stories so all or most of the media will get them at the same time.
94. **Encourage the media to support school events and issues.** Propose feature or documentary topics of potential viewer or reader interest that also promote schools. Extend an open invitation for media staff to visit the schools and learn about programs.
95. **Send public service announcements to the media.** Learn what public service directors want and submit announcements appropriate to their needs, including camera-ready art for print media, 10-, 20-, or 30-second spots for radio (submitted on paper or pre-recorded), or slides, copy or background information for television. Often TV and radio stations will work with local public service institutions to produce original announcements. Give this option serious consideration because when jointly produced, PSA's are virtually guaranteed regular placements and costs are reduced to little or nothing.
96. **Coordinate a forum for media representatives to meet with parents and other community residents at local schools.** Allow for question-answer time to constructively "reverse the roles" on the media representatives.
97. **Encourage media management to sponsor scholarships and special activities to educate students about print and electronic media reporting and production.**
98. **Solicit free or discounted copies of daily newspapers.** Encourage teachers to incorporate news coverage into English, civics and social studies courses.

99. **Become a resource for print media editors and broadcast news directors.** Provide the media with the roster of the district speakers' bureau. Anticipate news stories and suggest names of experts or interview possibilities immediately after learning of relevant current events.
100. **Coordinate field trips to newspaper printing plants and broadcast media production facilities** for school employees and students.
101. **Solicit media assistance in an annual evaluation of your public relations media effectiveness.** Request suggestions for improving your communications and news releases, as well as for specific new program ideas.

While considering these 101 ideas, it is important to remember two things. First, what works is good public relations. And second, what does not work is not necessarily bad public relations. It's more like taking a swing and not hitting a home run. When the ball and bat finally do meet perfectly, that one home run can make all the other swings worthwhile. Baseball great Babe Ruth, remembered most for his 714 lifetime homers, hit a round tripper only once in every 11 times at bat and struck out 1,330 times in the process. Although good research will remove much of the risk from public relations planning, confidence and enthusiasm to "play the game" are required prerequisites for effective public relations.

Excerpted from *Educated Public Relations: School Safety 101*, published by the *National School Safety Center* (1986). For information on ordering this publication, write:

*National School Safety Center*  
16830 Ventura Blvd., Suite 200  
Encino, California 91436  
(818) 377-6200

# SPONSORING AN AWARDS PROGRAM

## Introduction

There are many "unsung heroes" involved in the profession of victim advocacy: the crime victim who turns tragedy into positive action to help others; the law enforcement official who "goes the extra mile" to ease victims' painful experiences; the elected official who introduces strong policies for victims' rights; the volunteer who selflessly gives time to help "fill gaps" in victim service delivery; the judge who offers advice and support to victim service organizations; and so many others.

National Victims' Rights Week offers the perfect opportunity to honor those whose dedication and perseverance make victims' rights a reality. Awards presentations can take several forms:

- A special ceremony sponsored by a victim service organization or coalition of victim service agencies;
- Presentation of awards certificates at an annual National Victims' Rights Week event, such as a *Balloon Lift* or open house; or
- An informal "in-house" presentation of award certificates to outstanding staff members or volunteers.

An excellent example of an awards program heralds from the *Pinellas County Coalition of Victims' Rights* in Florida. During 1988 National Victims' Rights Week, the *Coalition* held an awards luncheon in conjunction with their annual conference, honoring one law enforcement official from every city in the county for outstanding victim advocacy. Awards for excellence were also given to exemplary victim advocates. This innovative program established high standards of excellence, provided great public relations opportunities for the organizations and honorees involved, and let some dedicated professionals know that their work is appreciated.

An awards program, while appropriate during National Victims' Rights Week, can be implemented any time during the year. It is a project which can easily become an annual event.

The guidelines included in the following *Description of Tasks* will help you plan, organize and implement a National Victims' Rights Week *Awards Ceremony*. Included in these *Strategies for Action* is camera-ready artwork for an awards certificate, which can be personalized to meet your specific needs.

Sponsoring an *Awards Ceremony* requires little effort and produces many rewards--for those who are honored, for those who sponsor the program, and for the many people whose lives will be positively touched by recognition of outstanding victim advocacy.

# AWARDS CEREMONY CHECKLIST: A DESCRIPTION OF TASKS

## COORDINATION OF TASKS

### Determine Sponsorship:

Your organization may wish to be the sole sponsor of an *Awards Ceremony*, especially if are honoring your own staff and volunteers. However, if you wish to honor outstanding victim advocacy efforts in your community, region or state, you may wish to join forces with other victim service organizations. The "coalition approach" will add prestige to your awards, and will also increase your number of nominations.

A sample letter inviting groups to co-sponsor an *Awards Ceremony* is enclosed.

### Planning Sessions:

Your initial planning session should: determine your co-sponsors; decide if an actual ceremony is appropriate; select categories for awards; determine type of awards (certificates, plaques, etc.) to be given; determine a process for nominations; and develop a media plan. Subsequent planning sessions should be held bi-monthly prior to National Victims' Rights Week to make sure tasks are accomplished.

### Delegating Tasks:

One volunteer should chair the *Awards Ceremony* project. Other volunteer coordinators should assume responsibility for the following tasks: nominations; logistics; securing awards; and media relations.

### Choosing a Nominations Process:

There is a wide range of possibilities for awards to recognize outstanding victim advocacy. You may wish to honor:

- Outstanding contributions from one profession (law enforcement, judiciary etc.), with several honorees in a region;
- Exemplary victim advocacy from a variety of professions (the media, prosecutors, mental health professionals, etc.), with one outstanding award recipient in each category;
- Individuals who work with different types of victims (sexual assault, homicide family survivors, etc.); and/or
- Volunteers.

Some suggestions for awards categories for various professions related to victim advocacy include:

- Law enforcement;
- Prosecutors;
- Judges;
- Mental health;
- Corrections;
- Clergy;
- Elected officials;
- Social services;
- Medical/emergency response; and/or
- Civic leadership.

Awards categories based upon the types of victims served should be determined by the victim services available in your community. Suggested categories include awards for outstanding contributions to help victims of:

- Child abuse;
- Sexual assault;
- Spousal or partner abuse;
- Elder abuse;
- Drunk driving;
- Hate and racial violence;
- Homicide family survivors; and/or
- Community crises or disasters.

The categories for nominations should be determined at the initial planning session. The Nominations Coordinator should develop a system for: victim service organizations to submit nominations (a **sample nomination form** is enclosed); selecting the awards recipients (a volunteer committee of three to five advocates can make the final

decision); and notifying award recipients (some programs have advance notification, while others maintain an "element of surprise" for the actual awards presentation). Two sample letters are enclosed for notification of awards.

## LOGISTICS

**Determine Awards Event:** (7 weeks in advance)

If victim service groups in your community sponsor an annual event, decide if it is appropriate to include an *Awards Ceremony*. Some suggestions for other awards events are: luncheon; press conference; open house; or civic event.

**Select Location:** (7 weeks in advance)

The location for your awards ceremony depends upon the type of event you sponsor. Be sure your location is centrally located, secure, large enough to accommodate your expected audience, and handicap accessible.

**Select Date:** (7 weeks in advance)

Your *Awards Ceremony* should be held when award recipients, those who nominated them, recipients' families, the media, and other key players can attend. Events scheduled during lunch or after work hours are best. The date should be determined at the initial planning session.

**Select Awards:** (7 weeks in advance)

The enclosed camera-ready artwork for an awards certificate can be duplicated and personalized for both the recipients and sponsoring organization(s). It's best to complete the pertinent information in either calligraphy or large bold-face type. These certificates can be matted and inexpensively framed for a fancier "look."

You may wish to add your organization or coalition's logo in the upper right hand corner of the sample certificate. You should print the certificate on textured paper, either ivory or white.

You may wish to create plaques for special awards. Also, some groups maintain a permanent plaque for annual awards in one location, engraving the name of each year's recipient. Honorees whose names appear on permanent plaques should be provided with a framed or unframed certificate noting their honor.

You also have the option of naming each award (or one or two special awards) for a special person, crime victim, or organization (for example, the *National Victim Center's Sunny von Bulow Award for Outstanding Victim Advocacy*).

You may also wish to provide a certificate to all persons who were nominated for awards. Even if they were not the award recipient, it's nice to recognize their efforts.

**Notifying Award Recipients:****(4 weeks in advance)**

A sample award notification letter is enclosed if you decide to notify award recipients prior to the actual award presentation. The award recipients' supervisors, along with the leaders of their agencies or organizations, should also be notified (sample letter enclosed). Make certain these key people, along with the award recipients' families and professional colleagues, are invited to the awards ceremony.

**Presentation of Awards:****(4 weeks in advance)**

You have a number of options for speakers at your event. The *Awards Ceremony* Coordinator is a logical choice to emcee your event. The actual awards presentations can be made by: the person(s) who nominated the winner(s); an elected official, such as your Mayor or city councilmember; or the leader of your city/region/state coalition.

All awards recipients should be asked to submit a biography or resume to the Nominations Coordinator. This information can be incorporated into the actual award presentation, which should highlight: why the person was nominated; his or her contribution to victims' rights; and his or her special qualities that resulted in the award.

Award recipients should be allowed to make brief remarks following the presentation.

**Secure Photographer:****(3 weeks in advance)**

A nice remembrance of any award presentation is a photograph. You may wish to hire a professional photographer. If cost is prohibitive, ask several volunteers to sit close to the podium and take photos of persons receiving awards.

You may also wish to provide a photo opportunity session following your ceremony for more formal pictures, including the *Awards Ceremony* Coordinator, the award recipient, his or her supervisor, and the person who submitted the nomination. It's also a good idea to take a group photo of all award recipients together for inclusion in news articles and organizational newsletters.

**Plan Awards Ceremony Agenda:****(3 weeks in advance)**

Regardless of the type of ceremony you plan, your agenda should try to limit the event to an hour or less. The agenda should include: welcoming remarks; introduction of special guests; an overview of the awards, nomination process and selection process; presentation of awards; and closing remarks.

**Design Program:****(2 weeks in advance)**

A "type treatment" logo for an *Awards Ceremony* is included in this *Strategies for Action* kit, and can be used for the cover of your official program. Your program can be printed on an 8 1/2" by 11" paper (60 to 80 pound weight) folded in half.

The cover of your program should include the logo, along with the date and location of your ceremony. The copy for your program should include: a list of co-sponsors; a brief overview of why the awards are being given; any key speakers or special guests; the names of the presenters; and a list of the awards, recipients, and their respective agencies or organizations. Any donations related to your event should also be noted in the program.

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

### **Co-Sponsor Letters:**

(7 weeks in advance)

The enclosed sample letter should be mailed to all victim service organizations in your community, and to any other programs which you wish to involve in your *Awards Ceremony*. The sample response form will let you know which groups are interested in participating in this project.

### **Award Notification Letters:**

(4 weeks in advance)

Two sample award notification letters are enclosed: one which notifies award recipients, and one which notifies their immediate supervisors and/or agency or organization leaders.

### **Nomination Form:**

(5 weeks in advance)

The enclosed sample nomination form can be used as a guideline for a form which meets your specific needs.

## **MEDIA**

### **Sample Press Release:**

(10 days in advance)

A sample press release highlighting the awards recipients and their accomplishments is enclosed. You may wish to draft a similar press release for distribution prior to your *Awards Ceremony* if you want the media to attend the event. These press releases must be double-spaced.

**SAMPLE LETTER TO POTENTIAL  
CO-SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS OF THE  
NATIONAL VICTIMS' RIGHTS WEEK AWARDS CEREMONY**

Name/Title  
Organization  
Street Address or P.O. Box  
City/State/Zip Code

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ :

During the annual commemoration of National Victims' Rights Week scheduled for (year), (your organization) would like to sponsor an awards ceremony to honor people in our community who have made notable contributions to victim advocacy. This special effort is one of the projects included in the National Victim Center's "Strategies for Action" kit.

It is our hope that your organization will co-sponsor an awards ceremony during the week of (date). By joining together, we have the opportunity to recognize outstanding victim advocacy efforts and offer prestigious recognition to worthy awards recipients.

An initial planning session is scheduled for (day), (date), at (time) at (location). At this meeting, we will determine the types of awards we wish to sponsor, decide what type of awards event is most appropriate, establish committees for various tasks, and assign volunteer responsibilities.

I have enclosed a response form which will help us determine which organizations in our community plan to co-sponsor the awards program. Please complete this form and return it to me no later than (date).

I hope you or a representative from your organization can join us on (date). If you have any questions concerning either the proposed awards ceremony or (year) National Victims' Rights Week, please call me at (area code/telephone number).

Sincerely,

Enclosure (Response Form)

# SAMPLE RESPONSE FORM TO DETERMINE CO-SPONSORSHIP OF THE AWARDS CEREMONY

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

ORGANIZATION/AFFILIATION: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address or P.O. Box

\_\_\_\_\_

City	State	Zip Code
------	-------	----------

TELEPHONE: (    ) \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, my organization would like to participate in the (year) National  
Victims' Rights Week Awards Ceremony.

\_\_\_\_\_ No, my organization would not like to participate.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will be able to attend the initial planning session on (date).

\_\_\_\_\_ I will be unable to attend the initial planning session, but would  
like to be informed of activities related to this project.

\_\_\_\_\_ I am interested in volunteering in the following areas:

\_\_\_\_\_ Award nominations

\_\_\_\_\_ Logistics

\_\_\_\_\_ Developing awards

\_\_\_\_\_ Media relations

\*\*\*\*\*

Please return this form  
no later than (date)  
to:  
(contact person)  
(address)

**SAMPLE NOMINATION FORM**

**National Victims' Rights Week Outstanding Victim Advocacy Awards Nomination Form**

\*\*\*\*\*

NAME OF PERSON SUBMITTING NOMINATION: \_\_\_\_\_

AFFILIATION/ORGANIZATION: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address or P.O. Box

City

State

Zip Code

TELEPHONE: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

**AWARDS CATEGORIES**

Please check the category in which you are submitting this nomination (specify categories here):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

Name of Nominee: \_\_\_\_\_

Affiliation/Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address or P.O. Box

City

State

Zip Code

Telephone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Nominee's Supervisor or Agency/Program Director: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

Please attach a brief commentary (not to exceed 250 words, double-spaced) about why your nominee should be honored for the category checked above. Include in your summary:

- His or her specific efforts which benefit crime victims;
- How long he or she has been involved in these efforts;
- His or her relation to your organization or other victim service programs in our community; and
- What makes these efforts exemplary and beneficial to crime victims in our community.

