

Office of Victim Services

# Advocator



**April 2009**

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**DRC Victim Notification System Enhanced**

ODRC's Office of Victim Services in partnership with the Ohio Attorney General's Office will soon be expanding information available to crime victims through the Victim Information and Notification Everyday (VINE) automated system. The Attorney General's Office, who oversees the VINE system, was recently awarded a three year federal grant through the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) to enhance the statewide notification system.

Currently, the VINE system notifies registered victims about the upcoming release of an offender. The public can also use the VINE Link website to access informa-

tion about offenders. Parole Officers are currently using VINE Link to receive notification about offenders released from jails. VINE and VINE Link are free services and are available every day, 24 hours a day. This link is [www.vinelink.com](http://www.vinelink.com). Over the next three years, the BJA grant will allow ODRC to implement the following additional notifications:

\*Telephone and/or e-mail notification of upcoming parole release hearings

\*Notice about the status of offenders under community supervision

\*Notice when supervision is terminated

\*Notice of offender's consideration for transitional control

\*Notice of violation of conditions of supervision

\*Notification of consideration for IPP (Intensive Program Prison)

OVS will continue to provide additional notification services to victims. In fact, we always recommend that crime victims be registered with both OVS and VINE to ensure that they receive the most comprehensive notification services.

**Karin's Korner - by OVS Administrator Karin Ho**

The Office of Victim Services has always had a dream of creating a newsletter designed to help keep you as Victim Coordinator and Community Services agencies linked with resources and helpful information and articles relating to victimization and highlighting the great work you do on a daily basis. As I have mentioned, we would not be able to do the work we do without the support of

each and every one of you across the state. This newsletter, *Advocator*, is our first newsletter designed to do just that!

Our goal is to utilize this newsletter as an on-line tool that will be distributed and updated as additional information or services become available.

Please provide us with your input

along the way with suggestions or comments to help us continually work to improve this newsletter. With your support we can make this newsletter one in which you look forward to receiving. Any input can be directed to Kari Filicky via e-mail at [kari.filicky@odrc.state.oh.us](mailto:kari.filicky@odrc.state.oh.us).

We are looking forward to a great year!



**Ohio State Penitentiary  
Youngstown, Ohio**

*“Advocacy, a  
career we may  
never have  
envisioned for  
ourselves”*



**Victim Coordinator  
Training**

## A Walk Through the System

As a Victim Advocate we know that the victimization of a person does not end with a conviction. This is only the beginning of another phase of the process that victims experience. We also know that continual victimization can occur while an offender is incarcerated and then again upon release of the offender from the institution.

In an attempt to help address some of these issues, the Office of

Victim Services does our best to reach out to county and community victim service agencies to help provide that link and continuum of services for the victim or survivor of an offense. Our big message is identifying who we are and that we are here for continued information and support.

In an effort to help bridge this gap, the Office of Victim Services has created a brochure to include in our outreach efforts entitled “A

Walk Through the System”. This brochure provides general information about the steps that are taken after an offender is convicted and sent to a prison until their release in the state of Ohio.

If you would like copies of this brochure, or others, please access our web-site at [www.drc.ohio.gov](http://www.drc.ohio.gov) by clicking on Office of Victim Services. You may also call our office at 614-728-1976.

## An Advocate Near You

We can all consider ourselves advocates in life. Each of us has a cause that we feel strongly about whether it be as advocates for our families, world issues, cures for illness, or as advocates for victims of crime.

Oftentimes, we may look at our role and find we are working in the field of victim advocacy which

is a career we may never have envisioned for ourselves. Working in the field of victim advocacy is truly a gift that is to be treasured.

In the state of Ohio we have wonderful victim advocates within our communities, government, and within the Department of Rehabilitation and Correction

(ODRC). The Office of Victim Services (OVS) within the ODRC has a great network of advocates within OVS and throughout the state. Please click on the following link to learn more about OVS and the network of victim support throughout the state.

[www.drc.ohio.gov/web/VICTIM.htm](http://www.drc.ohio.gov/web/VICTIM.htm)

## What Not To Say To A Crime Victim

As a victim advocate there have been times for all of us when the words may not come out exactly as we wished. With all of the training possible and with the best of intention, sometimes this still happens. Here are some guidelines of things NOT to say to a crime victim. DO NOT:

1. Tell the victim they will eventually have “closure”.

2. Tell the victim the importance of forgiveness. This is a personal choice.

3. Tell the victim if emotion is displayed they may have to leave a hearing/courtroom.

4. Ask the victim, “When do you think you will get over this?”

5. Question the victim’s credibility if no emotion is displayed.

6. Make all of the decisions for the victim.

7. Tell the victim you “understand what they are going through”.

8. Tell the victim “time heals all wounds”.

9. Tell the victim “they are in a better place” when referring to the murder of a loved one.

## Lake Erie Correctional Institution Fostering a Restorative Worldview

Each year in November, the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation & Correction and the Adult Parole Authority partner to highlight activities and events surrounding Restorative Justice Week. Restorative Justice is a way of viewing, understanding, and responding to crime and the effects it has on victims, communities and offenders.

