The
VICTIM'S INFORMER
TEXAS CRIME VICTIM CLEARINGHOUSE
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Suzanne McDaniel: A Celebration and Tribute

We lost a true pioneer in the Victim Services field when Suzanne McDaniel lost her battle with cancer on May 21, 2012. As many of you know, in 1977 Suzanne was employed by the Harris County District Attorney's office where she implemented the first prosecutor-based victim assistance program in Texas. She then moved to Austin, and while serving under three of our Governors, Suzanne proposed and implemented the first statewide resource and referral office for crime victims and served as Director of the Texas Crime Victim Clearinghouse. In 1984 when President Reagan created the President's Task Force on Victims of Crime, Suzanne coordinated field hearings that launched victims' rights as a national concern leading to her serving on the board of the National Organization for Victims Assistance for 10 years. Her next contribution to the field would be at the Office of Attorney General, where she developed curriculum and provided training for judges, law enforcement, prosecutors, medical service providers, and victim assistance organizations, while also acting as coordinator for the Crime Victims' Advisory Council. Suzanne was involved in the passage of numerous legislative reforms including the Texas Crime Victim Bill of Rights, the Texas Crime Victims' Compensation Act and the Texas Constitutional Amendment on Crime Victim Rights. In April, 2008 the Congressional Victim's Rights Caucus, founded by Congressman Ted Poe to honor individuals and others who truly made a difference for crime victims, renamed the award the "Suzanne McDaniel Public Awareness Award" as "a forever honor of her work, dedication, and compassion". In his presentation to the House of Representatives last week, Congressman Poe who had known Suzanne for 25 years referred to her as "one of the 'Old Buffalos', which is what we call the first Advocates in the victims' rights field". In 1995, President Bill Clinton presented Suzanne with the Crime Victim Service Award in recognition of her work in guiding victims through the recovery process. At the time of her death Suzanne was serving as the first victim service director for the Texas District and County Attorneys Association. There she helped train state victim service coordinators. Suzanne will be remembered by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice as the founder of the Texas Crime Victim Clearinghouse, a passionate visionary in the victim services field, a mentor and a great friend. We will miss you Suzanne.

by Angie McCown, Director
TDCJ Victim Services Division

The Fall Edition of the Victims' Informer will be dedicated to "Remembering Suzanne". Please submit stories, comments and photos for consideration to tdcj.clearinghouse@tdcj.texas.gov or mail copies to the Texas Crime Victim Clearinghouse 8712 Shoal Creek Blvd. Ste 265 Austin, TX 78757.

The
VICTIM'S INFORMER

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Male Survivors: Misconceptions that Hinder Males/Boys Seeking Support after Sexual Abuse

By Miriam M. Elizondo, Executive Vice President
The Rape Crisis Center Client Services, San Antonio, TX

As we conduct outreach in the community about the services that The Rape Crisis Center provides, we are still faced with the misconception that rape and sexual violence is primarily a women's issue. Sexual abuse is still one of the most under-reported crimes against a person, and males make up one of the most under-reported populations. One out of six males has had an unwanted or abusive sexual experience in their childhood. This statistic only includes males that have been victimized by direct physical contact and excludes all males that have been victims of harassment, exposure, and secondary victims. All forms of sexual violence are a human rights violation and require the attention of the entire community.

I often find myself in conversations with other providers and sexual assault task force members facing the same challenges. We know that males are being victimized; but where are they and why are they not seeking help? Perhaps the numerous myths and misconceptions that society still holds may play a key role in the underreporting of male sexual abuse.

Myth #1

Males/boys cannot be victims of sexual abuse. This common misconception is instilled through masculine gender socialization and fuels the stereotype of the "macho image". It detrimentally provides the perception that males and boys are not vulnerable and are at a much lower risk of victimization, and thus need less protection. Social and legal perceptions play a role in maintaining this misconception. It was not until February 2012 that the FBI changed the definition of rape to include males.

Myth #2

If a male/boy experiences sexual

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arousal or orgasm from abuse, this means he was a willing participant or enjoyed it. The physiological response to sexual abuse does not warrant consent for males or women. Perpetrators often maintain the secrecy of their abuse by convincing the victim that he/she in fact "enjoyed it" thus adding to the shame and guilt that seems to precede sexual abuse automatically.