No more than two letters of recommendation will be accepted for each nominee.

\*\*\*\*\*

Please return this Nomination Form  
no later than (date)

to:  
(contact person)  
(address)

## SAMPLE AWARD NOTIFICATION LETTER FOR AWARD RECIPIENTS

Name/Title  
Organization/Agency  
Street Address or P.O. Box  
City/State/Zip Code

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ :

It gives me great pleasure to inform you that you have been selected to receive the (name of award) for Outstanding Victim Advocacy. This special award is presented in conjunction with the annual commemoration of National Victims' Rights Week, scheduled for (dates). Co-sponsors of this awards program include (list of co-sponsors).

(Name of person who submitted nomination) submitted your name for nomination, citing your exemplary contribution in the field of (profession/type of victim services). We received many excellent nominations. However, your outstanding qualifications and contribution to our community and to the victim advocacy movement guided our final selection.

The co-sponsors of this program are sponsoring an awards ceremony on (day), (date), at (time) at (location). I hope you and your family can attend.

We will also invite your supervisor. You can let me know if there are any other guests you would like us to invite to this special event.

Please call me at (area code/telephone number) to confirm your attendance at the (date) ceremony, and provide me with a list of any additional guests you'd like us to invite.

Congratulations for receiving this special honor! I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

## SAMPLE LETTER TO AWARD RECIPIENTS' SUPERVISORS OR AGENCY/ORGANIZATION LEADERS

Name/Title  
Organization/Agency  
Street Address or P.O. Box  
City/State/Zip Code

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ :

It gives me great honor to inform you that (name of award recipient) has been chosen to receive the (name of award) for Outstanding Victim Advocacy. S/he was selected from an impressive field of nominees because of his/her exemplary contributions to victim advocacy efforts in our (community/region/state).

This awards program is co-sponsored by: (list of co-sponsors).

I would like to invite you to join (award recipient) at the official awards presentation, presentation, scheduled for (day), (date), at (time) at (location). This ceremony will be held in conjunction with the annual commemoration of National Victims' Rights Week-- (dates).

Please call me at (area code/telephone number) to confirm your attendance. Also, if there are any other persons whom we should invite to recognize (award recipient's) achievement, please let me know.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

## SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE \*

FORM IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
(Date)

CONTACT: (Name)  
(Telephone Number)

(City)--(Number of awards recipients) local citizens were honored by a coalition of crime victim service agencies in (city/county/region/state) for outstanding contributions to victim advocacy.

A special awards ceremony, held in conjunction with National Victims' Rights Week --(dates)--honors recipients for making a positive difference by helping the innocent victims of crime in our community.

(Spokesperson), (title) of the (organization/coalition), explained that in the field of victim services, there are many "unsung heroes."

"One person can have a tremendously positive impact on the life of someone who has been traumatized by a violent crime," (spokesperson) said.

"During (year) National Victims' Rights Week, we wanted to offer our personal gratitude, along with recognition from the community, to the (#) award winners whose exemplary actions made a difference to victims and service providers," she explained.

Awards were given in (#) categories, including (list specific awards categories).

(Insert separate paragraphs here with two sentences about each award winner. Include his or her name, affiliation, and a brief description about why he or she won the award.)

The (sponsoring organization or coalition) plans to make this awards program an annual event to recognize the important volunteer and professional efforts that improve the plight of crime victims. For more information about the awards programs or about victim services in (city/county/region/state), please call (area code/telephone number).

-30-

\* Submit a black and white photograph of the award recipients, or send a press release prior to your ceremony inviting a reporter and photographer to cover your event. Double-space press release.

# PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING A "CRIME VICTIMS AND THE MEDIA" SEMINAR

## Introduction

Since *The National Victim Center* opened in 1985, it has been proud to be the leader in bringing important issues concerning media coverage of crime and victimization to the forefront of America's victims' rights movement. In 1986, the *Center* sponsored the first research project which studied perceptions of crime victims in the media--including perspectives from victims, advocates, law enforcement and judicial officials, and print and broadcast media professionals. That year, the *Center* participated in *Texas Christian University's "Crime Victims and the Media: The Right to Privacy versus the Right to Know"* Symposium. This national event brought together over 700 victims and advocates, journalists, academicians and students to sensitize participants to the concerns of both victims and media representatives, and to discuss ways to improve news media coverage of violent crime victimization. In addition, the *Center* produced several publications pertaining to these issues, including a brochure, *Crime Victims and the Media*; and *Victims' Rights in the Media and Media Relations* educational curricula.

The *Center* has committed its time and resources to educate journalists about the rights and needs of crime victims. Likewise, it feels it is important for crime victims and advocates to understand the responsibilities and constraints journalists face in their profession. This mutual understanding cannot be accomplished without beginning and sustaining an open line of communication among victims, advocates, schools of journalism, and journalists.

You can sponsor an event which brings victims and advocates together with journalists in your community. Using the resources highlighted in the enclosed *Resource List*, you can either meet with journalists and journalism students on an informal basis, or sponsor a one-day conference to tackle these issues on a more in-depth basis.

The following *Strategies for Action* will help you organize a one-day *Crime Victims and the Media* seminar or conference in your community. These suggestions are based upon the *Center's* past experience in working with victim advocates and journalists to help them reach a "common ground" in news coverage of crime and victimization.

For the greatest impact, it's a good idea to join with all victim advocacy and criminal justice organizations in your community to co-sponsor the event. By doing so, you can help the media understand the impact of their actions on different victims--from child abuse and sexual assault to hate and racial violence and homicide.

One of the advantages of a *Crime Victims and the Media* seminar is that media coverage is virtually guaranteed because of the participation of local journalists. Your media co-sponsors should assume responsibility for soliciting coverage from print and broadcast mediums, leaving you with more time to take care of other logistics.

Victim advocates who decide to take on this project should be prepared for the educational experience of a lifetime! Your roles as victim advocates will be greatly enhanced by the exchange of information and ideas at a *Crime Victims and the Media* seminar.

## **Crime Victims and the Media Seminar: A Description of Tasks**

### **Secure Co-Sponsors:**

The success of your seminar will depend greatly upon the level of participation you receive from both victim advocacy organizations and the media. The initial letter you send to potential co-sponsors should generate support for your event, along with their commitment to help develop a program tailored for your community.

Who should be invited to participate? Some suggestions for co-sponsors and participants include:

- *Victim Advocacy Organizations:* Invite groups that serve all areas of victimization, including child abuse, sexual assault, hate and racial violence, elder abuse, domestic violence, homicide, and drunk driving. Also include state compensation programs, and VOCA-funded organizations.
- *Criminal Justice Professionals:* Prosecutors, prosecutor-based victim/witness programs, defense attorneys, corrections officials, and judges.
- *Law Enforcement:* Police, sheriffs, state police or highway patrol (with a emphasis on the Public Information Office personnel of these departments).
- *Broadcast News Mediums:* Radio and television journalists (including station managers, news directors, editors, public service directors, reporters, and camera-persons).
- *Print News Mediums:* Editors, reporters and photographers from daily and weekly newspapers and wire services (*Associated Press, United Press International, etc.*).
- *Journalism Schools:* Department chairpersons, professors and students from journalism departments at your community's colleges and universities.
- *Delta Sigma Chi:* This group is critical to the success of your seminar. *Delta Sigma Chi* is the professional society of journalists. Ask a local journalist for contact information.

By obtaining *Delta Sigma Chi* as a co-sponsor, you will most likely secure a wide variety of participants. *Delta Sigma Chi* has sponsored such seminars in the past, since such issues are relevant to its membership.

By garnering support from these sources, you will have an easier time getting "the best and the brightest" to contribute their unique perspectives to your seminar. You will also eliminate chances of "preaching to the choir," as the suggested participants include journalists who have both good and bad "track records" in their coverage of violent crime victimization.

In addition, you will be reaching a crucial group of people--students of higher education--who are the journalists of the future.

The sample letter of invitation to potential co-sponsors should be mailed ten weeks prior to your conference. Each participating organization or news medium should designate a representative to serve on the Coordinating Committee.

#### **Planning Your Seminar Agenda:**

The sample *Seminar Agenda* incorporates a full day of program activities. It is arranged to provide "equal time" for victims, advocates and journalists to offer their perspectives. The sample *Seminar Agenda* will also help you plan the timetable to meet your specific schedule.

Once again, take advantage of the many excellent resources available from the *National Victim Center*, *Texas Christian University*, and others with expertise in this area.

#### **Welcoming Remarks:**

Brief opening speeches should be given by a victim advocate and a media professional. The ideal victim advocate should work directly with violent crime victims, and have some experience in dealing with the media on their behalf. Likewise, the media professional should have responsibilities which entail the management of crime reporting, such as a television news director or a newspaper assignment editor.

Both welcoming speakers should "set the tone" for the day's activities, offering perspectives of crime victims and the media. Your speakers should also identify the goals and objectives of your seminar.

#### **Conference Overview:**

A crime victim should give a ten-minute overview of the seminar panels, and the seminar's goals and objectives.

#### **PANEL PRESENTATIONS\***

##### **Crime Victims' Panel:**

The first panel should include either four victims, or two victims and two victim service providers. The purpose of this panel is to address the emotional impact

of crime reporting on victims, including problems caused by inaccurate or insensitive reporting (especially at the initial impact stage of victimization).

Suggested speakers include violent crime victims who have a specific media-related incident (good or bad) to share with the audience. They can discuss either problems they endured as a result of insensitive media coverage, or ways in which the media made their situations just a little bit easier to handle. Anger--though understandable--is not appropriate on this panel, as it tends to immediately place journalists on the defensive. Your victim advocate panelists should have prior experience advocating for victims in the media.

Try and obtain a balance of victims and advocates who represent different types of victimization, i.e., sexual assault, homicide, drunk driving, etc.

#### **News Media Panel:**

The purpose of the media panel is to discuss trends in crime reporting, news mediums' policies toward coverage of violent crime victimization, and also to promote a better understanding of constraints journalists face, such as deadlines, editing and their viewers', or listeners' or readers' expectations.

Suggested speakers include a newspaper assignment editor, a television news director, a radio reporter and a newspaper reporter or photographer.

#### **Professional Panel:**

This panel consists of the "intermediaries" whose professional duties bring them in contact with both journalists and violent crime victims. Your panel members can offer a unique perspective about questionable media techniques and the pressures victims face as a result of their situations.

Suggested panelists include a prosecutor, a law enforcement public information officer, a judge and an emergency room staff member.

#### **Keynote Address:**

Your luncheon keynote speaker should incorporate "the best of both worlds" in his or her remarks. The speaker can present highlights of the study conducted by the Center and Texas Christian University about attitudes toward coverage of violent crime and its aftermath. He or she can also reflect upon the nature of news and the trauma associated with violent crime victimization, hopefully (again) seeking a "common ground" for journalists, crime victims, and their advocates.

#### **Group Discussion:**

The purpose of this exercise is to bring together an equal number of media professionals, victims, advocates and academicians to develop suggestions that may be incorporated into the policies and standards of print and broadcast news

mediums. A secondary goal is to help victim advocates learn to assist journalists by understanding how the media works, and how they can best meet journalists' needs when advocating for victims in situations involving news mediums.

Suggested speakers include a professor of journalism or a victim advocate with public affairs experience.

Remember, the media and victim advocates essentially have the same goal: to obtain the facts and report accurate information in a sensitive manner. With mutual cooperation and understanding, journalists can provide facts to the public in an expedient manner, and victim advocates can be assured that the victim and his or her family and friends are not traumatized by the media.

### Reports from Group Discussion:

Each group should have a representative who summarizes the suggestions made in the group discussions. Audience participation should be encouraged for this exercise, which will hopefully produce guidelines to enhance the quality of work for both journalists and victim advocates.

### Closing Remarks:

Your final speaker should "wrap up" the day's work by succinctly summarizing what you have accomplished. He or she should notify participants that a record of the day's proceedings will be developed and sent to them. Your closing speaker should also note that the end of the seminar marks the **beginning** of what will hopefully be an ongoing dialogue between crime victims, advocates, criminal justice professionals and the news media.

- \* Each panel should allow *at least ten minutes* at the end for a question-and-answer session.

### SUGGESTED ISSUES FOR PANEL PRESENTATIONS

The *Center's* efforts to promote more responsible media coverage of violent crimes have resulted in the identification of some major issues for your consideration. Some of these suggestions are derived from input received from victims as a result of their personal cases:

- The public's "right to know" versus crime victims' "right to privacy";
- The emotional impact of insensitive media coverage on crime victims and survivors;
- Media coverage of "sensitive" victims' cases; such as children, the elderly, differently-abled, and gays and lesbians;
- Media coverage (or lack thereof) of crimes against victims of color;

- Protecting victims' names and addresses from broadcast or publication;
- U.S. Supreme Court decisions affecting news coverage of crime and related legal and ethical concerns;
- Developing "codes of ethics" for media coverage of crime victims;
- Incorporation of such "codes of ethics" information, policies and standards by news editors and public service directors;
- Tough editorial decisions concerning whether or not to publish or broadcast controversial items, such as photos of victims grieving, photos and film footage of bodybags, information on the past history of sexual assault victims or any photos or information about child victims;
- Television coverage of crime victims' stories; and
- The role of the victim advocate in crime victims' cases.

## LOGISTICS

### Select Date:

(7 weeks in advance)

At your first planning session, discuss the best date to hold your seminar. You should give special consideration to media participants as their work schedules often preclude weekdays. For the highest level of participation, you may want to conduct your seminar on a Saturday.

### Select Location:

(7 weeks in advance)

Try to secure a free conference facility. Check with co-sponsoring news mediums, universities and colleges, libraries and labor unions.

### Room Arrangements:

(7 weeks in advance)

Your seminar site should be set up "classroom style" with tables and chairs. You will need two "breakout" rooms for the group discussions.

Your podium should have a table with four chairs (preferably on a riser platform) with a lecturn and microphone. You may also want to secure extra microphones for panel members to use during the question-and-answer periods.

### Registration:

(3 weeks in advance)

Secure two or three volunteers for registration. Their responsibilities will include greeting participants, taking care of pre-registrants and participants who register the day of the seminar, distributing name tags, handing out seminar packets and answering participant's questions.

**Designing and Producing Your Seminar Announcement:**

**(6 weeks in advance)**

Your seminar announcement should be mailed five weeks prior to the event to all victim advocacy and criminal justice organizations and agencies, news mediums, college and university journalism departments and *Delta Sigma Chi* members. Ask each conference co-sponsor to contribute mailing lists.