Restorative justice is about giving all parties involved the opportu-

nity to take an active role in a safe and respectful process allowing communication between the offender, victims, and the community.

Lake Erie Correctional Institution (LaeCI) is fostering this restorative world view as demonstrated in the activities surrounding Restorative Justice Week in 2008. Included in the activities that took place at LaeCI were fundraisers coordinated by the Responsibility as a

Man (RAM) offender program and donations for the Right Track Program in the city of Conneaut. Also, a silent auction was held for two children's playhouses. Money raised over the initial cost of the materials was donated to the Home Delivered Meals program for seniors.

Thank you to LaeCI and all other institutions and APA offices that participated in events related to Restorative Justice Week.

*“Restorative justice finds the right justice response for each person.”*

*Barb Toews*

## Federal Stimulus—What it Means to Victim Services in Ohio

The much anticipated Federal Stimulus Program, recently signed by President Obama, will bring a total of \$8.2 billion dollars to Ohio. We are pleased that funds have been allocated for criminal justice efforts, with \$62 million dollars directed to the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant program, and additional funds focusing on internet crimes against children, crime victims' assistance, and violence against women.

The Office of Victim Services is pursuing some of the new funding, in hopes of expanding and enhancing victim-related programming. We will let you know if we are successful and what that means for all of us.

## Current Grants within the Office of Victim Services

The Office of Victim Services receives several grants each year which allow us to carry out some very meaningful activities to aid Ohio crime victims. Our largest grant effort is the VINE program (Victim Information and Notification Everyday), the automated victim notification system. VINE funding is provided by the Ohio Attorney General's Office from Federal VOCA (Victims of Crime

Act) funds. We also receive VOCA funds to reimburse surviving family members in death penalty cases for travel expenses incurred to attend clemency hearings or executions.

Every state, including Ohio, receives Federal Funds from the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program. ODRRC has used its share to fund a variety of activities

within the Department. OVS has received annual Alien Grant funds for a number of years, providing the following: domestic violence training for parole officers; trainers and mentors for the PROVE (Personal Responsibility of Violence Elimination) batterers' program; and training for staff in dealing with stalking and workplace violence.

## On The Move – Congratulations

# THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF REHABILITATION AND CORRECTION

## Office of Victim Services

770 West Broad Street  
Columbus, OH 43222  
Phone: 888.842.8464  
Fax: 614.728.1980

[DRC.Victim.Services@odrc.state.oh.us](mailto:DRC.Victim.Services@odrc.state.oh.us)



In the Office of Victim Services we know that Victim Coordinators and those community service agencies that help support us are very talented and constantly on the move. Please take a moment to pass along congratulations to the following:

Donna Baker—Franklin Pre-Release Center's Employee of the Year for 2008

Erin Hosten—Cleveland Parole Officer for her promotion to Parole Board Hearing Officer

Diane Poindexter—Columbus APA Support Staff Person of the Year for 2008

Kim Robinson—Columbus APA Parole Officer of the Year for 2008

Congratulations to those identified. I am sure there are plenty of others who have received promotions or have been recognized in some way. Please be sure to let us know of your successes in the future so we may include this information in our next newsletter.

## Canton Leads the Way – Victim Awareness

As you know, the Victim Awareness Program (VAP) has always been a huge success within the institutions for offenders. This same success is now increasingly becoming just as popular within Adult Parole Authority (APA) offices across the state.

The Canton APA began their VAP in March of 2004 with only 9 offenders. Today, the classes include 34 offenders and there is a wait list through Spring 2010. The classes are offered in the evening and during the day. The first facilitators in Canton were Eldie Antenuce and Vicki Knapp-Rumbaugh. Today, other facilitators include David E. Martin and Laurie Stewart.

To begin this program, Vicki and Eldie solic-

ited Judges in the Municipal and Common Pleas courts, probation departments and other APA officers for possible participants and support of the program. Today, Judges are sentencing offenders to the program on a regular basis. Additional support has come from the community by allowing the program to take place in the evening at the TASC treatment center.

Other APA offices in the Akron region are also running a VAP program including the Akron and New Philadelphia offices. The goal is to get programs started in Geauga and Lake Counties also. All of this can not be done without the support of Joe Dubina, the Akron Regional Administrator, and the dedicated parole officers throughout the region.

We know that offenders respond well to the VAP whose foundation is that of Victim Impact Speakers. This program would not be the success that it is without those speakers.

Currently the other APA offices that have implemented a VAP include:

Columbus—Diane Poindexter & Kim Robinson

Cleveland—Erin Hosten & Tracey Tomaszewski

To those who are interested in beginning a program in your area, please contact Roxanne Swogger in the Office of Victim Services for assistance.