

## CAP TIPS #1 *To Improve Public Awareness*

### How to Promote the 2009 National Crime Victims' Rights Week Theme

#### ***"25 Years of Rebuilding Lives: Celebrating the Victims of Crime Act"***

#### **Introduction**

It is helpful to begin with an assumption that the general public, the news media, key allied professionals, and even many crime victims and survivors, are **not** aware of what the *Victims of Crime Act* (VOCA) is, and the powerful impact it has had on crime victims' rights and services in America. By beginning with this basic premise, you can help develop victim awareness and public messages relevant to the 2009 NCVRW theme that explains VOCA, how it has helped crime victims and the agencies that assist them, and has contributed to public safety in America.

#### **What is VOCA, and What Does it Do?**

Enacted in 1984, VOCA created a special **Crime Victims Fund** to be used exclusively to support important services for crime victims. The Fund consists entirely of fines and other penalties paid by Federal criminals. More than **\$9 billion** in Federal criminal fines and penalties have been deposited in the Crime Victims Fund through 2008. Most of these funds result from criminal prosecutions brought by United States Attorneys throughout the country.

**NO taxpayer dollars are used for VOCA-supported victim services.**

VOCA is the *only* Federal program that funds services to help victims of *all* types of crimes. Its hallmark has been its grants for a variety of victim services, including direct victim assistance and crime victim compensation programs.

NAVAA has prepared a Fact Sheet about the *Victims of Crime Act* that clearly describes how VOCA funds are used to support state VOCA victim assistance; state crime victim compensation programs; and victims of Federal crimes. It also includes a chart that describes VOCA allocations to each state over the past quarter-century for both victim assistance and crime victim compensation grants. The Fact Sheet can be downloaded at: [http://cap.navaa.org/VOCA\\_Fact\\_Sheet.pdf](http://cap.navaa.org/VOCA_Fact_Sheet.pdf). The Fact Sheet can be used as a handout at your NCVRW CAP events and activities, as an attachment to your press releases or simply as background information for introductions, speeches, invitations, etc.

## General Themes for 2009 NCVRW

- VOCA is often viewed as a major “funding stream” for crime victim services and victim compensation but, in reality, it is *so much more!* VOCA has been a *catalyst* to promote awareness about the plight of crime victims, their rights and needs:
  - Prior to 1984, there were few laws that defined and protected victims’ rights. Today, all 50 states have “Victims’ Bills of Rights;” and 33 states have constitutional amendments that clarify how victims should be treated within their states’ justice systems.
  - The passage of VOCA in 1984 provided an impetus for the Office for Victims of Crime, U.S. Department of Justice – created the year before – to create Federal leadership for crime victims’ rights and services, and to begin to develop “promising practices” to guide the development of a then-nascent victim assistance field.
  - Through OVC discretionary grant programs and other VOCA- supported initiatives, efforts to promote collaboration among victim assistance, justice and allied professionals – both system- and community-based – have been enhanced.
  - Before VOCA there were virtually no services for victims of Federal crimes. Today, there are victim service professionals in all U.S. Attorneys’ Offices and FBI field offices.
  - In pre-VOCA days, victim services on Native American reservations were largely ignored. Today, VOCA funded services are provided through OVC discretionary funds and through the OVC-administered Children’s Justice Act Partnerships for Indian Communities.
  
- The brilliance of VOCA is that its funds are derived *not* from taxpayers’ dollars, but from fines and fees assessed against convicted Federal offenders. This links directly to *offender accountability* for the harm that their crimes have caused to their victims, their communities, and America as a whole. In other words, “Crime Doesn’t Pay. *Offenders Do!*”
  
- The Federal fines and fees that go into the Crime Victims Fund are collected by U.S. Attorneys in 93 districts across the nation (to find *your* U.S. Attorney’s Office, please visit <http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/offices/index.html> for contact information).
  
- Prior to the passage of VOCA, only 36 states had victim compensation programs. Today, all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands have victim compensation programs that are funded in part by VOCA.
  
- VOCA has provided a *consistent stream of funding* for victim services for a quarter century. Prior to VOCA, crime victims and survivors had very few services, and little assistance in implementing their rights (*see below*). Many well-intentioned victim assistance programs opened, but were soon shut down due to lack of funding.

- VOCA-funded assistance programs are available for both victims who report crimes, *and* victims who choose not to report crimes. Since the majority of victims of crime *do not* report to law enforcement – in 2007, 46% of all violent victimizations and 37% of all property crimes were reported to police (Criminal Victimization, 2007, National Crime Victimization Survey, Bureau of Justice Statistics, accessible at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/cv07.pdf>) – the availability of VOCA-funded assistance services to non-reporting victims is an important feature.
- VOCA supported services are, for the most part, available to all victims *at no charge*. This includes critical, often life-saving emergency shelter, legal assistance, and crisis intervention services.

## **What Types of Crime Victim Assistance Services Does VOCA Support?**

VOCA-funded victim services vary by state and jurisdiction. It is helpful to *clearly describe* how crime victims and survivors are helped in *your* jurisdiction with support from VOCA. The following list – which can be adapted to your jurisdiction’s or agency’s VOCA-funded services – highlights the range of victim services, and the implementation of victims’ rights, that are enhanced by VOCA:

### ***Crime Victim Compensation***

Financial assistance that helps violent crime victims cover the many out-of-pocket costs associated with criminal victimization, including a wide variety of expenses and losses related to criminal injury and homicide. Beyond medical care, mental health treatment, funerals, lost wages and loss of support, a number of programs also cover crime-scene cleanup, transportation to medical providers, rehabilitation (including physical therapy and occupational therapy), modifications to homes or vehicles for paralyzed victims, and the cost of housekeeping and child care.

VOCA not only supplements state funds to pay these benefits, but all VOCA funded assistance programs help their clients apply to their state’s crime victim compensation program.

### ***Crisis intervention***

Services provided in-person, over the telephone, or via the Internet that help victims cope with the immediate mental health effects of victimization, assess their most essential needs, and provide services such as counseling, mental health support, and help to address sustenance issues. Many VOCA supported programs provide immediate 24/7 on-scene response.

### ***Emergency housing***

Shelters and safe homes provide short-term (usually up to 30 days or so) or long-term housing and related services for victims and their families.

### ***Emergency financial assistance***

Funds that are available in some communities to provide emergency cash awards to victims who are in dire financial straits or who need help to address basic survival concerns (such as health, housing, clothing, food, and transportation).

**Home safety checks**

A service that is usually offered by law enforcement agencies or bonded volunteers to improve the security of a victim's home, either by making recommendations or actually providing physical improvements and reinforcements (such as new locks, security systems, lighting, and landscape design).

**Safety planning**

An advocacy and support service to help victims identify concerns and issues related to their personal security and the safety of their family; protective measures that can enhance their personal safety; and contingency plans to cope with emergency situations.