The announcement should include:

- Title of seminar, date/times/location, and primary sponsors on the front cover;
- List of co-sponsoring organizations and news mediums with addresses and telephone numbers;
- Seminar agenda with presenter's names and affiliations;
- Cost of conference (to cover luncheon expenses); and
- Registration form (which includes name, affiliation, address, telephone number and registration fee) to be returned at least two weeks prior to the seminar.

An attractive poster which includes this information should be produced and disseminated on college and university campuses.

**Seminar Packets:**

**(4 weeks in advance)**

Your seminar packets are pocket folders which include a copy of the seminar program, biographies on your main speakers, and any publications obtained from the enclosed *Resource List*.

**Luncheon:**

**(4 weeks in advance)**

Depending on the location of the seminar, you may have to go to a different site for the luncheon or arrange for catering. Make sure the off-site facility (when applicable) is within walking distance. Arrange for a public address system and podium for the keynote speaker. And, keep the cost low!

**Designing and Producing the Seminar Program:**

**(2 weeks in advance)**

Include the same information contained in the seminar announcement. Also, remember to thank donors.

**Audio/Visual Aids:**

**(4 weeks in advance)**

Check with the presenters in advance to determine their audio/visual needs. You may need to secure an overhead projector, flip chart, slide projector and screen, or VCR with a monitor.

**College Credits:**

**(6 weeks in advance)**

You may wish to secure one unit of credit for college students who participate in this special event. Check with co-sponsoring schools of journalism regarding this option.

## RESOURCES CONCERNING CRIME VICTIMS AND THE MEDIA

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*Crime Victims and the Media* handbook published by the *National Victim Center*. Available for \$5.00, which includes postage and handling. To order, call (817) 877-3355 or write to the *National Victim Center*, 307 West 7th Street, Suite 1001, Fort Worth, Texas 76102.

Contains 60 pages of information on how victim advocates can help the media accurately report crime victims' stories in a sensitive manner that will not "re-victimize" them. Highlights the emotional impact of crime reporting on victims, victims' rights in the media, preparing victims for the media and the role of the victim advocate in the media. Also features sample codes of ethics for journalists and victim advocates, and sample release forms.

\*\*\*\*\*

*Victims' Rights in the Media* brochure published by the *National Victim Center*. First copy free, additional copies 15 cents each. The brochure highlights 21 rights crime victims have when dealing with the media. To order, call (817) 877-3355 or write to the *Center*.

\*\*\*\*\*

*The Media and Victims of Crime* study overview sponsored by the *National Victim Center* and *Texas Christian University's Department of Journalism*. Available free from the *Center*.

Highlights views about the media's coverage of violent crime victims, with personal incidents offered by victims, advocates, judges, criminal justice and law enforcement professionals and representatives from print and broadcast media.

\*\*\*\*\*

*News Coverage of Sexual Assault* Resource Guide published by the *Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Abuse (ICASA)*. Available for \$2.00. Contact *ICASA* at (515) 242-5096 or write *ICASA*, Lucas State Office Building, East 12th and Grand Streets, Des Moines, Iowa 50319.

Contains 23 pages of resources concerning coverage of sexual assault by the media, using names of victims and witnesses in news stories, interviewing survivors, and information about sexual assault.

\*\*\*\*\*

## SAMPLE SEMINAR AGENDA

8:00 a.m. to 8:30 a.m.	Registration
8:30 a.m. to 8:45 a.m.	Welcoming Remarks
8:50 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.	Conference Overview
9:00 a.m. to 9:45 a.m.	Crime Victims' Panel
9:45 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.	News Media Panel
10:30 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.	Break
10:45 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.	News Media Panel (continued)
11:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.	Professional Panel
12:15 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.	Luncheon with Keynote Address
2:00 p.m. to 3:15 p.m.	Group Discussions
3:15 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.	Break
3:30 p.m. to 4:15 p.m.	Reports from Group Discussions
4:15 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.	Closing Remarks
5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.	Reception (optional)

## SAMPLE LETTER TO POTENTIAL SEMINAR CO-SPONSORS

Name/Title  
Organization/News Medium  
Street Address or P.O. Box  
City/State/Zip Code

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ :

(Dates) has been declared (year) National Victims' Rights Week. During this special commemoration, crime victims, their advocates and concerned citizens will join together and promote the many services available in our community for victims of violent crime.

An area that merits special consideration is the news media's coverage of violent crime and victims. Media and victim relations are complex, partially because victims and journalists often have different ideas about a news story's purpose. We feel it is important for victims and advocates to understand the nature and complexity of news and, at the same time, help media professionals understand the devastating impact crime has upon victims. Open and continuing communication is necessary to obtain this mutual understanding.

To achieve this common goal, (primary sponsors) are sponsoring a one-day seminar about crime victims and the news media. Some of the issues we hope to address include:

- The public's "right to know" versus crime victims' "right to privacy";
- The emotional impact of crime and related news coverage on victims;
- Media coverage of sensitive victims;
- News mediums' policies concerning coverage of violent crime and victimization;  
and
- The role of victim advocates in crime victims' cases which involve the media.

We hope to include panel presentations which feature the views of crime victims, advocates, law enforcement and criminal justice officials, and the media.

We cannot achieve our goal of understanding crime victims and the media issues without **your** input and support. We would like to invite you to attend an organizing meeting to discuss this seminar.

Our initial meeting is planned for (day), (date), at (time) at (location). If you cannot attend, please send a representative from your (organization/department/agency/news medium).

We believe that (year) National Victims' Rights Week provides us with the ideal opportunity to share ideas about how to provide sensitive coverage of crime victims' stories without sacrificing the quality of such news. And, we hope you will join us on (date) to discuss this effort.

If you have any questions concerning this seminar or National Victims' Rights Week, please contact me at (area code/telephone number).

Thank you for your consideration of this special project.

Sincerely,

# VICTIMS' RIGHTS: A 'CAPITOL' IDEA

## Introduction

This year, victims and advocates in all fifty states will work to promote legislation which is responsive to the rights and needs of violent crime victims. History proves that some of the greatest strides of our movement are accomplished by legislative endeavors, which have produced a wide variety of new laws. Some examples of legislative successes include victims' rights constitutional amendments, victims' bills of rights, compensation, restitution, victim/witness protection, and tougher sentencing statutes.

One of the best ways to impact legislative change is by getting to know the "movers and shakers" in your state Senate, Assembly, or House of Representatives. Certainly most of us know our own representatives, but there are countless others we must rely upon to support and promote victims' rights issues.

For these reasons, the *Center* suggests that your state's crime victims and advocates--along with their supporters--sponsor a one-day program to bring victim advocates and your elected state officials together. The goals of this event are:

- To educate legislators and other state officials about victims' rights issues, trends, and concerns in your state;
- To bring to the forefront any key legislative initiatives that benefit crime victims which have been introduced in the current year's session;
- To help victims and advocates understand the legislative process in your state;
- To provide an opportunity to exchange ideas among victims, advocates, elected officials, and others; and
- To promote National Victims' Rights Week activities in your statewide media.

Our suggested theme for this special National Victims' Rights Week event is *Victims' Rights: A 'Capitol' Idea*.

There are any number of activities you can plan for this day. The sky's the limit! Some people may wish to involve **only** crime victims and their advocates, while others may want to include people involved in all areas of victims' rights, such as prosecutors, judges, and local elected officials.

The key to sponsoring a successful *Victims' Rights: A 'Capitol' Idea* is to select a date that allows for the highest degree of participation from those you plan to involve. This means scheduling your activities on a day when your Legislature is in session, and also on a day when no other major National Victims' Rights Week activities are planned at the local level.

*Victims' Rights: A 'Capitol' Idea* will require organization and support from as many victim advocacy organizations as possible. A strong display of statewide unity will not only impress your legislators; it will help you obtain excellent statewide media coverage from your Capitol news bureaus with limited effort.

The following Checklist: A Description of Tasks and the corresponding sample documents will help you organize and implement a successful *Victims' Rights: A 'Capitol' Idea* in your state Capitol.

## **Victims' Rights: A Capitol Idea Checklist: A Description of Tasks**

### **COORDINATION OF TASKS**

#### **Determine Activities for "Victims' Rights: A 'Capitol' Idea":**

There are a number of special activities you can co-sponsor with your Legislature in conjunction with *Victims' Rights: A 'Capitol' Idea*. Some states may wish to hold only one major event, while others may decide to squeeze as much into one day as possible. Remember, you are limited **only** by the level of participation you secure from your legislators, VIP's, and victim advocates!

Some activities suggested by our *Center* include:

- **Breakfast or Lunch:** A no-host breakfast or lunch provides victims and advocates with the opportunity to get to know your legislators in a casual setting. You must decide upon a location (a restaurant near your Capitol or the restaurant in your Capitol--where applicable--are possible locations). Make sure you have enough room for your guests, and that the restaurant you choose can accommodate your breakfast or lunch. A buffet service may be most efficient if you have time limitations. Also, try and keep the cost of your meal at a reasonable, affordable rate.

All participants can introduce themselves and briefly discuss their legislative responsibilities or organization's activities. You can then discuss key victims' rights legislation, initiatives and activities in your state. If you invite the media, provide time for press availability before or after your event.

- **Balloon Lift:** If you secure a high level of participation, you can sponsor a *Balloon Lift* on the Capitol grounds. In 1988, the Oklahoma City *Balloon Lift* at the Capitol was attended by over 300 people! Please refer to the *Balloon Lift Strategies for Action* contained in this kit.
- **Press Conference:** Co-sponsor a press conference in your Capitol with either your legislative leadership, legislators who are strong victim advocates, your Governor or "all of the above." Most Capitol buildings have special rooms designated for press conferences. Media access is simplified by the fact that most Capitol cities have bureaus representing major news mediums from cities throughout your state.

- **Office Visits:** Victims and advocates should take the opportunity to visit not only their district representatives, but also legislators who impact victims' rights legislation (the leadership, key Committee Chairpersons and members, etc.). Your participants should schedule appointments two to three weeks prior to the event. Don't hesitate to meet with legislative aides and Committee staff if legislators are not available!

Brief your participants in advance of their office visits about any pending victims' rights legislation. Encourage them to educate all Legislators about the importance of these bills.

Also, make sure they inform legislators about victim advocacy efforts in their home districts. It's important to let them know that you are providing valuable services to their constituents. If you have an information and referral network in their districts, let them know! Find out who their key district office staff members are, and follow-up!

- **Legislative Educational Session:** Many people in your Capitol city should be willing to teach a one-to-two hour seminar about how your Legislature works and how to influence legislation to benefit victims. Plan in advance! Check with legislators, their staff, or lobbyists to find a suitable instructor (or panel of instructors). They can "walk" your participants through the legislative process--step by step--and also offer "inside" information about the real infrastructure of your Senate, Assembly, or House of Representatives, i.e., the "movers and shakers," timelines, and key Committees that affect victims' rights issues.
- **Official Proclamations:** Two sample proclamations commemorating National Victims' Rights Week and the work of victim advocates in your state are included in this kit. Ask your Governor or key legislators to author a proclamation, and present it to victims and advocates at any of the events you sponsor in conjunction with *Victims' Rights: A 'Capitol' Idea*.
- **Moment of Silence:** During 1987 National Victims' Rights Week in Austin, Texas, *People Against Violent Crime* secured a "moment of silence" on the floors of both legislative Houses while Members were in session. This is, indeed, a fitting tribute to the citizens of your state who have been traumatized by violence.

Any legislative member can request a "moment of silence" on your group's behalf.

- **Opening Prayer:** Most state's Senate, Assembly, and House of Representatives commence their daily session with a prayer led by a minister, rabbi or priest. You may wish to utilize one of the enclosed **sample prayers** for this purpose. Check with the offices of your Legislature's Speaker or President to see about offering this poignant prayer to remember your state's crime victims and those who work so hard to serve them.
- **Bill Signing Ceremony:** If your state is fortunate enough to already have a victims' rights bill "sail through the Legislature," ask your Governor to

sponsor an official bill-signing ceremony in conjunction with National Victims' Rights Week. Work closely with his or her staff to make sure key victims, advocates, legislators and the media are all invited.

### Planning Sessions:

Since *Victims' Rights: A 'Capitol' Idea* involves participants from throughout your state, it will be difficult to hold many planning sessions. However, we suggest you hold an initial meeting in early March to plan your day's activities and delegate tasks.

You may wish to hold this meeting in your Capitol city so you can review logistics in person. Also, it's a good idea to have a member of your *Planning Committee* who lives near your state Capitol for logistical purposes.

Your *Planning Committee* should include at least five members to assume the following responsibilities: Overall Coordinator; Media Coordinator; Correspondence Coordinator; Program and Agenda Coordinator; and Logistics Coordinator. A staff member of your key legislative sponsor should also participate on the *Planning Committee*.

Committee members should closely follow this **Checklist** and utilize the **sample documents** to monitor their activities and simplify their tasks.

### Determine Participants:

Whom should you invite to join in the activities of *Victims' Rights: A 'Capitol' Idea*? It's up to your *Planning Committee*. However, keep in mind that more participants require a greater organizing effort. At the same time, more participants will increase both the prestige and media coverage of your activities.

Some suggestions for participants include:

Crime Victims	Victim advocacy organizations
All state Legislators	Key legislative staff
Lieutenant Governor	Secretary of State
Media	Attorney General
Lobbyists	Comptroller
Victim Compensation personnel	(Capitol City) Mayor
Capitol county/parish Board of Supervisors	
(Capitol City) City Council Members	

The two enclosed **sample letters of invitation** to crime victims/advocacy organizations and co-sponsoring legislators can be modified to suit your potential participants.

The key participants will be those who agree to co-sponsor the various activities of the event. Choose your Capitol co-sponsors carefully. By all means, seek your Governor's participation. Then, evaluate the best possible legislative

co-sponsors. Seek support from the leadership in both Houses (especially the House Speaker and Senate President); the Chairpersons of committees which hear victims' rights bills; and any legislators who have been supportive of victims' rights issues in the past.

The major duties of the primary co-sponsors' offices are to:

- Invite legislative and government officials;
- Assist with logistics; and
- Help obtain media coverage.

Make sure your primary co-sponsors in the Legislature have staff members who are willing to spend time and resources to make *Victims' Rights: A 'Capitol' Idea* a success. Their support will simplify your tasks involving logistics and the media.

## LOGISTICS

### Select Location(s):

(7 weeks in advance)

Once you've determined your activities for *Victims' Rights: A 'Capitol' Idea*, you must find appropriate locations at which to hold them. Work closely with your legislative co-sponsors' staff to select a site (or sites) that are large enough to accommodate your participants, handicap accessible, and suitable for media coverage. It's a good idea to keep your events on or near the state Capitol grounds.

