

National Crime Victims' Rights Week Honors Victims and Their Advocates- Dover

Dover – National Crime Victims' Rights Week is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year by declaring the week of April 18-24, 2021, to honor those impacted by crime and a time to remember those who have lost their lives as a result of a criminal act.

In addition to the victims who have been personally impacted by violent crime, we also want to give thanks to the individuals who provide outstanding service to the victims and their families on a daily basis.

Victims often experience many unfamiliar emotions such as shock, disbelief, anger, fear, frustration, or guilt. Victims may be immobilized by the feeling that their lives will never be the same. Although these feelings are very normal, victims in a state of emotional crisis are often unable to work through these feelings independently. They may not have the resources to seek professional assistance or know where to seek support. Victims and their families may suffer financially, physically, and emotionally. Victim Service Specialists are prepared to assist victims, witnesses, and families with these issues.

This year's theme is "Support Victims. Build Trust. Engage Communities." The theme emphasizes the importance of leveraging community support to help victims of crime. In the last year, victim service professionals and others who serve victims have had to adjust their practices to determine the best ways to work with victims in these unfamiliar times.

The Delaware State Police Victim Services Unit, comprised of civilian employees and assisted by specially trained sworn

Troopers, provides 24-hour crisis intervention, information, and referrals to the Delaware State Police and over 35 municipal departments statewide. They helped over 4,600 victims last year and responded to 865 hotline calls. Their commitment and dedication are unsurpassed as they continually strive to provide the best service possible to ensure positive outcomes for the victims they serve. In addition to the specialists themselves, another integral part of this victim advocacy team is the telecommunications specialists at DSP Communications. They triage hundreds of calls to the 24-hour victim hotline (1-800-VICTIM-1⁸).

This year the Delaware Victims' Rights Task Force is adapting to COVID-19 in how Crime Victims' Rights Week is honored. Traditionally the Governor signs an in-person proclamation and an Annual Tribute, but due to Covid-19, this event will be held through a virtual platform to recognize the week. The Victims' Rights Task Force will be highlighting the week on their Facebook page: www.facebook.com/delVRTF with the following activities:

On Monday, April 19th, a video was shared of Roxanne telling her own story, in her own words, about her victimization and the impact it had on her.

On Tuesday, April 20th, the VRTF Facebook page will spotlight organizations and programs across the state that serve victims. Delaware has an array of excellent services available, and we hope to recognize all that these programs do and provide information on how to best access these services.

On Wednesday, April 21st, Governor Carney's proclamation will be released.

On Thursday, April 22nd, the task force will be recognizing outstanding professionals in the Victim Services field. Additionally, the Delaware House of Representatives and Senate will be releasing a joint resolution, recognizing the week as

Crime Victims' Rights Week. It is part of the annual Advocacy Day effort to encourage individuals to reach out to their legislators to remind them of the impact of crime on victims and the community. Also, the services that assist victims and the need we have to expand services; and the need for victims to be ensured rights and protections in our criminal justice and civil systems.

Friday, April 23rd is "Thank An Advocate Day," and we encourage everyone to take a minute to honor those that work diligently to serve victims and survivors.

For more information about these events, please email DelVRTF@gmail.com. You may also visit www.facebook.com/delVRTF.

If you or someone you know is a victim or witness of crime or have lost a loved one to a sudden death and are in need of assistance, the Delaware State Police Victim Services Unit/Delaware Victim Center is available to offer you support and resources 24 hours a day through a toll free hotline 1800 VICTIM-1. (1800 842-8461). You may also email the unit Director at debra.reed@state.de.us.

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Presented by Public Information Officer, Master Corporal Heather Pepper

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