**Advocacy or intervention with employers, creditors, landlords, etc.**

A service provided to victims who, because of their need for medical or mental health treatment, personal safety, help in addressing sustenance issues, or participation as a witness in criminal justice proceedings, may require intervention with their employers (person) to take time off from work without being penalized or possibly losing their jobs and with others on behalf of the victim.

**Development or enhancement of the victim's social support system**

A service to help victims identify people who can provide them with immediate-, short-, and long-term support, which may include family members, friends, neighbors, co-workers, faith community members, victim assistance professionals, or others.

**Mental health counseling**

Services include crisis intervention; mental health needs assessment; individual counseling; and family counseling.

**Victim support groups**

Programs that provide peer support through victims reaching out to other victims, regularly scheduled victim support group meetings, and advocacy throughout criminal or juvenile justice processes.

**Legal advocacy and services**

Programs help victims understand and access their victims' rights under the law and to assist victim in obtaining emergency protective orders.

**Referrals for social services**

Programs provide victims with information about additional services that are *not* victim-specific, such as housing, food banks, transportation, employment, and family support; as well as services that are available in adjunct government systems, such as Child Protective Services, Adult Protective Services, disability services, education systems, etc.

**Information regarding what to do in case of emergency**

Providing victims with vital information about "911" emergency services, crisis hotlines, and other resources that can provide crisis responses to their immediate needs.

## Information about crime victims' rights

Crime victims have many rights established by statutes and state-level victims' rights constitutional amendments. These rights are relevant from the time the crime occurs through the court processes and, in many cases, appellate processes.

Information about victims' rights is generally provided by most criminal and juvenile justice and victim assistance programs, and includes:

- Information about their rights under the law as victims of crime.
- Information about and assistance with filing a victim compensation claim in cases involving violent crime.
- Orientation to the criminal or juvenile justice process to help them understand what is happening, their basic rights, and any role they may have in justice proceedings.
- Information about their right to protection.
- Information about their right to attend and participate in key justice proceedings.
- Information about and assistance with completing a pre-sentence investigation interview—referred to as “pre-adjudication interview” within the juvenile justice system—which is usually conducted by a probation officer prior to sentencing or adjudication to enable the judge to learn more about the defendant and the impact of the crime on the victim.
- Information about their right to submit a victim impact statement (VIS), either orally or in writing.
- Information about their right to restitution, and assistance with seeking and documenting losses for restitution orders from the court.
- Information about their right to other legal/financial obligations from the convicted offender, such as child support, payment of health insurance, etc.
- Notification of the outcome of criminal or juvenile justice proceedings.
- *For cases involving incarceration or detention:* Notification of the location of the offender while he or she is incarcerated, and any movement (including release or escape).
- *For cases involving community supervision:* Information about victims' right to give input into conditions of community supervision; their right to protection (including assistance with obtaining protective orders); their right to financial/legal obligations owed by the offender (such as child support, restitution, payment of house mortgages or rent, etc.); their right to be notified of any violations, to give input into any violation hearings, and to be notified of the outcome of any violation hearings; and their right to receive contact information for the agency/professional who will be supervising the offender.

- *For cases involving criminal appeals:* Information about victims' rights and relevant roles throughout the appeals process (usually provided by the prosecutor's office that tried the case or the state office of the Attorney General).

## Office for Victims of Crime Discretionary Funds

VOCA has supported OVC discretionary funds that have helped grow our field from a grassroots advocacy movement to a truly professional discipline. Through discretionary grants, OVC has:

- Created model policies, procedures and programs to enhance crime victim services and the implementation of victims' rights in law enforcement, jails, prosecutors' offices, courts, community and institutional corrections, and state Attorneys General offices.
- Developed videotapes and DVDs that highlight the impact of crime on victims, and focus on how system- and community-based agencies and programs assist victims of crime.
- Created resources to help underserved victims of crime, including victims with disabilities; victims in urban and rural jurisdictions; victims of human trafficking; and victims of hate crimes (among others).
- Created the OVC Resource Center that houses myriad documents that strengthen the capacity of victim assistance and allied professionals to help crime victims and survivors (<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/ovcres/welcome.html>).
- Created the OVC Training and Technical Assistance Center to promote education and leadership development for professionals who serve victims of crime (<https://www.ovcttac.gov/>).
- Support for the National Victim Assistance Academy and many State Victim Assistance Academies.
- Supported the development of victim services in many Federal agencies (U.S. Attorneys' offices, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the U.S. Department of State, among others).
- Provided funding for the Community Awareness Projects and for the annual publication of the National Crime Victims' Rights Week Resource Guide.

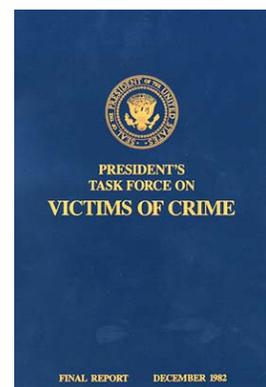
## Tips for Promoting the Silver Anniversary of the Passage of VOCA

An important tip is to immediately view the NCVRW Theme DVD, which is included in the Resource Guide that OVC is mailing to you. The DVD has victims, advocates and leaders in our field who were involved with the passage of VOCA in 1984, and offers unique and personal perspectives about the impact of VOCA.

While this CAP TIP offers *general* information about VOCA and its impact on crime victim assistance and victim compensation, it's up to *you* to personalize the impact of VOCA to your state, your jurisdiction, and your agency. The "local impact" of VOCA will be much more relevant to crime victims, allied organizations, and the news media in your community.

The following tips can help you create a "local angle" that emphasizes the impact of VOCA:

- Focus on the "power of the personal story:"
  - Identify victims whose lives were positively affected by receiving VOCA-funded victim services.
  - Identify victims who received victim compensation to help them cope with the physical, psychological, financial, social and spiritual impact of crime.
    - Ask them to provide testimonies about their personal experiences, either "on the record" (that can help promote public awareness) or "off the record" (that can be documented without identifying the actual victim).
    - Use victim/survivor testimonials in your media relations (press releases, opinion/editorial columns, and public service announcements) to personalize what could be perceived as "just another Federal fund."
  
- **MAKE IT PERSONAL:** Statistically, most people in America have been victims of crime or know someone who has been a victim of crime:
  - Crime is personal, and it affects all of us.
  - Every time a crime occurs, it affects the quality of life of not only the direct victim, but also his/her neighborhood and community.
  - VOCA has helped crime victims – including those who report crimes and those who don't – to cope with the often traumatic effects of victimization.
  - VOCA provides a "safety net" for crime victims, *most of whom are unaware that the services and support they receive are funded by convicted Federal offenders.*
  
- The impetus for VOCA emerged in 1982, when President Reagan convened a Task Force on Victims of Crime that held hearings around the Nation and obtained suggestions from crime victims, victim service providers, and justice and allied professionals about how to improve the treatment of crime victims in America. The *Final Report* of the President's Task Force on Victims of Crime provided a strong foundation that led to the passage of VOCA. It includes many "sidebar quotations" from crime victims that describe their treatment *prior to the passage of VOCA* (that can help you define a "before VOCA" and "after VOCA" framework). The *Final Report* in its entirety can be downloaded at:  
<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/publications/presdntstskforcrprt/welcome.html>.