Myth #3

Males/boys are less traumatized by sexual abuse than females/girls. There are numerous studies that have been conducted to show the impact of sexual abuse on a male. Most outcomes report that both males and females show long-term damaging effects after their victimization. Some believe that males face even more challenges due to society's reluctance to accept male victimization which can perpetuate the silence and underreporting of their abuse.

Myth #4

Males/boys that are sexually abused will eventually perpetrate others. This myth creates a harmful stigma for male survivors by suggesting that they are destined to become a sexual perpetrator. In my seven years of providing sexual assault counseling to families and children, I have seen numerous families and professional providers treat boy survivors as the perpetrators out of fear that they will hurt the younger children in the home. I have also worked with adult males that have integrated this myth into their reality and are in constant fear that one day, despite absolutely no intention or plans, they will perpetrate another. Research has found that a majority of victims do not go on to become adolescent or adult perpetrators; and those who do perpetrate in adolescence usually don't perpetrate as adults if they get help when they are young.

Myth #5

If the perpetrator was a female, the male/boy should be considered fortunate for having been initiated into sexual activity by a female. Nonconsensual sexual activity, whether by a female or male towards a female or male is not about sex; it is about power and control and may cause negative and traumatic responses to any victim. Sexual abuse of a boy or man is no different than sexual abuse of a girl or woman. There are an overwhelming amount of messages received by boys and males through media, society, and culture, that sexualizes boys to the extreme and strengthens the damaging misconception that boys cannot be victims of sexual abuse.

There are two issues to think about when considering the challenges of male survivors being similar to female survivors; first, abused boys healing from their childhood abuse; and second, adult males being victimized during their adulthood. Social beliefs and trends play a crucial role in how we view victimization. If we think of child abuse, we do consider the vulnerability of boys and the need for their protection. Perhaps, mistakenly, not as much as girls, but the thought and consideration is still typically present. When do boys become a forgotten part of our community with regard to victimization? When do we no longer see them as vulnerable beings and the need for support and advocacy ceases to be a priority?

I have worked with numerous male survivors and have learned through the courageous accounts of their experiences that when they disclosed their abuse to family members, authorities, or medical providers, for many, the response was negative and damaging to their healing. Many reported that the initial response to their disclosure set the precedence for the years and years of isolation and kept them from seeking support. Some of the most common responses to trauma for males are anger, relationship and intimacy struggles, sexual orientation confusion, and isolation. The organization "1 in 6" is dedicated to educating and advocating for male survivors. "1 in 6" reports that men who do not seek or address their abuse are at a significantly higher risk for a range of negative health and behavioral consequences.

The mission of the Rape Crisis Center is to provide comprehensive services to those who have been impacted by sexual violence. It is a community responsibility to dispel the myths and misconceptions of male sexual violence and to learn from male survivors what needs to change so that men and boys are more comfortable seeking help. In the last three years, The Rape Crisis Center has seen an increase of male clients that have been direct victims of sexual violence. We have worked diligently to spread the message that we provide services to males and boys and dispel the stigma that sexual violence is solely a women's issue. Due to our efforts, we have been able to learn more from our male clients with regard to the challenges that they faced and still face to this day following their abuse.

Sexual assault is a problem for humanity in general and our brothers, sons, fathers, uncles, boyfriends, and husbands need to be heard, believed,

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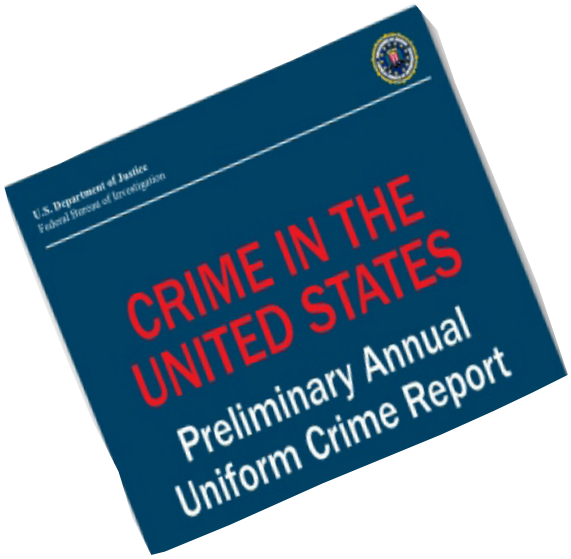
and supported in order for us to work towards our ultimate goal of ending sexual violence. As Rick Gipprich from Texas Association Against Sexual Assault stated, "a person is raped because a rapist raped them". Neither age, social economic status, life choices, attractiveness, provocative clothing, nor gender are reasons to justify or disregard the horrible nature of this crime or to invalidate the trauma that is left for the victim to heal from.