### Obtain Permits:

(7 weeks in advance)

Any event held on Capitol or public grounds will require a permit. Ask your co-sponsoring legislators' staff members for assistance in obtaining these permits. They are usually available from the offices of either the Sergeants-at-Arms or the State Police. Make sure you have a copy of your permit on hand the day of the event.

### Design and Print Programs:

(2 weeks in advance)

The size of your program will depend upon the number of participants and the variety of activities you plan. Large event(s) may require programs printed on 17" by 22" paper folded once. Programs for smaller events can be reproduced onto 8-1/2" by 11" paper.

Design a cover that includes pertinent information, including the day's title *Victims' Rights: A 'Capitol' Idea*, recognition of National Victims' Rights Week, the date, and location(s) of your activities. Capitol staff may be able to help you secure a photograph or camera-ready art of your Capitol building for the front cover.

You should list participating organizations, legislators, elected officials and others. You should also include an agenda of your day's activities, including times and locations of individual events. Finally, **don't** forget to thank people who have donated time and resources to the event.

Try to get the printing of your programs donated. Ask your legislative co-sponsor if he or she can reproduce copies at the state printing office.

**Prepare Banner:**

(2 weeks in advance)

A banner for *Victims' Rights: A 'Capitol' Idea* is optional. However, it would provide an excellent visual background for print and television media. Use your creativity. A felt banner proclaiming *Victims' Rights: A 'Capitol' Idea* would be a good task for an artistic volunteer, and can be prepared for little cost.

**Prepare Sign-In Sheets:**

(1 week in advance)

A sample sign-in sheet is included in this *Strategies for Action* kit. It's a good idea to make separate sheets for your various participants, such as "Legislators," "Victims," "Advocates," etc. Simply fill in the "category," reproduce, and have them available for all your guests.

Sign-in sheets also simplify the process of writing "thank-you" notes to your participants and supporters, as all relevant contact information is included on one page.

**Coordinate Logistics with Co-Sponsors' Staff Members:**

A strong supportive staff will make your job a great deal easier! Work with them in advance of *Victims' Rights: A 'Capitol' Idea* to:

- Arrange to set-up for your activities, utilizing the services of Capitol groundskeepers and maintenance staff, when needed;
- Make sure the sites you used are as neat and clean as when you began your activities;
- Acquire a public address system and arrange for its set-up, if required;
- Notify the media of your planned activities and assist with follow-up phone calls (most Capitol staffs have excellent, up-to-date media rosters);
- Secure an American and state flag (these visually enhance your event for photo opportunities);
- Make sure all legislators and other key state officials are invited to *Victims' Rights: A 'Capitol' Idea* activities by both your organization(s) and the co-sponsoring legislator(s);
- Make sure legislators who have committed to participate receive a "reminder" note or telephone call the day before your event; and

- Serve as the "Capitol contact" for people requiring additional information about *Victims' Rights: A 'Capitol' Idea*.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### Co-Sponsor Letters with Response Forms:

(7 weeks in advance)

The enclosed **sample letter** should be mailed to all victim advocacy organizations in your state **seven weeks in advance** of your event. The **sample response form** will let you know how many groups are interested in participating in *Victims' Rights: A Capitol' Idea*.

You may wish to draft a variation of this sample letter and response form for other state and local elected officials, judges, law enforcement agencies, and any "VIP's" you would like to invite to this special day.

### Legislative Co-sponsor Letters:

(6 weeks in advance)

The enclosed **sample letter** should be mailed to the legislator(s) who you would like to co-sponsor specific activities for *Victims' Rights: A 'Capitol' Idea*. You may wish to have different Legislators sponsor different events, or have a number of legislators co-sponsor all the day's activities. Remember, think **bi-partisan!**

### Thank-You Letters:

(week after event)

Make sure you thank **everyone** who helped support *Victims' Rights: A 'Capitol' Idea*, especially your legislative co-sponsors. You can refer to the **sample thank-you letter** contained in either the *Candlelight Vigil* or *Balloon Lift Description of Tasks*.

## MEDIA:

(NOTE: Please refer to the *Candlelight Vigil* or *Balloon Lift Description of Tasks* for additional guidelines about publicizing *Victims' Rights: A 'Capitol' Idea*.)

### Press Release:

(10 days in advance)

A **sample press release** to be typed double-spaced for both media and organizational newsletters is included in this kit. Work closely with your legislative co-sponsor's staff to secure media coverage. Make sure all *Capitol News Bureau* media representatives receive a copy of your press release, especially those whose mediums serve cities where your participating organizations are located. Attach a list of participating victim advocacy groups with complete contact information so news bureaus from their hometown will be aware of a "local" angle.

It's a good idea to use your legislative co-sponsor's letterhead for all media-related efforts.

**Follow-Up Phoning:**

(1 week in advance)

Check with your legislative co-sponsor's staff to determine the best follow-up activities which will guarantee satisfactory press coverage.

**Media Kits:**

(1 week in advance)

Again, work with your legislative co-sponsor to produce attractive media kits. You may wish to include the following components in your media kits: copy of your press release; copy of any official proclamation; copies of any remarks made during *Victims' Rights: A 'Capitol' Idea*; copies of any pending (or passed) legislation discussed in conjunction with this event; a list of co-sponsoring legislators; and a list of co-sponsoring victims' rights organizations with complete contact information.

You may also wish to have organizational brochures, newsletters and other resources available for the media.

## SAMPLE LETTER TO POTENTIAL CO-SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS

Name/Title  
Organization  
Street Address or P.O. Box  
City/State/Zip Code

Dear :

As you know, (year) National Victims' Rights Week is scheduled for (dates). Many victim advocacy organizations in (your state) recently received the National Victims' Rights Week "Strategies for Action" kit produced by the National Victim Center. One of the suggested activities is to sponsor a day of public awareness and legislative activities at our state Capitol in (city).

The theme of this event will be "Victims' Rights: A 'Capitol' Idea." We hope to join with our state legislators to educate them about victims' rights issues, discuss this session's victims' rights legislative agenda, and commemorate National Victims' Rights Week activities both in (capitol city) and across (your state).

"Victims' Rights: A 'Capitol' Idea" will take place on (day), (date), from (beginning time to ending time) at our state Capitol. We have obtained co-sponsorship of this day's activities from (list of co-sponsoring legislators and state officials).

Some of the activities planned for "Victims' Rights: A 'Capitol' Idea include (list of planned activities).

We would be delighted for your organization to co-sponsor "Victims' Rights: A 'Capitol' Idea." It is the perfect opportunity to focus our state's attention on National Victims' Rights Week, as well as to obtain strong media coverage of our efforts both in (capitol city) and our local communities.

I have enclosed a response form for you to let our Planning Committee know if we can count on your support. Please return it to me no later than (date).

Organizations and individuals who agree to participate will be mailed a complete itinerary by (date).

I am confident your support will contribute to the success of "Victims' Rights: A 'Capitol' Idea." I hope you will give serious consideration to co-sponsoring this special event to pay tribute to the countless crime victims of (your state) and the fine organizations which serve them.

Sincerely,

Enclosure (Response Form)

**VICTIMS' RIGHTS: A 'CAPITOL' IDEA**  
**Response Form**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

ORGANIZATION: \_\_\_\_\_

MAILING ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address or P.O. Box

\_\_\_\_\_ City State Zip Code

TELEPHONE: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_  
A/C

\*\*\*\*\*

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, my organization would like to co-sponsor Victims' Rights: A 'Capitol' Idea. Please list us as co-sponsors on the program and in media-related materials.

\_\_\_\_\_ Number of representatives from my organization will attend Victims' Rights: A 'Capitol' Idea.

\_\_\_\_\_ Please send me information about overnight accommodations.

\_\_\_\_\_ Please send me information about other organizations or individuals in my area who are participating so we can arrange transportation to the Capitol.

\_\_\_\_\_ I **would** like to meet with my state representatives during Victims' Rights: A 'Capitol' Idea.

\_\_\_\_\_ I **would not** like to meet with my state representatives during Victims' Rights: A 'Capitol' Idea.

\*\*\*\*\*

\_\_\_\_\_ My organization is unable to participate in Victims' Rights: A 'Capitol' Idea.

\*\*\*\*\*

Please return this form  
no later than (date)  
to:  
(contact person)  
(address)

## SAMPLE LETTER TO POTENTIAL LEGISLATIVE CO-SPONSORS

Honorable (Name)  
(Your state) State Senate/Assembly/  
House of Representatives  
Capitol Office Address  
City/State/Zip Code

Dear :

The annual commemoration of National Victims' Rights Week is planned for (dates). During this special week, (your state's) crime victims and advocates will join together to educate our citizens about the rights and needs of violent crime victims.

Many victims and advocates are interested in spending a day together in our state Capitol. We welcome the opportunity to meet with our representatives to discuss current victims' rights issues and initiatives, and to learn more about the legislative process in (your state). We have substantial grass-roots support for our effort, and plan to solicit statewide media coverage of our activities.

In the past, you have been a strong supporter of victims' rights in (your state). Because of your leadership in areas concerning crime victims and criminal justice, we would be honored if you would agree to co-sponsor the activities related to "Victims' Rights: A 'Capitol' Idea."

Some of the events we are considering include: (list possible events from your list of suggested activities, i.e., no-host breakfast or lunch, press conference, etc.). We are eager to receive your input concerning which of these events would be best to implement during National Victims' Rights Week.

We would also like to choose a date and time(s) which fit your schedule. We know you are very busy, and are willing to plan our activities around your calendar.

The Planning Committee for "Victims' Rights: A 'Capitol' Idea" will assume responsibility for logistics and media related to any events we co-sponsor. We will be pleased to coordinate these efforts with your staff.

We hope your schedule permits you to join us for "Victims' Rights: A 'Capitol' Idea." We believe it is the perfect way to show the citizens of (your state) that our elected officials are concerned about the rights and needs of violent crime victims.

I will contact your Capitol office next week concerning this special event. If you have any questions about "Victims' Rights: A 'Capitol' Idea" or (year) National Victims' Rights Week, please do not hesitate to contact me at (area code/telephone number).

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

## SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE\*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
(Date)

CONTACT: (Name)  
(Telephone Number)

### "VICTIMS' RIGHTS: A 'CAPITOL' IDEA"

(City)--(Your state's) violent crime victims, their advocates and supporters will join together at the state Capitol on (day), (date), at (time) to commemorate (year) National Victims' Rights Week.

The annual observance of National Victims' Rights Week is scheduled for (dates). During this special time, thousands of victim advocacy organizations will sponsor special events to pay tribute to those traumatized by violence, and also to educate citizens about the many services now available to help violent crime victims.

In (capitol city), victims and advocates from (number of) cities--including (list participants' cities)-- will meet with their representatives to discuss pending legislation and ways to improve services for violent crime victims in (your state).

In addition, (legislative co-sponsors) will host (list special events and activities with times and locations).

According to (spokesperson), violent crime victims must rely upon new and existing state laws to protect their rights and interests.

"In the past few years, our Legislature has enacted some good statutes to help violent crime victims secure justice--including (list one or two good laws)," (spokesperson) noted. "But we must continue to work hard to promote programs and services which will help ease the pain and suffering of innocent citizens whose lives have been touched by violence."

(Legislative co-sponsor) agreed with (victim/advocate/spokesperson).

"During National Victims' Rights Week and throughout the year, it's important for our Legislature to hear the 'voice of the victim,' and to better understand their needs so we can help them," (legislative co-sponsor) noted.

"(Day's) meetings will help my colleagues and me learn more about what we can do to promote victims' rights in (your state)," (he or she) concluded.

(Legislative co-sponsor) will recognize the efforts of (state's) victim advocates with an official (Senate/House/Assembly) resolution. In addition, legislators will observe a moment of silence at (time) on (date) to pay tribute to innocent citizens who have been victimized by violent crime.

For additional information about "Victims' Rights: A 'Capitol' Idea," or to learn more about (year) National Victims' Rights Week activities, please contact (spokesperson) at (area code/telephone number).

-30-

\* Double-space press release.

## SAMPLE PRAYERS\*

*O thou eternal Mystery, before whom we live and move and have our being, we come in our anger and confusion over the violence we have known, trying to respond with wisdom and justice. Replace our feelings of despair with determination, futility with faith, helplessness with hope. Use our efforts, we pray, to create your shalom. Amen.*

*Eternal and creative Energy, who brings into being the things that are not, who generates within us faith, hope and charity, and who always offers to us new possibilities of living, bless our efforts today as we seek a just response to the violence we have known within our land, our families and our lives. May the results of our efforts be a greater peace both within us and among us. Amen.*

\* These sample prayers were written by the Reverend Richard Lord and Janice Harris Lord, Director of Victim Services for Mothers Against Drunk Driving National Office.

*But in that coming day, no weapon turned against you shall succeed, and you will have justice against every courtroom lie. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord. This is the blessing I have given you, says the Lord.*

Isaiah 54:17

# WORKING WITH LIBRARIES TO PROMOTE VICTIMS' RIGHTS

## Introduction

This year, (date) is also National Library Week. This helpful coincidence provides an ideal chance for crime victims and advocates to develop a good working relationship with libraries and their staff to promote victims' rights issues.

You should consider the different types of libraries which provide citizens in your community with information and resources. Your organization can target your public awareness activities to many different segments of the population, depending on the libraries you contact.

There are four categories of libraries:

**Public:** City, city branches, county, and county branches

**Academic:** College, junior college, university and trade schools

**School:** Elementary, middle schools, junior high schools, high schools, and alternative schools

**Special:** City hall (includes Police Training Centers), corporations, law, medical, and newspapers

Most of these libraries are interested in some aspects of victims' rights. Think about the different people who utilize each library's services, and plan your activities according to these special interest areas.

## Suggestions for Working with Your Libraries

1. Develop a complete list of libraries in your community, including contact persons, addresses and telephone numbers. This information is available in the telephone book. You may wish to contact a librarian in your public library for further assistance.
2. Schedule an appointment with the director of each library with which you plan to work. Let them know you are interested in providing information and resources to their constituents about violent crime and victimization, with a special emphasis on the specific type of victimization addressed by your organization.