- Conduct some basic research about how VOCA funding has affected your state or community. Talk to chronologically-gifted victim advocates who were working in our field *prior* to the passage of VOCA, or in its early stages of implementation:
  - Reference the above “What Types of Crime Victim Assistance Services Does VOCA Support?” and *personalize it to your agency or jurisdiction* – how has VOCA made a difference?
  - Provide a comparison of victims’ rights and services “before VOCA” and “after VOCA.”
  
- Engage the U.S. Attorney and Assistant U.S. Attorneys for your district in your NCVRW activities. You can recognize their efforts to assist victims of Federal crimes and to collect fines and fees from convicted Federal offenders that support the VOCA Fund by:
  - Inviting him/her to present opening remarks or another presentation at your NCVRW event(s).
  - Providing him/her with a personalized “certificate of appreciation” (a template is included in the OVC NCVRW Resource Guide) for efforts related to Fund collections.
  - Describing the important role of U.S. Attorneys in collecting fines and fees for VOCA and restitution for individual victims of Federal crimes in *any* media relations (see below) you conduct prior to or during 2009 NCVRW (press releases, opinion/editorial columns, etc.).
  - Seek media opportunities to promote the NCVRW theme that includes victim service providers and U.S. Attorneys talking about the importance of the Fund; how it holds offenders accountable; and the types of victim services it supports in your community.
  
- Most people do not realize that many Federal agencies provide victim assistance services. You can highlight appropriate services provided by the FBI, Postal Service, State Department (for Americans victimized in other countries), and even the Internal Revenue Service, among other Federal agencies.
  
- Contact your state’s VOCA Assistance Administrator and Crime Victim Compensation Administrator. Contact information is available on the NAVAA Web site ([www.navaa.org](http://www.navaa.org)) and the NACVCB Web site ([www.nacvcb.org](http://www.nacvcb.org)). Ask them for information that defines:
  - The types of victim assistance programs they currently fund, and have funded since 1984. Which agencies in your area receive VOCA assistance funds?
  - How many crime victims in your state (and community) are served annually with support from VOCA?
  - How many victims receive crime victim compensation annually in your state and county? What were the total amount of benefits paid?
  - See the VOCA Fact Sheet at [http://cap.navaa.org/VOCA\\_Fact\\_Sheet.pdf](http://cap.navaa.org/VOCA_Fact_Sheet.pdf) for the total dollar amount of VOCA assistance and compensation grants awarded to your state since VOCA began.
  
- Media relations:
  - Use the “general themes” (see above in this CAP TIP) to deliver succinct messages about the impact of VOCA:

- Funded by convicted Federal offenders, *NOT* taxpayers' dollars ("Crime Doesn't Pay. *Offenders Do!*")
    - More than \$9 billion collected since 1984, including (amount) that has gone to *your* state's victim assistance and victim compensation programs
    - Describe the range of victim services that VOCA supports in your community (see above, "What Types of Crime Victim Assistance Services Does VOCA Support?").
  - In your media outreach (press releases, opinion/editorial columns, and letters-to-the editor), publicly recognize your U.S. Attorneys' Office for its efforts that contribute to the Fund and recover restitution for victims:
    - Seek media interviews (television, radio, print and web-based) – in concert with your U.S. Attorney – that highlight the impact of VOCA on your community; and the role of your U.S. Attorney in collecting the fines and fees that contribute to the VOCA fund.
    - If/when you honor your U.S. Attorney's Office for its diligence in collecting fines and fees for VOCA, make sure you invite the media to attend!
- Focus on the Silver Anniversary of the passage of VOCA:
  - Identify *25 victims* who can articulate the importance of VOCA in personally helping them in the aftermath of their criminal victimization:
    - Ask them to provide you with two-to-three sentences about how victim assistance helped them cope in the aftermath of their victimization.
    - Include their testimonies in a NCVRW package for:
      - Your local elected officials or state legislators.
      - Local broadcast, print and web-based media.
  - Describe *25 differences* that VOCA has made in your community in the past quarter-century.
    - Create 25 visual depictions of the impact of VOCA (i.e., posters or essays to be displayed in your courthouse; ornaments to be hung on a tree, etc.)
- Visit the OVC Oral History Project Web site, which contains videotaped interviews and written transcripts of over 60 pioneers in our field, many of whom addressed the significance of VOCA in their interviews. Go to <http://vroh.uakron.edu/index.php>, and use the "search" function to obtain quotations about VOCA with the following key words:
  - VOCA
  - Crime Victims Fund
  - Victims of Crime Act

### **For More Information**

Please contact National Crime Victims' Rights Week Community Awareness Project Consultant Anne Seymour via email at [annese@atlantech.net](mailto:annese@atlantech.net); or by telephone at 202.547.1732.

## CAP TIP #2 *To Improve Public Awareness*

### ***Sponsoring a Student Poster/Essay Contest***

#### **Introduction**

One of the most creative ways to engage students in National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRW) activities is to sponsor a contest that allows them to submit posters and essays that reflect the NCVRW theme, and the importance of crime victims' rights and services. By encouraging students' writing and artistic talents, Contest sponsors can educate them about the impact of crime on individuals, schools, communities and our Nation as a whole; and help them understand the importance of the Crime Victims Fund in not *only* holding Federal offenders accountable for their crimes, but also in paying fines and fees that help support services for crime victims.

A student poster/essay contest is also an excellent way to engage schools in observing 2009 NCVRW, and focusing on victimization issues that are specific to America's youth, including school violence, crime and bullying; family violence; sexual assault; and juvenile crime and victimization.

### **Student Poster and Essay Contest Guidelines**

#### **Contest Co-sponsors and Supporters**

The Contest can be co-sponsored by your NCVRW Planning Committee, which should include crime victims and survivors; community- and system-based victim assistance professionals; criminal and juvenile justice professionals; and allied professionals (including schools). Contest co-sponsors can provide speakers for classrooms and school assemblies who can address the impact of crime and victimization – including youth-specific topics as described above – and the importance of the Crime Victims Fund in supporting and expanding victim services nationwide.

Key school officials to involve in planning and implementing the Contest include:

- School Board members.
- School principals.
- School teachers.
- Parent-Teacher Association.
- Teen Courts facilitators and participants.
- Any after-school program coordinators.

Permission must be obtained from school officials to sponsor the Contest, and their willingness to officially endorse and “co-sponsor” it lends credence to your efforts. It's helpful to ask your NCVRW Planning Committee if members have any direct contact

with the school officials listed above, as personal contacts can be very helpful in seeking support and co-sponsorship.

### **Contest Theme**

A recommended Contest Theme is “Why It Is Important to Help People Who Have Been Hurt by Crime.”

For younger students who submit entries for the Poster Contest (grades 1 through 5), the theme can be articulated by asking them to consider questions (such as):

- How does it feel when somebody does something that is not nice to you?
- What does it mean to you to be helpful or nice to someone who is hurting?
- What do you think police officers do to help people who get hurt by crime?
- Do you know that there are lots of people whose job is to help people who are hurt by crime?

For older students who submit entries for the Essay Contest (grades 6 through 12), this can include an explanation of how the Crime Victims Fund has helped millions of people who have been victimized. For example:

- In 2006, there were six million violent crimes and 19 million property crimes in our country.
- Many crime victims are affected physically, emotionally, financially and spiritually by crime, and often need help in recovering from its impact.
- A unique aspect of many crime victim services is that they are supported by what’s known as “the Crime Victims Fund.” This Fund comes from fines and fees paid by people convicted of Federal crimes. In other words, convicted offenders are held accountable for their actions, and the money they have to pay helps millions of crime victims in America each year.
- This year is the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Crime Victims Fund, and the 2009 NCVRW Theme is “25 Years of Rebuilding Lives: Celebrating the Victims of Crime Act.”
  - Since the Fund began in 1984, more than \$9 billion has been collected for programs that help crime victims.
  - More than four million crime victims annually receive support and services provided through 4,200 victim assistance agencies.
  - Without the Crime Victims Fund, there would be many victims who don’t receive any help to get better.

### **Contest Overview**

The one-page *Contest Overview* included in this CAP TIP can be adapted to your community, and used to explain the Contest to school officials and parents, as well as students who seek to be contestants.

A sample *Submission Form* is also included in this CAP TIP. It’s helpful to develop a plan that allows essays to be submitted via email to a designated individual; and to arrange to pick up any posters or essays from the schools that participate in the Contest on April 10<sup>th</sup>.

### **Outreach to Schools and Teachers**

It is a good idea to develop simple background information about crime and victimization to help students understand and depict the theme of the Contest. For example:

- Obtain and provide students with local statistics about crime and victimization in your community, or use national statistics featured in the *Statistical Overviews* of the NCVRW Resource Guide (including “School Crime and Victimization” and “Teen Victimization”).
- Obtain and provide students with information about school and teen crime and victimization in *your* community, and ask them to consider what they can do to help prevent such crimes, and help people whom they affect.
- Ask representatives of law enforcement, prosecution/courts and victim services to speak to the students about what they specifically do to help victims of crime (in measures that are commensurate with the students’ age and cognitive development).
- For older students who participate in the Essay Contest, provide them with a copy of *VOCA Voices* from the NCVRW Resource Guide, and ask them to reflect on how crime victim services have improved over the past 25 years with support from VOCA.
- If any schools have Teen Court programs, ask their members to use their own experiences as participants to address the Contest theme.

## **Twelve Tips for Contest Implementation**

1. Carefully review the one-page *Contest Overview* and one-page *Contest Submission Form*, and adapt it to your own jurisdiction and Contest.
2. Determine the best contact(s) among school officials who can support the implementation of the Contest. Draft a letter or email that explains NCVRW, the Poster and Essay Contest and its educational value. Attach the one-page *Contest Overview* to provide a summary of the Contest. Secure permission and hopefully their co-sponsorship for the Contest.
3. Post information about the Contest, including the contestant *Submission Form*, on your co-sponsors’ websites, and ask participating schools and their parent/teacher groups to do the same. Identify **one centralized website** that can provide an overview of the Contest and information about how to submit entries.
4. Ask participating schools to e-mail the *Contest Overview* and a link to contest rules and submission requirements to the parents of all students who might be interested in participating.
5. Solicit a panel of judges that includes crime victims and survivors, victim service providers, justice professionals, civic leaders and educators. An excellent panel of judges could include a survivor, your Chief of Police or County Sheriff, your

6. Publicize the contest to local news media, and ask them to help promote the Contest (you can even seek their co-sponsorship for the Contest). If your community has youth-specific media – such as school/student newspapers and/or radio stations, a youth page within the daily newspaper, or radio or television programs geared toward children and teenagers – make sure they are asked to help promote the Contest.
7. Provide a “certificate of participation” to all Contest contestants by adapting the *sample certificate of appreciation* featured in the online artwork at [http://ovc.ncjrs.gov/ncvrw2009/camera\\_ready.html](http://ovc.ncjrs.gov/ncvrw2009/camera_ready.html).
8. Since CAP funds cannot be used for cash “prizes,” seek donations from local businesses and merchants for Contest prizes, i.e., merchandise that is age-specific, free fun activities (such as movie tickets, bowling, miniature golf, etc.). Make sure that all contributions for prizes are recognized in media outreach and at the actual prize ceremony.
9. Once winning entries have been selected, invite the students, their families and school officials to attend an awards ceremony (which can be held in conjunction with other NCVRW victim and public awareness events).
10. Prominently display all entries, highlighting the winning entries, at your NCVRW victim awareness and public education events.
11. Remember to follow-up with thank-you letters to anyone who provided support or assistance in implementing the Student Poster/Essay Contest.
12. Brainstorm with your NCVRW Planning Committee about how to use the content of the essays and artwork to promote victim awareness and public outreach throughout the year. For example, artwork can be featured on a calendar or in public education displays; and portions of essays can be used in speeches, brochures and annual reports. See examples on the following pages.

### **For More Information**

Please contact National Crime Victims’ Rights Week Community Awareness Project Consultant Anne Seymour via email at [annesey@atlantech.net](mailto:annesey@atlantech.net); or by telephone at 202.547.1732.

## 2009 National Crime Victims' Rights Week



Celebrating the  
Victims of Crime Act

*National Crime Victims' Rights Week is observed every year in April to promote awareness of the many needs of crime victims, and what individuals, communities, our justice system and helping professionals can do to assist them.*

### THEME:

**"Why It Is Important to Help People Who Have Been Hurt by Crime"**

**CO-SPONSORED BY:** (List co-sponsors)

### CONTEST RULES

**The Poster Contest is for students in Grades 1 through 5.** Posters should be submitted on white paper that is either 8 ½" by 11", or 17" by 22".

**The Essay Contest is for students in Grades 6 through 12.** Suggested essay lengths are as follows:

Grades 6 and 7	Up to 250 words
Grades 8 and 9	Up to 500 words
Grades 10 through 12	Up to 750 words

Students should write or draw from their own perspectives:

- Why is it important to help people who have been hurt by crime?
- If someone becomes a crime victim, what can be done to help them?
  - How can family and friends help them?
  - What can police and the courts do to help them seek justice?

All students who submit entries will receive a "Certificate of Participation" from the Contest Cosponsors.