3. Be prepared for your meeting! Bring any brochures, newsletters, or other resources that get your message across. And remember, offer your support and services not only during National Victims' Rights Week, but throughout the year.
4. Ask the library director to explain the existing library collection which relates to crime and victimization. Determine specific areas which could use additional resources. If time permits, tour the library.
5. Discuss ideas to promote victims' issues during National Victims' Rights Week. You may wish to:
  - Design a bulletin board about victims' rights in general, or your specific area of victimization;
  - Develop a display case, using the *Center's National Victims' Rights Week Strategies for Action* kit's posters and resources from your organization;
  - Invite the public to attend a seminar concerning victims' rights issues at the library;
  - Present an in-service training workshop about your organization and its services to the library staff;
  - Contribute bibliographies and other print, audio, or visual materials concerning violent crime and victims to your library;
  - Develop a special program or resource materials concerning:
    - Local services for crime victims;
    - What victims and witnesses should know about the criminal justice process;
    - How to cope with violent crime victimization; and
    - Helping children cope with victimization.
  - Work with your local law enforcement agencies to present a workshop on crime prevention techniques;
  - Provide your library director with a complete list of victim services in your community; and
  - Provide your library with the *Center's* telephone number and address. Calls are always welcome from fellow librarians.

### **The National Library Resource Project on Crime Victimization**

Another exciting way to involve your libraries in National Victims' Rights Week activities is to offer them copies of the *National Library Resource Project on Crime Victimization*, now available free in limited quantities from the *National Victim Center*. The *Project* features 100 pages of resources to help city, school and special libraries develop collections and patron information about victims' rights, including:

- Camera-ready slicks for public service posters and displays;
- *The Librarian's Guide to Subjects and Classifications Dealing with Crime Victimization;*
- *The Librarian's Reference Reading List on Crime Victimization;*
- A statistical overview;
- *A State Profile for Crime Compensation and Victim/Witness Assistance;* and
- A resource guide of national organizations which deal with victimization.

You can add a roster of victim service organizations in your region to make the *Project* kit an exceptional resource that will be valued by your libraries throughout the year.

To order your complimentary copy of the *National Library Resource Project on Crime Victimization*, please contact the *Center's* librarian at (817) 877-3355.

# VICTIMS' RIGHTS RESOURCE ARENA

## Introduction

One of the best ways to inform the public about victims' rights issues is to sponsor a *Resource Arena*. A well organized *Resource Arena* will bring together organizations representing all facets of victims' rights, including programs which service victims of homicide, sexual assault, domestic violence, child abuse, elder abuse, racial or hate violence and abuse of differently-abled populations, along with law enforcement, judicial and prosecutor-based services.

A *Resource Arena* enables your community's citizens to receive information about victims' rights programs and services at one convenient location. Each organization contributes an attractive display booth with staff or volunteers available to answer questions and provide information and referral services upon request. It combines the best possible public education and community awareness strategies to inform people about victims' rights and needs.

A *Resource Arena* can encompass one or several days of activities. Your decision should be based upon the amount of time, staff and volunteers each participating organization can commit to this special project. If you've never sponsored a *Resource Arena* before, it's a good idea to limit your activities to one or two days.

You may wish to include special programs along with display tables in your *Resource Arena*. Some suggestions for programmatic activities include:

- A presentation from your District Attorney about his or her Victim/Witness Program;
- A self-defense course;
- An overview of your state's "Crime Victims' Bill of Rights" (where applicable) or other key laws;
- A presentation about home security;
- An overview of your community's *Neighborhood Watch* programs;
- A presentation to parents about protecting their children from child abuse; and/or
- An overview of hate and racial violence concerns.

In addition, you may wish to add visual presentations to your *Resource Arena*. You can produce charts and other graphic depictions of crime and victimization, offering local, state and national perspectives. The enclosed *National Crime Prevention Council's Crime and Crime Prevention Statistics* contains data, research, and charts that can easily be converted into attractive visual displays.

Your *Resource Arena* should be held in a "high visibility" location. Another factor that will contribute to the success of your efforts is a good media campaign, involving public service announcements, press releases and newsletter articles.

The guidelines included in the following *Description of Tasks* will help you plan, organize and implement your *Resource Arena*.

Remember, the more people you involve in sponsoring your *Resource Arena* will result in more people spreading the word about this special National Victims' Rights Week event. Be creative! With your *Resource Arena*, "the sky's the limit!"

## **Victims' Rights Resource Arena Checklist: A Description of Tasks**

### **COORDINATION OF TASKS**

#### **Planning Sessions:**

Since a *Resource Arena* involves a large number of participating organizations, your responsibilities include clarifying any logistical concerns they may have. The enclosed **sample letter** inviting groups to participate in your *Resource Arena* features a **response form** for those who wish to participate in the *Resource Arena*, including those who are unable to attend your planning session.

One or two organizations should take the lead in coordinating your *Resource Arena*. However, other participants must be informed about the date(s), hours and location of the *Arena*, along with suggestions on what resources they should bring to share with the public.

#### **Delegating Tasks**

You may wish to appoint Coordinators to assume responsibility for media, logistics and providing information to participating organizations. The components of this *Description of Tasks*, along with the enclosed **sample documents**, should help your Coordinators effectively complete their duties.

#### **Resource Arena Volunteers:**

The *Center* recommends that you assign volunteers responsibility for the following tasks:

- **Display Table Coordination:** The primary sponsor of the *Resource Arena* should assign a staff member to greet participating organizations, direct them to their display tables and provide other assistance, as needed.

- **Media Coordination:** One volunteer with public affairs experience should be available at all times to greet the media, guide them through the *Resource Arena* and provide information about all participating organizations.
- **Display Table Staffing:** Each participating organization should arrange to have a volunteer or staff member at its display table for the entire duration of the *Resource Arena*.

## LOGISTICS

**Select Location:** (7 weeks in advance)

Your *Resource Arena* should be held in a location that is highly visible with plenty of "foot traffic." City, county, state or federal office buildings are excellent sites. Your local county courthouse, public library or shopping mall can also provide you with good attendance.

Make sure your site is secure, well lit, large enough to accommodate your projected number of guests and handicap accessible. Adequate parking space and convenient loading zones are also important considerations.

**Obtain Permits:** (7 weeks in advance)

Most buildings--both public and private--require permits for public displays. There is seldom a cost involved. Be sure your Coordinator has a copy of the permit on hand during your *Resource Arena*.

**Prepare Banner:** (2 weeks in advance)

A large, attractively designed banner to greet your guests and publicize your event should be prepared and displayed at your *Resource Arena*. You can either paint your message on butcher paper or prepare a felt banner.

Some suggested messages include: *Welcome to the (City/County/State/Parish) Victims' Rights Resource Arena; (year) National Victims' Rights Week Resource Arena or Resources for Victims' Rights.*

**Secure Tote Bags:** (5 weeks in advance)

It's helpful if you provide your guests with bags to hold their *Resource Arena* materials. Your local grocery or department store will most likely be pleased to donate paper or plastic tote bags. Bags with "handles" attached or cut out are easiest to hold.

**Design Resource Arena Program:** (2 weeks in advance)

A good program highlights the goals of your *Resource Arena*, lists participating organizations, services and contact information, provides statistics and thanks donors. The camera-ready logo type treatment should be included on the cover of your program.

**Print Program:**

(2 weeks in advance)

Your programs can either be reproduced inexpensively by your primary sponsor, or you can ask a local printer to donate paper and printing services.

**Secure Public Address System:**

(2 weeks in advance)

If you are planning any special programs for your *Resource Arena*, such as remarks which include speakers, it's helpful to have a public address system. Ask your *Resource Arena's* building manager or maintenance department if they can set up a sound system, or check with local churches or schools that can loan you a system.

If special programs involve speakers, you must also secure a lectern. If your building manager is unable to provide a lectern, check with local churches, schools or civic organizations about borrowing one for your *Resource Arena*.

**Supplies:**

(1 week in advance)

The primary sponsor of your *Resource Arena* should come prepared to help all participants set up their display tables. You should have the following supplies on hand: scissors; glue; scotch tape; making tape; yardstick; wide and narrow felt tip markers; poster boards; butcher paper; and extra pens and pencils.

Your *Resource Arena* will look attractive and professional if all display tables are covered with the same type of tablecloth. You can use either butcher paper (taped neatly to each table) or inexpensive paper tablecloths.

**Tables and Chairs:**

(1 week in advance)

If your *Resource Arena* is held in a city, county, state or federal building, you should be able to secure tables and chairs from the maintenance department. Verify this important logistic in advance! Provide the staff with a count of the number of tables and chairs you will need. A six-foot table with one or two chairs will accommodate most participating organizations. Also, provide additional chairs for people who visit your *Resource Arena*.

**Maintenance Concerns:**

(1 week in advance)

Check with your *Resource Arena* building's contact person or maintenance department about rules related to setting up your *Arena*. Make sure you ask the following questions:

- Can you use masking or scotch tape on the walls?
- Are easels available to the displayers?
- Can you post signs in and around the building prior to and during your *Resource Arena*?
- Will security be provided?
- Is there a contact person and telephone or office number available for information and assistance during the duration of the *Resource Arena*?

**Arrange for Clean-Up:**

(1 week in advance)

Each participating organization should assume responsibility for cleaning up its area and removing all *Resource Arena* materials after your event. However, you should plan to have volunteers break down tables, fold up chairs and further assist in making the area as clean as it was when you began.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

**Co-Sponsor Letters:**

(7 weeks in advance)

The enclosed sample letter should be mailed to all victim service organizations, non-profit organizations which support your cause, and any organization which has worked with you in the past. Make sure you include groups which address special populations including senior citizens, children, the differently-abled, and gay and lesbian citizens.

The sample response form will let you know how many groups are interested in participating and what types of special programs or presentations they would like to conduct at the *Resource Arena*.

**Press Release with Cover Letter:**

(10 days in advance)

A great way to publicize your *Resource Arena* is to mail the enclosed sample letter and press release to organizations and associations in your community and ask them to publish it in their newsletters. Check your *Yellow Pages* under *Associations*, *Civic Organizations*, and *Social Services Agencies* for your mailing list.

**Letters to Speakers:**

(6 weeks in advance)

If your *Resource Arena* includes special programs or presentations, draft a letter inviting program participants. Make sure you indicate the date, time and location of the program, along with specific guidelines about what their contribution will entail.

**MEDIA**

**NOTE:** Please refer to the *Candlelight Vigil/Balloon Lift Description of Tasks* for additional guidelines about publicizing your *Resource Arena* in the media.

**Public Service Announcements:**

(5 weeks in advance)

A series of sample PSA's to publicize your *Resource Arena* is included in this kit.

**Press Release:**

(10 days in advance)

A sample press release for both the media and organizational newsletters is included in this kit. You may want to begin your *Resource Arena* with a press conference or host press availability during special presentations. Make sure your press release is double-spaced.

**Follow-Up Phoning:**

(1 week in advance)

Don't overlook this important task! Make sure you check with your major news media to make sure they received your press release and public service announcements, answer any questions they have and confirm their attendance.

**Media Kits:**

(1 week in advance)

Compiling media kits for your *Resource Arena* is optional. If you decide to produce media kits, include the following materials in an attractive pocket folder: brochures and/or information from each participating organization; any materials related to special *Resource Arena* programs; a copy of your press release; and a copy of the *Resource Arena* program.

**SAMPLE LETTER TO POTENTIAL  
CO-SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS OF THE  
NATIONAL VICTIMS' RIGHTS WEEK RESOURCE ARENA**

Name/Title  
Organization  
Street Address or P.O. Box  
City/State/Zip Code

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ :

The week of (dates) has been declared National Victims' Rights Week. In (city/county/parish/state), we hope to promote victims' rights and concerns during this period.

On (day(s)/date(s)), (name or organization) is sponsoring a National Victims' Rights Week Resource Arena from (time to time) at (location) in (city). The purpose of our Resource Arena is to bring together all local victim service organizations to educate and inform the public about victims' rights and programs we provide to those touched by crime.

I would like to invite you to co-sponsor our Resource Arena. All participants will prepare and staff a display table with information about their programs and services. In addition, we would like to conduct some brief public service programs during the Resource Arena to provide information about special topics related to crime and victimization, such as demonstrations about home safety or programs about compensation or victims' rights.

Our initial planning session for the Resource Arena is scheduled for (day), (date), at (time) at (location). I hope you or a member of your staff can attend and help us coordinate this special project.

I have enclosed a response form which will help us determine which organizations plan to participate in the Resource Arena. Please complete this form and return it to me no later than (date).

We believe a Resource Arena will complement nationwide National Victims' Rights Week activities designed to help people understand the victim experience and learn about programs which aid in recovery and rehabilitation. Your participation will, without a doubt, enhance the scope and quality of the National Victims' Rights Week Resource Arena in (city/county/parish/state).

If you have any questions concerning either the Resource Arena or National Victims' Rights Week, please call me at (area code/telephone number).

Sincerely,

Enclosure (Response Form)

**NATIONAL VICTIMS' RIGHTS WEEK**  
**Resource Arena Response Form**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

ORGANIZATION: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address or P.O. Box

City

State

Zip Code

\*\*\*\*\*

\_\_\_\_\_ We would like to sponsor a display table at the National Victims' Rights Week Resource Arena.

\_\_\_\_\_ We do not plan to participate in the National Victims' Rights Week Resource Arena.

\_\_\_\_\_ We plan to have \_\_\_\_\_ attend the initial planning session.  
(Name)

\*\*\*\*\*

We need the following equipment for our display:\*

- |                       |                                    |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| _____ Six foot table  | _____ Overhead Projector           |
| _____ Chair(s)        | _____ Easel                        |
| _____ Slide Projector | _____ Space to hang banner         |
| _____ Screen          | _____ VHS Equipment and Television |

\* At the initial planning session, we will ask participating organizations to identify equipment they can bring to the Resource Arena. We will look into the Resource Arena building's equipment supply and rental agencies, as needed.

\*\*\*\*\*

\_\_\_\_\_ We would like to sponsor the following public service presentation during the Resource Arena (briefly describe):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Approximate length of program: \_\_\_\_\_

Equipment needs: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO:  
(contact person)  
(address)

**SAMPLE LETTER TO CIVIC AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS  
ASKING THEM TO PUBLICIZE THE  
RESOURCE ARENA AND  
PUBLISH A NEWSLETTER ARTICLE**

Name/Title  
Organization  
Street Address or P.O. Box  
City/State/Zip Code

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ :

(Dates) marks the annual commemoration of National Victims' Rights Week. During this period, victims' service organizations in (city) will join forces to educate the public about victimization and generate community awareness about victims' rights.

On (date(s)), a National Victims' Rights Week Resource Arena will be held at (location) in (city). This special event is co-sponsored by (list of participating organizations). We would like to invite you and your members to attend the Resource Arena and learn more about crime and victimization.