*(List any additional "prizes" for the winning entries in each category here)*

**ALL CONTEST SUBMISSIONS ARE DUE BY FRIDAY, APRIL 10<sup>TH</sup>, 2009.**

**Please submit your Contest entries to:**

**(EITHER A SCHOOL TEACHER/OFFICIAL OR CENTRALIZED LOCATION THAT IS EASILY ACCESSIBLE BY EMAIL (FOR ESSAY ENTRIES) OR DROP-OFF)**



**2009 National Crime Victims' Rights Week  
Poster/Essay Contest**

**SUBMISSION FORM**

***Please complete this Form and attach it to your Contest submission:***

Student's Full Name:

Student's Age:

Student's Telephone Number:

Student's Grade:

Name of Student's Teacher:

Name of School:

Address of School:

Telephone Number of School:

***ALL CONTEST SUBMISSIONS ARE DUE BY FRIDAY, APRIL 10<sup>TH</sup>, 2009.***

**Please submit your Contest entries to:**

***(EITHER A SCHOOL TEACHER/OFFICIAL OR CENTRALIZED LOCATION THAT IS EASILY ACCESSIBLE BY EMAIL (FOR ESSAY ENTRIES) OR DROP-OFF)***

## CAP TIP #3

### To Improve Public Awareness

## WORKING WITH SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

### Introduction

Young people in high school, colleges and universities are a rich resource for volunteers in crime victim assistance. Through student groups, internships and personal experiences with their own families' voluntarism, they are often committed to engage in their communities and to make a positive difference.

In addition, many high schools, colleges and universities today have *requirements* for student voluntarism that cultivate and encourage an active role in service to others, and service to communities. And regardless of whether or not service is "required," many young people today feel a strong need to engage in their neighborhoods and communities through voluntarism.

### What We Know About Young Volunteers

The Washington, DC-based Corporation for National and Community Service conducted a national survey of youth in 2005. "Building Active Citizens: The Role of Social Institutions in Teen Volunteering" (November 2005) found that:

- *Millions of young people volunteer.* 15.5 million youth between the ages of 12 and 18 contribute more than 1.3 billion hours of service during 2004.
- *Young people volunteer more than adults.* Young people volunteered at twice the rate of adults, with 55 percent of young people volunteering, compared with only 29 percent of adults.
- *Volunteering helps young people succeed.* Youth who volunteer are less likely to engage in risky behavior, are more likely to feel connected to their communities, and tend to do better in school.
- *Altruism is the driving motivator.* Youth who volunteer do so out of altruism, strongly agreeing with statements such as "I would like to help make the world a better place," and "It's important to do things for others."
- *Adult role models are crucial.* A youth who has a parent who volunteers is nearly three times more likely to volunteer on a regular basis.

- *They need flexible volunteer opportunities.* Thirty-nine percent of teenagers volunteer on a regular basis; 35 percent do so occasionally, and 27 percent are episodic volunteers.

Today's youth – who are in college or high school (or of that age) – comprise the “Millennial” generation (born between 1977 and 1998). There are 75 million Millennials in the United States today – a generation known by its:

- Ability to celebrate and be comfortable with diversity.
- Ability to multi-task.
- Optimism.
- Individualism.
- Comfort with and strong connection to technology.
- High expectations of self and others.

In addition, many young people have been directly affected by violent crime (including family violence and sexual assault) and non-violent crimes, or know somebody who has been a victim of crime. They will have an existing connection to your 2009 NCVRW activities.

## **Volunteer Tasks for Young People**

It's a good idea to think about how high school and college students can help with your NCVRW activities. Of course, they can help set up and break down your NCVRW events, and volunteer to serve as “staff” for your outreach activities. However, you can get creative and consider the following suggestions for voluntarism among young people to solicit and secure:

- ROTC members to serve as greeters to your event, and/or participating in an Honor Guard or Color Guard.
- Glee Club or Choral Groups, or high school/college bands to provide music for your special event (and remember, their parents are also likely to attend to add to your crowd!).
- Computer Clubs to help you with any needs related to technology.
- Student newspaper and media groups to help you publicize your NCVRW activities.
- Service organizations to help you with tasks such as folding programs and name plates; affixing ribbons to the NCVRW commemorative pin; delivering bookmarks to bookstores and libraries in your community; and hanging posters about your event(s) throughout your community (camera-ready artwork for all these suggestions can be downloaded from the OVC 2009 NCVRW Resource Guide at [http://ovc.ncjrs.gov/ncvrw2009/camera\\_ready.html](http://ovc.ncjrs.gov/ncvrw2009/camera_ready.html)).

- Art students to provide calligraphy for certificates of appreciation (see the NCVRW Resource Guide at [http://ovc.ncjrs.gov/ncvrw2009/camera\\_ready.html](http://ovc.ncjrs.gov/ncvrw2009/camera_ready.html)) and other awards.

## Where Do You Find Young Volunteers?

### High Schools

Many high schools now *require* students to complete a specific number of volunteer hours in their community, in order to graduate. Since NCVRW falls just a month before graduation, there may be many students who are seeking opportunities to fulfill this requirement.

You can contact local high schools to solicit volunteers, and ask the administrative staff if they have “community service requirements” that can be fulfilled by volunteering during 2009 NCVRW. In addition, high school-age volunteers can be sought from:

- Teen court and youth court programs.
- Youth crime prevention groups (such as Students Against Drunk Driving and Teen Crime Prevention Councils).
- Youth groups sponsored by multi-faith communities.
- Multi-cultural groups that address specific populations (such as African-Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, etc.) or promote cross-culturalism.
- Teen gay/straight groups.
- Youth public service groups.

### Colleges and Universities

Many victim assistance and justice agencies sponsor student internships, with current and past interns serving as a great “portal” for seeking volunteers. They can be asked to identify and engage their fellow students and friends in volunteer activities to promote 2009 NCVRW.

In addition, college and university volunteers can be sought from:

- Direct contact with the Faculty Directors of relevant majors programs (such as criminal justice, social work, corrections, communications, journalism and arts programs)
- Student organizations and groups (especially those involved in social justice issues, such as social work or criminal justice organizations).
- Student leadership (such as student body presidents and governing councils).
- Greek communities (sororities and fraternities).
- Campus women’s centers.

If *any* of your 2009 NCVRW activities focus on issues relevant to young people (such as teen bullying, relationship violence, family violence, and/or juvenile offending), make sure to include such information in your “pitch” to students or their faculty supervisors.

### Additional Tips

## **Global Youth Service Day**

Global Youth Service Day (GYSD) will be held from April 24 to 26, 2009. GYSD is the largest annual service event in the world. GYSD highlights and celebrates the difference youth make in their communities year-round through community service and service-learning. On April 24-26, 2009, millions of young people will participate in and lead service projects in all 50 states and in more than 100 countries around the world. Young people, working with their families, schools, community organizations, multi-faith-based communities, and businesses, will improve their communities by addressing critical issues such as global climate change, education & illiteracy, social justice, poverty, health, hunger, and homelessness. Hundreds of local teen courts, youth courts and youth service programs have been involved with Global Youth Service Day in the past.

Since GYSD falls on the first day of NCVRW (April 26<sup>th</sup>), this is an excellent opportunity to engage young people in your activities. You can learn more about GYSD, download planning resources and the Action Kit, and register your NCVRW program or project on the global event map at [www.GYSD.org](http://www.GYSD.org)

## **Volunteer Match**

A truly wonderful online service is now available that matches volunteers to nonprofit organizations in their communities. Volunteer Match allows you to post information about your volunteer needs, and the types of volunteers that can help meet them, with your zip code providing the geographic link to voluntarism. Thousands of people link to volunteer opportunities through this innovative website.

This is a great resource for both youth and adult volunteers, and perfect for 2009 NCVRW *and* throughout the year! For more information, and to register your organization to solicit volunteers, visit [www.volunteermatch.com](http://www.volunteermatch.com).

## **For More Information**

Please contact National Crime Victims' Rights Week Community Awareness Project Consultant Anne Seymour via email at [annesey@atlantech.net](mailto:annesey@atlantech.net); or by telephone at 202.547.1732.

## **CAP TIPS #4** **To Improve Public Awareness**

### ***Developing Culturally Competent Resources for Crime Victims and Survivors***

#### **Introduction**

A longstanding challenge to America's victim assistance field is to develop information and resources for crime victims and survivors that are culturally and ethnically competent, and to promote outreach efforts that collaborate with culturally-diverse communities. The ultimate goal is to ensure that *all* victims – regardless of their culture, ethnicity or language – have information about and access to quality victim assistance services.

The vast range of cultures in the United States is described by WikiAnswers.com, which notes that “there are as many cultures in the United States as there are in the world, as the United States is the place of some form of acceptance for all cultures and ethnic people. In retrospect, the United States has just one culture: the culture of variety. To know how many individual cultures exist in America is to know how many exist in the world, and cultures change and evolve as quickly as the times.”

According to projections by the Pew Research Center, “If current trends continue, the population of the United States will rise to 438 million in 2050, from 296 million in 2005. Eighty-two percent of the increase will be due to immigrants arriving from 2005 to 2050 and their U.S.-born descendants.”

#### **Tips for Developing Culturally Competent Resources**

The “Checklist for Developing Culturally Competent Health Communications Programs” published by the Centers for Disease Control (see “References and Resources” below) offers excellent suggestions for developing resources that are culturally- and ethnically-competent (which have been adapted for this CAP TIP):

##### **Language**

- Remember, ideally materials should be developed first in the language of the target audience, and then translated into English.
- Assess the literacy level of the target audience.
- Offer an English translation of the text.

- Select a qualified and trained translator, regardless of whether the translation is done in-house, by a freelance translator or a translating company. Use a translator who knows the target audience and has translated many types of documents.
- Do “back translations,” which require two qualified translators, translating the material from English to the second language and back to English again, several times.
- Ease the translation process:
  - Use short, simple words.
  - Use phrases that flow easily in the translated language (which may differ from the English version).
  - Write in the *active voice*, when culturally appropriate (i.e. avoiding verbs that in English, would include the suffix “ing”).
  - Avoid abstract concepts (which may not translate well from English to the language of audiences of another culture).
  - Be very direct.
  - Avoid jargon and technical terms.
  - Avoid criminal justice and victim assistance acronyms (that may be confusing to your audience); and if they are used, explain clearly what they mean.
- Consider including specific information in your written materials or on your website that indicates – in the language of culturally-diverse populations you are trying to reach – that “this information is also available in (language[s]) by (indicate how to access the information in a different language).”

## Working with Translators

It’s important to recognize that translation involves not only *language*, but also sometimes *different dialects* within a language.

Translators can be sought from a number of resources, including:

- Leaders from a specific culturally-diverse community (who should be familiar with specific dialects of the language most commonly spoken by community members). You can also ask for recommendations for seasoned translators from such leaders.
- Language departments at local universities and colleges.
- In some communities, foreign embassies and posts can assist with simple translation that is not too time-consuming.

Some good translation tips are to:

- Allow the translator to select from a wide range of expressions, phrases and terms used by the target audience.

- Instruct the translator on the purpose of the materials; the target audience; and key themes to be addressed.
- Review victim-related terminology with the translator to ensure that all terms are clear relevant to their definitions and intent.

## **Imagery**

- To the extent possible, try to incorporate culturally relevant colors (such as the colors on a nation's flag) with the NCVRW theme colors."
- Incorporate graphics and symbolism that have culturally-appropriate meanings and are familiar to your audience.
- Determine whether photographs, drawings or other visual descriptions speak to the target audience. If you use photographs with people, make sure they reflect the culture of the audience you are trying to reach.
- Be aware that some cultures may prefer lists and bulleted points, and others prefer narratives.
- Use role models from the community. Pay attention to the use of men, women and children; skin color; hairstyles; dress; and jewelry.
- When relevant, use culturally appropriate music.

## **Predisposing, Enabling and Reinforcing Factors**

It's helpful to research key issues about specific cultures that impact their views of crime and victimization, crime victim assistance, and accessing services. For example:

- Family relations.
- Religious beliefs.
- Communication and media preferences.
- Gender roles.
- Any views of law enforcement, criminal justice and victim assistance processes that members of the community may have, based upon prior experiences or views from their country of origin.
- Building on the strength of victims/survivors, instead of just focusing on the trauma of victimization.
- Emphasizing the cultural competence of available victim services and service providers.

## Tips for Outreach to Culturally Diverse Communities

It is helpful to identify “gatekeepers” to culturally-diverse communities. Gatekeepers are community leaders who seek to retain and celebrate a culture’s unique identity while, at the same time, ensure that their community members are aware of and can readily access community support and services that can help them – including *crime victim services*. They can be identified through elected bodies with an interest in constituent outreach (such as Boards of Supervisors and City Councils); nonprofit organizations; civic organizations; and multi-faith communities.

Many communities also have ethnically-diverse news media that operate at the county, city and neighborhood levels. These include cable television, newspapers and radio programming, as well as culturally-specific websites and listservs within a community. By partnering with gatekeepers (see above), you can offer information about your NCVRW activities in April, and available victim services throughout the year, by seeking spokespersons who can conduct interviews for print and broadcast news media in languages and styles that are culturally-specific and appropriate.

Multi-faith communities are another great resource for culturally-diverse victim outreach and public awareness. Many can be identified through the Internet; simply type “churches” or “temples/synagogues/mosques in city/county” into any Internet search engine. Once you have a listing of multi-faith organizations, you can conduct outreach via email, telephone or in person to help promote 2009 NCVRW, and victim services throughout the year.

Finally, it’s a good idea to ask your NCVRW Planning Committee about any contacts or past experiences *they* may have with outreach to culturally-diverse communities. Often, personal contacts emerge that provide important linkages to the audiences you are trying to reach.