I have enclosed a press release highlighting the purpose and programs of our National Victims' Rights Week Resource Arena. We would be very grateful if you could publish it in your newsletter or in-house organ. We believe your members can benefit from the knowledge and awareness they will gain by attending this special event.

If you have any questions concerning our Resource Arena or (year) National Victims' Rights Week, please contact me at (area code/telephone number).

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Enclosure (Sample Press Release)

## PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

:30

Here's your chance to learn more about crime and victimization in (city). A National Victims' Rights Week Resource Arena is scheduled for (day(s)), (date(s)), (times)), at (location) in (city). This special event is co-sponsored by (list of participating organizations).

Find out what these organizations do to help the thousands of crime victims in our community. For more information, call (area code/telephone number).

# # #

:30

Have you ever been victimized by crime? Or do you know someone who's fallen prey to violence? You can learn more about victims' rights and issues at a National Victims' Rights Week Resource Arena planned for (day(s)), (date(s)), (times)), at (location) in (city). Organizations such as (list two or three participating groups) will be on hand to let (city's) citizens know about their programs and services for crime victims.

For more information about the National Victims' Rights Week Resource Arena, call (area code/telephone number).

# # #

:20

During National Victims' Rights Week, find out what you can do to help innocent victims of violent crime. Visit the National Victims' Rights Week Resource Arena on (day(s)), (date(s)), (times)), at (location) in (city).

For more information, call (area code/telephone number).

# # #

:20

Are you aware of the many excellent programs serving violent crime victims in (city)? Find out what's being done about crime and victimization in our community at the National Victims' Rights Week Resource Arena on (day(s)), (date(s)), (times)), at (location) in (city).

For more information, call (area code/telephone number).

# # #

## SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE\*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
(Date)

CONTACT: (Name)  
(Telephone Number)

### "RESOURCES FOR CRIME VICTIMS AVAILABLE (DATES)"

(City)--A Resource Arena featuring information about violent crime and victimization will be held on (day(s)), (date(s)), (times)), at (location) in (city).

This special event will be held in conjunction with other activities planned nationwide during National Victims' Rights Week--(dates). The Victims' Rights Resource Arena will feature information and special presentations by (list of participating organizations).

Last year, over six million citizens were victimized by violent crime. The U.S. Department of Justice estimates that one out of four American families will be touched by violence this year alone. And studies show that crime in America is becoming more random and more violent.\*\*

According to (spokesperson), it's important for the citizens of (city) to learn about violent crime and victimization before it affects them.

"Most people ignore violent crime until it touches them," (spokesperson) explained. "Our Resource Arena will teach people about crime prevention and what they can do to help someone they love who's been touched by violence."

"People need to know more about the many fine services and programs sponsored in (city) for violent crime victims," (he or she) continued.

"The Victims' Rights Resource Arena will help our community better understand and learn how to deal with the victim experience," (he or she) concluded.

Experts will be on hand to provide information and answer questions about crime, victimization and victims' rights. In addition, special presentations addressing (topics) will begin on (date) at (time).

For more information about the Victims' Rights Resource Arena and other (year) National Victims' Rights Week activities, call (area code/telephone number).

-30-

\* Double-space press release.

\*\* Update statistics annually.

# CANDLELIGHT VIGIL/BALLOON LIFT CHECKLIST: A DESCRIPTION OF TASKS

## COORDINATION OF TASKS

### Planning Sessions:

These meetings are, without a doubt, critical to the success of your *Vigil* or *Balloon Lift*. The initial letter you send to potential co-sponsors seven weeks in advance (**sample enclosed**) must be tailored to generate enthusiasm and support from local grass roots organizations.

The *Center* recommends that you schedule at least **three** planning sessions which include a representative from each organization co-sponsoring the event. It's helpful if the meetings are scheduled on the same day of the week at the same time (for example, every other Tuesday at 4:00 p.m.).

When soliciting co-sponsors, look beyond "traditional" victims' rights groups. Organizations which serve senior citizens, gay and lesbian constituents, differently-abled populations, minority clientele, etc., along with corrections, judicial, mental health, legal and law enforcement organizations, should be considered for co-sponsorship of your *Vigil*. The more people you involve in the planning stage, the more people you will have attend and support your *Vigil* or *Balloon Lift*.

It's important to establish an agenda for each planning session and to **follow that agenda!** This *Description of Tasks*, along with calendars and related support materials, should help you plan your agenda and delegate responsibilities related to your *Vigil* or *Balloon Lift*.

During the week prior to your *Vigil* or *Balloon Lift*, you may have to meet more often to finalize all the crucial logistics of the event.

### Delegating Tasks:

Your core *Coordinating Committee* for the event should consist of **one** representative from each co-sponsoring organization. Each *Committee* member should volunteer to be responsible for a certain number of tasks. If you have enough co-sponsors, the *Center* recommends that you delegate coordinating responsibilities in the following areas: Overall Coordinator; Media Coordinator; Correspondence Coordinator; Victims' Coordinator; Program and Agenda Coordinator; and Logistics Coordinator.

"The more, the merrier" is an appropriate slogan for your respective Coordinators, as it is important to solicit volunteers to assist with the many tasks. The *Description of Tasks* will, again, assist the long-term planning efforts leading up to your event.

## **Volunteers for your Vigil or Balloon Lift:**

The *Center* recommends that you assign volunteers responsibility for the following tasks:

- **Media:** Two volunteers should staff the press table, hand out media kits, and be prepared to offer guidance to media representatives, as needed.
- **Victims and Survivors:** Two to three volunteers should be on hand to welcome victims and survivors, sign them in and give them their programs. Fifteen minutes prior to the event, volunteers should brief these special participants about the agenda for your *Vigil or Balloon Lift* using your program as a guide.
- **Master/Mistress of Ceremonies:** Your "M.C." should be a victim service provider or victim. He or she should be articulate and capable of keeping your program on schedule.
- **Speakers:** One volunteer should be available to greet the guest speakers, sign them in, answer any questions they may have and provide guidance, as needed.

Prior to your event, inform your guest speakers whom their contact will be at your *Vigil or Balloon Lift*.

## **LOGISTICS**

It is important to have one person assume responsibility for setting up the equipment, tables, lecturn, etc. for the *Vigil or Balloon Lift*. Plan to begin set-up tasks one-and-a-half hours prior to your event.

The Logistics Coordinator should have 5 to 8 volunteers assisting him or her. Some heavy lifting may be included in these volunteers' assignments.

The Logistics Coordinator should also arrange for 5 to 8 volunteers to help clean the area after the event.

**Photo Board:** If you choose to create a photo collage of victims, you will need one or two volunteers to monitor this task. Photos should be attached to the board with masking tape on the back (the volunteer must be prepared with a large number of pieces of tape rolled to stick both ways).

**Flowers:** One volunteer should give each victim and survivor a flower, either upon their arrival, after they give their testimony (if applicable), or after they light their candles or release their balloons.

**Choosing a Spokesperson:** Your spokesperson will be the key contact for media representatives (his or her name will be included as "Contact" on all media mailings).

Your spokesperson should be extremely knowledgeable about victims' issues--including local programs and services, pending state legislation, identifying the specific needs of victims and survivors in your community, etc.

He or she should have some experience working with the media and/or public speaking, and should be very articulate.

It is wise to have only one spokesperson to avoid confusion; however, many *Coordinating Committees* select two representatives. Evaluate your needs and logistics; make your decision based upon what will enhance your efforts to coordinate your *Vigil* or *Balloon Lift*.

## LOGISTICS

### Select Location:

(7 weeks in advance)

An excellent location for your *Vigil* or *Balloon Lift* is the County Courthouse. In past years, successful *Vigils* have been held in churches so inclement weather was not a problem. Several groups have held *Balloon Lifts* at government memorial sites or the State Capitol. And in Port Huron, Michigan, students from local schools all joined in the 1987 *Balloon Lift* from their respective campuses.

The site you choose should be large enough to accommodate a sizable crowd, well lit, easily accessible to the public, and handicap accessible for disabled participants.

If you are planning to conduct your *Vigil* outdoors, make sure you plan an alternative site in case of inclement weather. Since the *Balloon Lift* must be held outdoors, plan an alternate date in case of bad weather.

Arrange for a room where victims can gather prior to the *Vigil* or *Balloon Lift* to sign-in, receive a briefing on the itinerary, and have some quiet time. You may also wish to secure a room for press availability following the event if there are victims who are willing to be interviewed.

Make sure there is plenty of parking space available!

### Obtain Permits:

(7 weeks in advance)

If your site is a public facility, you **must** have official permission to conduct a public event. There is usually no cost involved. Obtain the name of a contact person who can assist you on the date of your event. Also, be certain that the *Logistics Coordinator* has a copy of your permit on hand that date.

### Obtain Candles and Drip Catchers: (Vigil Only)

(5 weeks in advance)

Many facilities require that you provide "dripleless" candles for your *Vigil*.....we recommend this regardless of the rules! The best candles are 10 to 12 inch tapers. If you purchase your candles from a "candle company," they will provide you with paper flutes to catch the wax drippings. If you are unable to secure these flutes, you can use paper cups: slice a small cut in the base of the cup and push the candle up through it.

To limit your expenses, try to get the candles donated, either by a candle company or a local business. Local grocery stores may be willing to donate paper cups. We suggest that you avoid paper cups with a company's name printed on them!

**Arrange for Balloons:  
(Balloon Lift Only)**

(5 weeks in advance)

Black balloons have a dramatic, powerful visual effect on both your participants and the news media. In 1987, the *Balloon Lift* sponsored by *Victims' Outreach* in Dallas, Texas, featured black, white and red balloons--with each color representing emotions associated with victimization.

Check your *Yellow Pages* listing under *Balloons* and contact different companies for prices. Explain your project, and don't hesitate to ask for a discount or donation.

Arranging for balloons also means enlisting quite a few volunteers the day of your *Balloon Lift* to fill them with helium and attach strings. In some communities, participants are also provided with small cards to personally commemorate or memorialize victims or survivors of crime. These cards are then attached to the balloons prior to the event.

As an environmental precaution, Oklahoma victims and advocates had hundreds of balloons with such cards at their *Balloon Lift* in 1989. However, they only let loose one symbolic balloon. This alternative is definitely environmentally sound!

**Arrange for a Choir:**

(4 weeks in advance)

The *Center's* past experience with *Vigils* or *Balloon Lifts* has been very heartening in regards to securing a choir to lead the participants in song. Local high schools are a great place to seek a choir; other suggestions include church choirs, police choirs, or any local musical group. Often, a choir may wish to participate because of its personal relationship with a victim they know.

Suggested songs include: *Kumbaya* (create your own verses); *This Little Light of Mine*; *Blowing in the Wind*; *May the Lord Bless and Protect You*; *Climb Every Mountain*; and *That's What Friends Are For*.

Your choir can also sing *America the Beautiful*, *The Star Spangled Banner*, or *This Land is Your Land* to commence your event.

**Arrange for Color Guard(s):**

(3 weeks in advance)

Several successful *Vigils* and *Balloon Lifts* in the past have featured color guards. You can request color guards from state and local law enforcement agencies, including police, sheriffs, state police, highway patrol, and marshalls. Securing a compedium of color guards from each of these law enforcement agencies will add a special touch to your event.

**Design Your Program:**

(2 weeks in advance)

Your programs should include: an attractive cover; list of co-sponsoring organizations; your event's agenda or itinerary, including key participants; and acknowledgements of thanks to all key donors and contributors to your events. Use the camera-ready logo stats included in this kit for your program.

**Prepare Banner:**

(2 weeks in advance)

A banner to hang on (or behind) the lecturn is optional. The advantage of a lecturn banner is that it provides an excellent visual for the media. The estimated cost of an attractive felt banner is \$20.00.

**Print Program:**

(2 weeks in advance)

You should make a special effort to have your program printed free of charge by a local printer (and recognize this contribution on your program's list of "thank-you's").

**Prepare Sign-In Sheets:**

(1 week in advance)

A sample sign-in sheet has been included in this kit for your use. You should provide sign-in sheets for the following participants: victims and survivors; dignitaries; media representatives; and volunteers. Simply make copies of the enclosed sign-in sheet, fill in the heading, and reproduce enough copies to accommodate the people on each list. Provide clipboards for your sign-in sheets at the event.

**THE FOLLOWING LOGISTICAL CONCERNS SHOULD BE ADDRESSED NO LATER THAN ONE WEEK BEFORE YOUR EVENT.**

**Arrange for Security:**

Local police and sheriff departments and related associations are usually willing to coordinate security at no cost to you. You may wish to block off a section of a public road if you expect a large number of participants, and your local law enforcement agency can do this. Security volunteers should provide assistance with crowd control, be able to provide guidance and directions, and maintain a safe environment.

**Arrange for Clean-Up:**

This is everyone's favorite responsibility! Actually, your clean-up crew has several specific duties: to take down any tables, chairs, public address system, etc. and return them to the owners; clean-up any litter that clutters the grounds; and make sure that the area is as clean as it was prior to the ceremony. You will want to do this next year--be sure that your group will be welcome again.

**Secure Tables:**

One or two 6- to 8-foot tables should accommodate your needs nicely. You will need a place to distribute balloons or candles and programs; to sign-in media representatives and distribute media kits; to sign-in victims, survivors and their families; and to display literature from your co-sponsoring organizations.

**Secure Lecturn:**

Featured speakers (along with victims and survivors who wish to publicly provide personal testimony) must have a lecturn that can be equipped with many press

microphones. You should be able to secure a lecturn at no charge from a local civic organization, church, school, or business. If your event is held at night, provide lighting for the lecturn.

**Secure Public Address System:**

A local church or school may provide this to you at no cost. If not, call a local dealer (usually listed in your *Yellow Pages* under *Sound System, Audio-Visual Equipment or Rental*) and try to get the least expensive system available. You will need a microphone with two speakers; many portable systems are more than adequate. Don't forget to check the systems immediately prior to your event for sound levels and static!

**Secure Flowers:**

You may wish to give victims and survivors who attend your event a flower. You can present them with a flower upon arrival, after they give their testimony (if applicable), or after they light their candles or release their balloons. If you check around with your local florists, you should be able to get flowers donated.

**Secure American and Your State's Flags:**

This is an optional item which will enhance the visual effect of your *Vigil* or *Balloon Lift*. Again, a local church, school, or civic organization may loan you these flags. If you are at the County Courthouse, a supportive judge should be glad to loan you his or her flags for the ceremony. Flags should be placed on each side of the lecturn. For *Vigils*, be sure they are clear of any area where candles are being placed--catching the flag on fire is likely to mar your ceremony.