## References and Resources

Harvard Medical School’s Center of Excellence in Women’s Health developed an “Excellence in Women’s Health Cultural Competence Curriculum,” which offers excellent training resources about cultural competence (with one module specifically addressing violence against women). The curricula and other resources can be downloaded at: <http://www.hms.harvard.edu/coewh/cultural/>.

The National Center for Cultural Competence offers a wide range of resources about culturally competent training, outreach and policy development. You can review and download publications at: <http://www.ask.com/bar?q=National+Center+for+Cultural+COmpetence&page=1&qsrc=0&ab=0&u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww11.georgetown.edu%2Fresearch%2Fgucchd%2Fncrc%2F>.

The “Checklist for Developing Culturally Competent Health Communications Programs” published by the Centers for Disease Control can be accessed at: [http://www.cdc.gov/DHDSP/CDCynergy\\_training/Content/activeinformation/resources/CV-cross.cult.tool2.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/DHDSP/CDCynergy_training/Content/activeinformation/resources/CV-cross.cult.tool2.pdf).

The Executive Summary and full Report, "U.S. Population Projections: 2005 – 2050," developed by the Pew Research Center, can be accessed at:  
<http://www.ask.com/bar?q=U.S.+population+projections&page=1&qsrc=0&ab=1&u=http%3A%2F%2Fpewresearch.org%2Fpubs%2F729%2FUnited-states-population-projections>.

### **For More Information**

Please contact National Crime Victims' Rights Week Community Awareness Project Consultant Anne Seymour via email at [annesey@atlantech.net](mailto:annesey@atlantech.net); or by telephone at 202.547.1732.

## **CAP TIPS #5** **To Improve Public Awareness**

### **Expanding Your Community Outreach Efforts (or "Leave No Stone Unturned!")**

#### **Introduction**

In the victim assistance field, we tend to turn to "the usual cast of characters" when seeking support for National Crime Victims' Rights Week activities – victim assistance organizations, justice agencies, and a few trustworthy allied professionals. Yet within each of our communities, there are countless organizations and individuals who share our interest in public safety, crime victim assistance and crime prevention.

The important question is: *How do you identify and reach out to them?*

#### **Identifying Potential Partners in Crime Victim Assistance**

It's truly surprising and encouraging to realize that there are at least 150 potential partners that NCVRW Planning Committees can reach out to in advance of your activities in April. And it's fairly simple to create a community-specific roster of organizations and programs that might be interested in supporting and/or attending your activities.

Some helpful tips:

- Visit your city or county "official website." Most of them list governmental offices, and have links to public service and nonprofit organizations that serve your community.
- Visit the website of your Chamber of Commerce. Many (if not most) businesses and nonprofit organizations in communities belong to the Chamber of Commerce, and its website often provides information about and links to its members.
- Pick up a copy of your local Yellow Pages telephone directory. In most communities, a variety of allied organizations are listed under "social service" or "human service" organizations.
- Ask your Planning Committee members to identify organizations – both formal and informal – to which they belong, and begin to compile a list.

## What Do You Ask For?

Throughout your planning activities, you've undoubtedly discovered a multitude of tasks related to your NCVRW activities and events. First and foremost, you want to turn out a crowd, so simply asking people to attend your events – and bring their families and friends – is a good place to start.

You can also develop topic-specific messages for targeted audiences. For example:

- Law firms can incorporate the 2009 NCVRW theme into their annual Law Day observances (planned for Friday, May 1, 2009).
- Local stores can display posters about your events, and provide free bookmarks to their customers (sample artwork is included in the 2009 OVC NCVRW Resource Guide).
- Student organizations can help set up and break down your events.
- Garden clubs can donate floral arrangements for your events.
- Veterans organizations can provide a Color Guard, or free (or reduced cost) space for events at their posts.

In addition, everyone whom you reach out to can be asked to publicize your events and activities, and help promote awareness about crime victim assistance throughout the year. It's helpful to provide them with easy access to information about your program – in person, over the telephone or by email – and invite them to join your victim awareness and outreach efforts by informing their customers and clients about how to “*call, click or come in*” to access victim assistance services.

## Getting Started

Your Community Awareness Project team has identified 150 types of agencies and organizations that can be included in your outreach efforts. They include:

- Civic organizations.
- County and municipal services.
- Public safety and justice.
- Allied professions.
- Schools.
- Colleges and universities.
- Health and fitness.
- Multi-Faith communities.
- Senior services.
- Youth organizations.
- Veterans organizations.
- Miscellaneous groups.

You can tailor and expand this list by following the tips offered above to identify potential partners in your *own* community!

## **Civic Organizations**

1. Civitan
2. Elks
3. Exchange Club
4. Grange
5. Jack & Jill of America
6. Jaycees
7. Junior League
8. Kiwanis
9. Lions
10. Masons
11. Optimists
12. Rotary
13. Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE)
14. Shriners
15. Singles Clubs/Organizations
16. Welcome Wagon
17. Women's Clubs
18. Toastmasters

## **County and Municipal Services**

19. Arts Commission
20. Office on Aging
21. Animal shelters
22. Beautification Programs
23. Office of Minority Affairs
24. Office of Community Affairs
25. Community Relations
26. Disabilities Services
27. Department of Health
28. Department of Housing
29. Community Development
30. Human Services
31. Libraries
32. Mental Health
33. Parks and Recreation
34. Public Service Commission
35. Public Utilities
36. Rehabilitation Services
37. Small Business Development or Administration
38. Transportation and Transit
39. Veterans Affairs
40. Visitor and Convention Bureau

## **Public Safety and Justice (adult and juvenile)**

41. Police
42. Sheriffs
43. Medical examiner
44. Pre-trial services
45. Jails
46. Prosecutors
47. Judges
48. Court administrators and managers
49. Probation
50. Parole
51. Institutional corrections
52. Corrections-based offender community service programs
53. Fire departments
54. Emergency medical services

## **Allied Professions**

55. Law firms (remember, May 1<sup>st</sup> is Law Day)
56. Mental health providers and counselors
57. Medical professionals
58. Labor unions
59. Neighborhood Watch programs
60. Funeral directors
61. Child advocacy programs
62. Guardians ad litem
63. Court-appointed Special Advocates (CASA)

## **Schools**

- 64. Superintendent of Schools
- 65. School Board
- 66. After school programs
- 67. Alternative schools
- 68. Youth courts
- 69. School booster clubs
- 70. Student government
- 71. Junior Achievement
- 72. School clubs (i.e., Glee Club, art, theater, etc.)
- 73. School band
- 74. Students Against Drunk Driving
- 75. Crime prevention/McGruff Clubs
- 76. School volunteer/intern groups
- 77. Parent-Teacher Association
- 78. Teach for America
- 79. Pre-school and day care association

## **Colleges and Universities**

- 80. Student Council
- 81. Greek organizations
- 82. Sports clubs and organizations (tennis, football, running, etc.)
- 83. Student Union
- 84. Specialized student clubs (i.e., arts, communications, social services, language, etc.)
- 85. Marching Band
- 86. Women's Center
- 87. Campus police and safety/victim assistance programs
- 88. American Association of University Women (and other faculty associations)

## **Health and Fitness**

- 89. Health clubs
- 90. Sports clubs (such as running, golf, cycling, soccer, etc.)
- 91. Yoga and exercise centers
- 92. Bicycle shops
- 93. Annual marathon groups

## **Multi-Faith Communities**

- 94. Council of Churches
- 95. Salvation Army
- 96. Catholic Charities
- 97. Volunteers of America
- 98. Interfaith Council
- 99. Faith service organizations

## **Senior Services**

- 100. Meals on Wheels
- 101. Senior Centers
- 102. Nursing homes
- 103. Adult day care programs
- 104. Senior health programs

## **Youth Organizations**

- 105. Big Brothers and Big Sisters of America
- 106. Boy Scouts of America
- 107. Girl Scouts of America
- 108. Boys and Girls Clubs
- 109. Recreation centers
- 110. Youth sports associations
- 111. 4-H clubs

## **Veterans Organizations**

- 112. Veterans of Foreign Wars
- 113. American Legion
- 114. Blinded Veterans Association
- 115. Paralyzed Veterans of America
- 116. Vietnam Veterans of America

## Miscellaneous

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 117. Americorps                                  | 134. Restaurants   |
| 118. Book/film clubs                             | 135. Grocery stores  |
| 119. Culturally-specific nonprofit organizations | 136. Libraries   |
| 120. Chamber of Commerce                         | 137. YWCA/YWHA   |
| 121. Business Associations                       | 138. YMCA/YMHA   |
| 122. Banks                                       | 139. Alcoholics Anonymous                                    |
| 123. Dry cleaners                                | 140. Narcotics Anonymous                                     |
| 124. Drug stores and pharmacies                  | 141. Theater groups  |
| 125. Beauty salons                               | 142. NAACP chapters  |
| 126. Nail care salons                            | 143. Garden Clubs  |
| 127. Community centers                           | 144. Red Cross   |
| 128. Food banks                                  | 145. Americorps  |
| 129. America's Second Harvest                    | 146. Arc   |
| 130. Homeless shelters                           | 147. Neighborhood Associations                               |
| 131. Goodwill                                    | 148. Mothers/fathers groups                                  |
| 132. Motorcycle clubs                            | 149. Hotel/motel Association                                 |
| 133. Coffee houses                               | 150. Retired city/county/state/federal employees association |

## For More Information

Please contact National Crime Victims' Rights Week Community Awareness Project Consultant Anne Seymour via email at [annese@atlantech.net](mailto:annese@atlantech.net); or by telephone at 202.547.1732.

## CAP TIPS #6

### To Improve Public Awareness

## POST IT!

### Introduction

A tried-and-true strategy to increase public awareness about NCVRW events and activities is to hang posters throughout your community. Many people get information about community events simply by viewing posted information at venues that they frequent. Think about it.....how many times have you learned about a community activity that you ended up attending after you saw a poster advertising the event?

This CAP TIP is designed to help you identify places to hang posters; volunteers who can assist with this labor-intensive project; and guidelines for poster hanging.

### Where to "POST IT!"

While each community is unique, the list below is a good place to start as you plan your poster dissemination strategy:

- Adult Day Care programs.
- Banks.
- Beauty and nail salons.
- Book stores.
- Boys and Girls Clubs.
- Bus stops.
- Businesses with heavy traffic (such as dry cleaners, barber shops, beauty salons).
- Chamber of Commerce.
- Churches, temples, mosques, synagogues and their associated meeting halls.
- City, county and state office buildings (see CAP Tip #5, "Expanding Your Community Outreach Efforts")
- Coffee shops.
- Colleges and universities (on bulletin boards throughout campus and at the Student Union).
- Community centers.
- Community theaters.
- Food banks.
- Grocery store bulletin boards.
- Health and fitness clubs.
- Justice agencies (police, sheriffs, prosecutors, courts, jails, probation, parole and corrections).
- Law firms (*remember, May 1<sup>st</sup> is Law Day!*).
- Libraries.
- Medical offices (doctors, dentists, hospitals, etc.).
- Movie theaters.
- Non-profit organizations throughout your community.
- Recreation centers.
- Restaurants.
- Schools (grade schools and high schools often have a bulletin board designated for "community activities").
- Senior Centers.
- Shopping malls (which often have a designated display area for community events).

- Specialized shops (i.e. bicycle, running gear, etc.).
- Small businesses.
- Veterans' halls (American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, etc.).
- Visitors and Convention Bureau
- YMCA and YWCA.

## Who Can Help?

For the past few years in Washington, DC, hundreds of posters that publicize the Office for Victims of Crime NCVRW Prelude Events are hung throughout the community by convicted and adjudicated offenders – both juvenile and adult – who have community service hours to fulfill through their Probation Department. Check with your local adult and juvenile probation departments, and see if their community service probationers can do this. You can “kick off” the distribution process by offering to provide the probationers with an overview of victim services in your community, and how their community service hours will help to promote greater awareness about crime victims’ rights and services.

Other tips to disseminate posters:

- Ask high school students with community service hours/obligations to join this effort.
- Identify student clubs at schools, colleges and universities to take this on as a public service project.
- Contact your local chapter of Boys Scouts and Girl Scouts of America to seek their involvement.
- Provide each member of your Planning Committee with 20 posters to hang in venues that they visit on a regular basis.

## Guidelines for Poster Dissemination

It’s a good idea to check with your county or city government to identify “do’s and don’ts” specific to hanging posters. For example, in most communities:

- Posters cannot be hung on utility poles or public trash cans.
- There are local ordinances that guide the placement of yard signs and banners.
- There may be guidelines about how posters can be affixed (such as the type of tape that *can* and *cannot* be used).
- People are asked to remove their posters once the event has occurred.

It is against the law to place flyers or other paper-based information in people’s mailboxes. However, you can leave such information on the front porches or stoops of houses.

Many businesses and venues are happy to post your information, but it's important to *seek permission* and *guidance* about where to display the poster.

### **POST IT Resources**

It's a good idea to provide volunteers with a "resource kit" that contains:

- Posters in a manila envelope.
- Thumb tacks to post information on bulletin boards.
- Scotch tape, masking tape and strapping tape to post information on windows and other hard surfaces.

It's also helpful to assign volunteers to a specific area of your community in which to hang posters, to avoid overlap, to ensure that your entire community is covered (literally!), and to remove posters after your event.

### **For More Information**

Please contact National Crime Victims' Rights Week Community Awareness Project Consultant Anne Seymour via email at [annese@atlantech.net](mailto:annese@atlantech.net); or by telephone at 202.547.1732.