**Secure Large Board Upon Which to Place Victims' Photos:**

Many survivors may wish to bring a photo of their loved ones to be included in a large "photo collage." This provides an excellent visual for media representatives, and is a poignant tribute to those killed by violent crime. Two standard poster boards--or a large piece of plexiglass--will suffice if you choose to include a photo collage in your ceremony.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

**Co-Sponsor Letters:**

(7 weeks in advance)

The sample letters enclosed in your kit should be mailed to all victim service organizations, grass-roots groups which support your cause, local bar associations and other groups which have aided you in the past. If you do not receive a response from those to whom you mailed the letter, follow-up with a phone call six weeks prior to your event. Your first Planning Session is critical to the success of your *Vigil* or *Balloon Lift*.

**Letters to Elected Officials and Dignitaries:**

(6 weeks in advance)

The enclosed sample letters will inform elected officials of your *Vigil* or *Balloon Lift*, invite them to participate, and invite them to submit a statement of support for possible inclusion in your media kit.

**Letters to Speakers:**

(5 weeks in advance)

You should limit your speakers to three or four persons, if possible (too many presentations take away from the poignancy of your event). Use your judgment to determine whom to ask. Some possibilities include supportive judges, your Mayor, city council members or supportive elected officials.

Sample letters are enclosed. If you have not received a response from your potential speakers, give them a call to confirm their participation.

**Letters to Victims and Victim Families:**

(5 weeks in advance)

This may be the most important correspondence related to your event. The sample letter with a response form should be given to all co-sponsoring organizations. They can then send the letter inviting all those on their respective mailing lists. You should have one coordinator to monitor responses (the return address on the response form should be the same for all organizations).

**Thank-You Letters:**

(week after event)

It is always important to thank those who contributed to the success of your *Vigil* or *Balloon Lift*. Those individuals include: keynote speakers, dignitaries, the media, anyone who donated goods or services and any special guests. Sample thank-you letters are included in this kit.

**MEDIA****Public Service Announcements:**

(5 weeks in advance)

Radio and television stations are usually very accommodating in broadcasting PSA's for non-profit organizations. The sample PSA's can be tailored to meet your individual needs. When your victim volunteers follow-up on the press releases, they can also confirm that the television and radio stations received (and will air) the PSA's. You may also wish to ask television stations to promote your *Vigil* or *Balloon Lift* on the local eventing news. Some television and radio stations will ask a representative from the *Coordinating Committee* to record the PSA's. Volunteer this special service, as it will greatly enhance your public awareness efforts!

**Press Releases:**

(10 days in advance)

The sample press releases will be one of the media's initial introductions to your *Vigil* or *Balloon Lift*. It should be sent to all newspapers (including weekly publications and "throw-aways"), radio stations, television stations, local magazines and organization/business newsletter editors. Call your local newspapers and find out the name of the editor or reporter who should receive your release. Make a note of his or her name for future reference.

Media lists for your community are available from the *Center*. Please contact the *Center* if you would like a copy of the print and electronic media in your region.

**Follow-Up Phoning:****(1 week in advance)**

The follow-up phone calls to those who received your press release are as important as the release itself! The phoning is most effective if the personal contact is made by a victim who will participate in your *Vigil* or *Balloon Lift*.

Often, press releases are misplaced or thrown away. Follow-up phoners should use the following guidelines in their task:

1. Ask to speak to your contact or the assignment editor.
2. Introduce yourself and explain your personal involvement in the *Vigil* or *Balloon Lift*.
3. Ask if they received a copy of the press release.
4. Ask if they have any questions or if there is any additional information they will need.
5. Ask if they have any special requirements for covering the event (lighting, risers for television cameras, etc.).
6. If they do not have the press release, send it directly to them.
7. Send any follow-up information they request.
8. Record all press responses on the enclosed form.

**Editor's Advisory:****(1 week in advance)**

Your "final reminder" to the media is the *Editor's Advisory* (samples enclosed). This should be mailed to all media representatives who have agreed to attend or indicated that they "might" send someone. Your *Editor's Advisory* also allows you the chance to add any pertinent information that was not included in the press release, such as last minute guests or speakers.

**Compile Materials for Media Kits:****(1 week in advance)**

The enclosed media kit checklist will help you decide the contents you should include in this important document.

**Collate Media Kits:****(day before event)**

You should obtain several volunteers to compile the media kits. Provide a sample kit to them for guidance.

MONTH: March

CANDLELIGHT VIGIL/BALLOON LIFT CALENDAR COUNTDOWN

6-I

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
WEEK 7			First planning session. Select location.				
WEEK 6						Mail letter inviting elected official and dignitaries.	
WEEK 5		Mail invitations to potential speakers.	Second planning session. (Plan calendar and assign tasks.)	Mail public service announcements.	Order candles and balloons.	Mail letters to victims and survivors.	
WEEK 4			Secure choir.	Follow-up phone calls to secure potential speakers.			
WEEK 3		Arrange for color guards.					

MONTH: April

CANDLELIGHT VIGIL/BALLOON LIFT CALENDAR COUNTDOWN

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
WEEK 2			Secure public address system. Third planning session.	Mail press release/ finalize program.	Complete program design. Prepare banner.	Program to printer.	
		Follow-up phoning for press release.	Final planning session. Finalize media kits.	Mail editor's advisory. Mail program agenda to participants.		Prepare sign-in sheets.	Collate media kits. Finalize all logistics.
NVRW	Pray for good weather!	<b>NOON BALLOON LIFT</b> * * * (time) <b>CANDLELIGHT VIGIL</b>	Send thank-you letters.				

**SAMPLE LETTER TO  
POTENTIAL CO-SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS  
FOR CANDLELIGHT VIGIL**

Name/Title  
Organization  
Street Address or P.O. Box  
City/State/Zip Code

Dear :

You are, no doubt, aware that the annual commemoration of National Victims' Rights Week is scheduled for (dates). This is a perfect opportunity for all of us who serve violent crime victims to join together and promote public awareness concerning the rights and needs of those traumatized by crime.

On (date), (organizations) are sponsoring a Candlelight Vigil to pay tribute to the victims and survivors of violent crime in our community. This special event is being coordinated by the National Victim Center, a non-profit organization located in Fort Worth, Texas which is dedicated to serving crime victims nationwide. The Center is encouraging victims' organizations nationwide to sponsor simultaneous events during National Victims' Rights Week; its staff has forwarded extensive materials to me which specifically detail the logistics necessary to host a Vigil in (your city).

(Co-sponsoring organizations) would be delighted if (their organization) could join with us to co-sponsor the Vigil on (date). We have asked other agencies and advocates who serve crime victims to also host the Vigil with us.

A meeting to coordinate the Vigil activities has been scheduled for (day), (date), at (time) at (location). I hope that you, or a representative of (their organization), can join us at this planning session.

We are confident that, with your support, we can organize a tremendously successful event which will bring local victims and their advocates together and, at the same time, create substantial public awareness in our community about the needs of crime victims and organizations like ours which serve them.

Please let me know if your organization will be able to join our efforts. I can be reached at (area code/telephone number).

I look forward to seeing you on (date of planning session).

Sincerely,

## SAMPLE LETTER TO POTENTIAL SPEAKERS FOR CANDLELIGHT VIGIL

Name/Title  
Street Address or P.O. Box  
City/State/Zip Code

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ :

The annual observance of National Victims' Rights Week is scheduled for (date). A major event planned by local victims' organizations and those we serve is a Candlelight Vigil, scheduled for (date/date/time) at (location).

This Vigil will give us the opportunity to pay tribute to all those who have been traumatized by violent crime. Our ceremony is being held in conjunction with many other Vigils co-sponsored nationwide by the National Victim Center of Fort Worth, Texas.

Local organizations co-sponsoring this special event include (list of co-sponsoring organizations).

We would be honored if you could join us on (date) and present brief remarks (3 to 5 minutes) to our participants. If you can provide us with a copy of your presentation by (one week before event), we would like to include it in our media kit.

Your participation will, without a doubt, enhance the success of this special event.

Please let me know at your earliest convenience if you will be able to join us on (date).

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

**SAMPLE LETTER  
INVITING DIGNITARIES TO  
CANDLELIGHT VIGIL**

Name  
Street Address or P.O. Box  
City/State/Zip Code

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ :

On (day/date), (list of co-sponsors) are hosting a Candlelight Vigil at (location) at (time). You are cordially invited to attend.

The purpose of this special event is to pay tribute to victims and survivors of violent crime during National Victims' Rights Week--(dates). Concerned citizens and community leaders like you who attend the Vigil will have the opportunity to reaffirm their commitment to the rights and needs of violent crime victims.

Our Candlelight Vigil is one of many special Vigils that will be hosted by victims, victims' organizations, and their supporters nationwide on (date). This special ceremony is co-sponsored by the National Victim Center, a national non-profit organization based in Fort Worth, Texas, which serves victims of violent crime.

Unfortunately, time limitations prevent us from having many public speeches presented at the Vigil. However, if you would like to submit a brief statement to me indicating your support for crime victims and services, please mail it to me **no later than** (one week before Vigil). We will include a copy of your remarks in our media kit.

We have received an enthusiastic response to our Candlelight Vigil from victims, their supporters, and the local media. I sincerely hope you, your family, and friends can make a special effort to join us on (date). Your participation will, undoubtedly, contribute to the significance of this special event.

If you are able to join us, please call me at (area code/telephone number) so that we may acknowledge your presence at the Vigil.

On behalf of (list of co-sponsors), I look forward to seeing you on (date).

Sincerely,

# SAMPLE LETTER TO VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS INVITING THEM TO ATTEND THE CANDLELIGHT VIGIL

Name  
Street Address or P.O. Box  
City/State/Zip Code

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ :

The annual commemoration of National Victims' Rights Week is scheduled for (dates). (Organizations) are sponsoring a number of activities during this week to generate greatly needed public support for victims' rights and services.

We are hosting a Candlelight Vigil on (day/date/time) at (location). This special ceremony will allow us to publicly pay tribute to victims and survivors of violent crimes, and, at the same time, create public awareness about the severe problems people are faced with after being victimized.

Last year, there were over six million victims of violent crime in our nation! Yet, only 37 percent of those traumatized by violence reported their crimes to the authorities. We feel it is time to stand up and let the voice of the victim be heard-- to join forces and let America see the real people who comprise these appalling statistics!\*

Your participation, and that of your family and friends will, without a doubt, enhance this poignant ceremony. We believe the Vigil will offer victim families and advocates the opportunity to do something positive and concrete as a National Victims' Rights Week tribute to their loved ones.

Victim participants will have the chance to briefly share their experience publicly, if they so desire. We will have a "photo board" if crime victims and survivors wish to share a picture of their loved ones with the other Vigil participants. The photos will be returned following the ceremony.

If you would like to participate in our community's Candlelight Vigil, please complete the attached form and return it to me **no later than** (seven days before Vigil). A photo of your loved one may be attached to the form, or you may wish to bring it on the evening of (date).

We have received an enthusiastic response to this special event from victims, survivors, their supporters, and the local media. (List of dignitaries) will join us and offer brief statements supporting our worthy cause, and the (name of choir) will lead us in singing a tribute to those we love.

If I can provide you with additional information about the Candlelight Vigil or other National Victims' Rights Week activities, please call me at (area code/telephone number).

I hope you, your family and friends will be able to join us.

Sincerely,

Enclosure (Response Form)

\* Update statistics annually.

# NATIONAL VICTIMS' RIGHTS WEEK

## Victims' Testimony

NAME OF VICTIM AS YOU WOULD LIKE IT READ: \_\_\_\_\_

NATURE OF VICTIMIZATION: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF VICTIMIZATION: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Day/Month/Year)

CURRENT STATUS OF CRIMINAL CASE (PLEASE BRIEFLY DESCRIBE, IF APPLICABLE):  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

OPTIONAL BRIEF MEMORIAL OR TRIBUTE STATEMENT YOU WOULD LIKE TO READ (OR  
HAVE READ) AT THE VIGIL:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

WILL YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS ATTEND THE VIGIL? \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO

PLEASE INDICATE HOW MANY PARTICIPANTS YOU PLAN TO BRING: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

YOU WILL BE MAILED AN AGENDA IF YOU PLAN TO ATTEND

\*\*\*\*\*

Please return this form  
**no later than**  
(seven days before event)  
to:

## SAMPLE THANK YOU LETTER FOR CANDLELIGHT VIGIL

Name  
Street Address or P.O. Box  
City/State/Zip Code

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ :

On behalf of (co-sponsoring organizations), I would like to thank you for your contribution to our community's National Victims' Rights Week Candlelight Vigil. This special ceremony was a tremendous success, and that is due in large part to your participation.

We plan to make our Vigil an annual event, and hope we can count on your support again next April.

We sincerely appreciate your concern and commitment to improving victims' services and generating public awareness about victims' rights in our (city/county/state).

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

## SAMPLE CANDLELIGHT VIGIL PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

:30

During National Victims' Rights Week, shed a little light on a national disgrace. Join victims and their advocates at a Candlelight Vigil on (day/date/time) at the (location) in (city).

This special event is co-sponsored by (list of co-sponsoring organizations).

Please join us and show your support for victims of violent crime. For additional information, please call (area code/telephone number).

# # #

:30

On (day/date), a Candlelight Vigil to pay tribute to those victimized by violent crime will be held at (time) at (location) in (city).

Come light a candle to recognize the six million Americans who become violent crime victims each year. Reaffirm your commitment to stop crime and the senseless tragedies it causes in (your community).

For more information, call (area code/telephone number).

# # #

:20

On (day/date), shed a little light on a national disgrace. Join violent crime victims and their advocates at a Candlelight Vigil beginning at (time) at (location) in (city).

For additional information, call (area code/telephone number).

# # #

:15

A Candlelight Vigil honoring victims of violent crime will be held on (day/date/time) at (location) in (city).

For further information, call (area code/telephone number).

# # #

:15

Citizens concerned about violent crime are invited to join crime victims and their supporters at a Candlelight Vigil on (day/date/time) at (location).

For additional information, call (area code/telephone number).

# # #

## SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE FOR CANDLELIGHT VIGIL\*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
(Date)

CONTACT: (Name)  
(Telephone Number)

### "SHED A LITTLE LIGHT ON A NATIONAL CRISIS"

(City)--A *Candlelight Vigil* to pay tribute to victims of violent crime will be held on (day/date/time) at (location).

This special ceremony is co-sponsored by (list organizations which are co-sponsoring your *Vigil*), in conjunction with activities planned for National Victims' Rights Week--designated from (dates). Similar *Vigils* will be conducted on (date of event) in communities across America. This nationwide effort is coordinated by the *National Victim Center* in Fort Worth, Texas, an organization which serves over seven thousand victim service programs in all fifty states.

The *Candlelight Vigil* will allow crime victims and survivors, their families, friends, and concerned citizens to publicly recognize the needs of violent crime victims. At the same time, the *Vigil* will raise our community's awareness about victims' rights and the need to improve and expand services to those traumatized by violent crime.

(List of guest speakers and their affiliations) will present brief remarks to *Vigil* participants. In addition, the (name of choir) will provide a choral tribute to victims of violence.

According to (spokesperson), the *U.S. Department of Justice* estimates that one out of four American families will be victimized by violent crime this year alone.

"Last year, there were over six million violent crime victims in our nation," (spokesperson) said. "Every 25 minutes, someone is murdered. Every six minutes, a woman is raped. Every one minute, a robbery is committed. And only 37 percent of all crimes are reported to the authorities.\*\*"

"It's important for citizens of (city/county/state) to comprehend the tremendous pain and frustration inflicted upon crime victims," (spokesperson) explained.

"And there is a dire need for concerned citizens to speak out for victims' rights and support (city's/county's/state's) programs which provide desperately needed crisis intervention, advocacy, and support services to violent crime victims," (spokesperson) concluded.

The citizens of (city/county/state) are invited to join in the *Candlelight Vigil* and shed light on this national disgrace. Supporters who are unable to attend the (date of event) ceremony are encouraged to light a candle that evening to commemorate victims.

For further information, call (area code/telephone number).

-30-

\* Double-space Release.

\*\*Update statistics annually.

# SAMPLE EDITOR'S ADVISORY FOR CANDLELIGHT VIGIL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
(Date)

CONTACT: (Name)  
(Telephone Number)

## EDITOR'S ADVISORY

### NATIONAL VICTIMS' RIGHTS WEEK VIGIL PLANNED

- WHO:** (List of co-sponsoring organizations), victims, their families, and friends
- WHAT:** Candlelight Vigil sponsored in conjunction with National Victims' Rights Week to pay tribute to victims of violent crime in our (city/county/state/parish)
- WHEN:** (day/date/time)
- WHERE:** (Location--include specific directions)
- WHY:** To bring together violent crime victims, victim service organizations, criminal justice programs, and concerned citizens to focus on the need to improve services and programs for victims of violence, to raise public awareness about the plight of crime victims, and to shed "light" on a national disgrace.

\*\*\*\*\*

**NOTE:** Our (city's/county's/state's/parish/s) Candlelight Vigil is being held in conjunction with many similar ceremonies coordinated for (date) by the National Victim Center in Fort Worth, Texas--an organization which provides services to over 7,000 victim service organizations in all fifty states.

Featured speakers at our Candlelight Vigil will include (list of speakers and their affiliations).

A choral tribute to violent crime victims will be provided by (name of choir).

**MEDIA RESPONSE FORM**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>PUBLICATION/STATION</b>	<b>TELEPHONE</b>	<b>WILL ATTEND</b>	<b>WILL NOT ATTEND</b>	<b>REPORTER COVERING VIGIL</b>

I-20

**(RETAIN COPIES OF THIS FORM FOR OTHER COMMUNITY AWARENESS PROJECTS INVOLVING MEDIA)**

## GUIDELINES FOR MEDIA KITS

YOUR MEDIA KIT(S) SHOULD INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING MATERIALS:

Official Programs

Press Release (sample enclosed)

Statements of Keynote Speakers

List of Co-Sponsoring Organizations  
(you may wish to include a very brief  
description of their activities)

National, State and/or Local  
Statistics Relevant to Crime  
and Victimization

YOU MAY ALSO WISH TO INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING MATERIALS:

Official Proclamations for  
National Victims' Rights Week

Statements by Victims

Brochures on Co-Sponsoring Organizations

REMEMBER...THE LESS INFORMATION YOU INCLUDE IN YOUR MEDIA KIT,  
THE BETTER CHANCE THERE IS THAT IT WILL BE READ AND ABSORBED  
BY THE MEDIA.

Your media kit should be collated into a pocket folder with a heading which states  
("Your community or organization's *CANDLELIGHT VIGIL*." You may wish to glue  
a business card to one of the inside pockets so that the media will have a contact  
person for additional questions they may have.

These guidelines should also be utilized for media kits for your *Balloon Lift*, when applicable.



# SAMPLE LETTER TO POTENTIAL CO-SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS FOR BALLOON LIFT

Name/Title  
Organization  
Street Address or P.O. Box  
City/State/Zip Code

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ :

This year, National Victims' Rights Week is scheduled from (dates). This special observance gives us the opportunity to promote victims' rights and issues here in (city).

On (day/date), our organization is sponsoring a Balloon Lift at noon at (location). This special event is being held in conjunction with countless other Balloon Lifts and Candlelight Vigils across the nation. All these observances will be coordinated and promoted with the support of the National Victim Center of Fort Worth, Texas. The Center has provided us with comprehensive guidelines to organize this public awareness event.

At our Balloon Lift, we would like to pay tribute to all those victimized by violent crime in our community. We hope that organizations like yours, along with victims, advocates, judges, attorneys and concerned citizens will "give victims' rights a little lift" by releasing balloons into the sky on (date of event).

I would like to invite you and your organization to co-sponsor this special event with us. The first planning meeting to organize the Balloon Lift is scheduled for (day), (date), at (time) at (location). I hope you or a representative from your group can attend.

Please let me know if your organization is interested in co-sponsoring the Balloon Lift.

If you have any questions concerning this event or National Victims' Rights Week, you can call me at (area code/telephone number).

I am confident that, with your support, we can make (year) National Victims' Rights Week a memorable tribute to victims of violence.

Sincerely,

## SAMPLE LETTER TO POTENTIAL SPEAKERS FOR BALLOON LIFT

Name/Title  
Street Address or P.O. Box  
City/State/Zip Code

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ :

The annual commemoration of National Victims' Rights Week is scheduled for (dates). During this period, victims and advocates in (city) and throughout the nation will join together to promote victims' rights and educate the public about our issues and concerns.

Here in (city), a number of organizations--including (list of co-sponsoring organizations)--plan to recognize victims of violence at a Balloon Lift on (day/date), at (time) at (location). This special event will allow victims, their advocates and citizens concerned about violent crime to "give victims' rights a little lift" by releasing balloons into the air. Our Balloon Lift is being held in conjunction with many other public awareness events conducted nationwide with the support of the National Victim Center of Fort Worth, Texas.

On behalf of the Balloon Lift co-sponsors, I would like to invite you to address our friends and supporters on (date of event). I believe your commitment to violent crime victims and their rights will help sensitize the Balloon Lift participants to the need to support victims and the programs which serve them.

Please let me know if you will be able to join our National Victims' Rights Week Balloon Lift. If you can provide me with a copy of your remarks by (seven days before Balloon Lift), we will include them in our media kits.

If you have any questions about this special event or about National Victims' Rights Week, please call me at (area code/telephone number).

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

## SAMPLE LETTER INVITING DIGNITARIES TO BALLOON LIFT

Name/Title  
Organization/Affiliation  
Street Address or P.O. Box  
City/State/Zip Code

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ :

The annual commemoration of National Victims' Rights Week is scheduled for (dates). During this period, victims and advocates in (city) and throughout the nation will join together to promote victims' rights and educate the public about our issues and concerns.

A number of organizations are sponsoring a Balloon Lift to pay tribute to victims of violence on (day/date) at (time) at (location). Co-sponsoring groups include (list of organizations). This special event will allow victims, their advocates and citizens concerned about violent crime to "give victims' rights a lift" by releasing balloons into the air.

We would like to invite you to attend this special event. Please let me know by (date) if you will be able to join our National Victims' Rights Week Balloon Lift. We would like to publicly recognize your participation on (date of event).

Unfortunately, time limitations prevent us from having many public speeches presented at the Balloon Lift. However, if you would like to submit a brief statement to me indicating your support for crime victims and services, please mail it to me **no later than** (two weeks in advance). We will include a copy of your remarks in our media kit.

If you have any questions concerning this special event or about National Victims' Rights Week, please call me at (area code/telephone number).

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

## SAMPLE LETTER TO VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS INVITING THEM TO ATTEND THE BALLOON LIFT

Name  
Street Address or P.O. Box  
City/State/Zip Code

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ :

This year, National Victims' Rights Week is (dates). Once again, victims, advocates and the organizations which serve them will join together to educate the citizens of (city) about victims' issues and concerns.

A Balloon Lift is planned for (day/date) at (time) at (location). This special event is co-sponsored by (list of organizations). We hope to "give victims' rights a little lift" by releasing balloons into the sky on (date of event).

We would like to invite you, your family and friends to join our Balloon Lift. It will give you the opportunity to pay tribute to all innocent people whose lives have been lost or altered by senseless violence.

Victim participants will have the chance to briefly share their experience publicly, if they so desire. We will have a "photo board" if crime victims and survivors wish to share a picture of their loved ones with the other Lift participants. The photos will be returned following the ceremony.

If you would like to participate in our community's Balloon Lift, please complete the attached form and return it to me **no later than** (one week in advance). Photos of victims may be attached to the form, or you may wish to bring it on (date of event).

Many victims and survivors plan to attach messages to their balloons. We will provide paper and pens if you wish to write your thoughts down and tie a message to your balloon.

We hope that our Balloon Lift will educate our friends and neighbors in (city) about victimization and the need to support programs which help those who have been touched by violence. Your participation in this special event--and that of your family and friends--will help us accomplish this goal.

Please call me at (area code/telephone number) if you would like additional information about the Balloon Lift or our National Victims' Rights Week activities.

I look forward to seeing you on (date of event).

Sincerely,

Enclosure (See Candlelight Vigil Response Form)

## SAMPLE THANK YOU LETTER FOR BALLOON LIFT

Name  
Street Address or P.O. Box  
City/State/Zip Code

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ :

On behalf of the co-sponsors of the National Victims' Rights Week Balloon Lift, I would like to thank you for participating in this special event.

We were all very pleased with the success of the Balloon Lift. It is because of people like you that were able to deliver a strong public message about victims' rights to the citizens of (city).

We would like to make our Balloon Lift an annual event and hope that you, your family and friends will join us in future public awareness activities.

Your support and participation were truly appreciated!

Sincerely,

## SAMPLE BALLOON LIFT PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

:30

On (date), give victims' rights a lift in (city). A Balloon Lift will begin at (time) on (date), (date) at (location) to pay tribute to our friends and neighbors who have been touched by violence. This special event is sponsored by (list of organizations).

Anyone concerned about violent crime and its impact on (city) should join the Balloon Lift on (date).

For additional information, call (area code/telephone number).

# # #

:30

During National Victims' Rights Week, discover why victims' voices are more than just hot air.

On (day), (date), a Balloon Lift to pay tribute to victims of violence will begin at (time) at (location) in (city). This special event, sponsored by (list of organizations), gives all of us the chance to show our support for violent crime victims.

For more information, call (area code/telephone number).

# # #

:20

Join violent crime victims and their supporters at a Balloon Lift during National Victims' Rights Week. This special event begins at (time) on (day), (date), at (location) in (city).

Show your support for victims' rights! For more information, call (area code/telephone number).

# # #

:20

Show your support to victims of violence during National Victims' Rights Week. Come join a special Balloon Lift beginning at (time) on (day), (date), at (location) in (city).

For additional information, call (area code/telephone number).

# # #

:15

On (day), (date), give victims' rights a lift. Please join us at a special Balloon Lift beginning at (time) at (location) in (city).

Call (area code/telephone number) for more information.

# # #

## SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE FOR BALLOON LIFT\*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
(Date)

CONTACT: (Name)  
(Telephone Number)

### "GIVE A LITTLE LIFT TO VICTIMS' RIGHTS"

(City)--A *Balloon Lift* to show support for violent crime victims and the organizations which serve them will be held on (day/date) at (time) at (location) in (city).

A number of local victim advocacy organizations are co-sponsoring this special event, including (list of co-sponsors). The *Balloon Lift* will kick off National Victims' Rights Week in (city), designated from (dates). Similar community awareness events will be held simultaneously on (date of event) in communities across America. This national effort is coordinated by the *National Victim Center* of Fort Worth, Texas--a national organization which serves violent crime victims, survivors and their advocates in all fifty states.

The co-sponsors of the *Balloon Lift* hope to sensitize (city's) citizens to the rights and needs of violent crime victims and, at the same time, educate local citizens about what they can do to help their friends and neighbors who have been touched by violence.

(List of guest speakers and their affiliations) will address the participants in the *Balloon Lift*. Other special guests include (list of dignitaries).

According to (spokesperson), the *U.S. Department of Justice* estimates that one out of four American families will be victimized by violent crime this year alone.

"Last year, over six million Americans became victims of violent crime," (spokesperson) explained. "It's important that innocent victims know their rights and receive support to guide them through the maze of our criminal justice system."\*\*

"Right here in (city), many organizations provide this greatly needed support to victims on an ongoing basis," (he or she) continued.

"The *Balloon Lift* gives us the opportunity to publicly recognize the pain and suffering of crime victims, and commit our resources to help them cope with the trauma of violent crime victimization," (spokesperson) continued.

"The citizens of (city) are invited to join us on (date) and 'give a little lift' to victims' rights in our community," (he or she) concluded.

For additional information about the *Balloon Lift* or National Victims' Rights Week, please contact (name) of (organization) at (area code/telephone number).

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\* Double-space Release.

\*\*Update statistics annually.

# SAMPLE EDITOR'S ADVISORY FOR BALLOON LIFT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
(Date)

Contact: (Name)  
(Telephone Number)

## BALLOON LIFT TO KICK OFF NATIONAL VICTIMS' RIGHTS WEEK ACTIVITIES

**WHO:** (List of co-sponsoring organizations), violent crime victims, their families and friends

**WHAT:** National Victims' Rights Week Balloon Lift to raise community awareness about violent crime and victimization in (city/county/parish/state)

**WHEN:** (day/date/time)

**WHERE:** (Location--include specific directions)

**WHY:** To publicly recognize the rights and needs of violent crime victims and educate the public about the many services and programs available to citizens who are victimized by violence.

\*\*\*\*\*

**NOTE:** Our (city's/county's/state's/parish/s) Balloon Lift will be held in conjunction with many similar public awareness events coordinated for (date) by the National Victim Center of Fort Worth, Texas--a national organization which provides services to over 7,000 organizations which help crime victims in all fifty states.

Featured speakers at our Balloon Lift include (list of speakers and their affiliations).