Redefining to Represent: The Federal Government's New Rape Definition Expected to Increase Sexual Assault Statistics

This year, the Department of Justice released a revised definition of rape; one over a decade in the making.

By Lauren Reynolds
TDCJ Victim Services Division, Texas Crime Victim Clearinghouse

Numbers talk in government agencies and for far too long, federal statistics documenting rape have been underrepresented. The Uniform Crime Report (UCR), released by the FBI, has been operating on a definition that was 85 years old. In 1927, rape was defined as the "carnal knowledge of a female forcibly and against her will". Over the past decade, many advocacy groups, such as the Women's Law Project, have been fighting to modernize the language. Finally, early this year, a new definition was released: "the penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim". Many advocacy, coalition and non-profit groups are rejoicing in the new and inclusive language.

Considering the long road to a revised definition for this devastating crime, its documentation on a national level has the potential to produce a ripple effect that could be seen from federal to local areas. According to TAASA's Deputy Director, Torie Camp, rape victims in Texas have been receiving services unrestricted from the old definition. In the Texas Penal Code, Chapter 22, Section 22.011, eight intentional or knowing actions define sexual assault. Texas has historically collected a broader range of statistical data on sexual assault than the Federal government; however the UCR numbers are more prominent than those reflected in state reports. While the new federal definition is expanded and helpful, it has not held any states back from providing services to all victims-men, women and children; it has simply been a poor representation of the levels of sexual violence in Texas and in the country. Through Texas rape crisis centers, victims of rape can receive hospital accompaniment for an exam, individual or group

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counseling, advocacy services, which can include helping victims find a new place to live or helping secure time off work, accompaniment throughout the court process and education/prevention services. These services are available even if the sexual assault is not reported to law enforcement.

Texas has been nondiscriminatory in providing services and already reports more accurate statistics in its state report. This new definition allows information gathered by state and Federal governments to be more consistant. And as these numbers talk, so will money. Funding for local and state rape crisis centers is considered in relationship to numbers reported in the UCR. With this new definition, more accurate numbers will be collected, providing more data for funding rape crisis centers. In Texas, Criminal Justice Advisory Committees coordinated by local council of governments (COGs) make recommendations on the distribution of money based on numerous factors such as need, and high statistics reflect a high need for services.

When will these numbers, bringing a more accurate reflection of what is happening in Texas, be available? According to the Crime Records Service at DPS, new statistics in line with the new definition will begin to be collected January 2013, so those numbers should be released sometime mid-2014. Joanne Archambault, the Director of End Violence Against Women, estimates the UCR rape rates will increase 40-60%. Sexual assault victims will likely feel better represented with a higher rate of victimization.

The steps the Federal government has taken in modernizing the old definition in rape should result in some incredible return in numbers, not only for the state of Texas, but nationally. With this more encompassing representation, sexual assault organizations have hope to provide even more services for victims.

TEXAS VICTIM ASSISTANCE ON-LINE TRAINING

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice Victim Services Division is excited to announce the creation of the Texas Victim Assistance On-Line Training, an online and experiential format for learning aimed at new victim service professionals.

Through a grant award from the Office of the Governor, Criminal Justice Division, and assistance from key stakeholders, Texas Department of Criminal Justice Victim Services Division will offer training focused on victim-centered service delivery and professional development that complements other victim services initiatives and enables new advocates to acquire baseline professional skills and competence. Completion of the training will provide victim service practitioners with the necessary tools for providing consistent and appropriate services to crime victims, working collaboratively with partner agencies serving victims, and providing a model of professionalism for victim service practitioners who serve our community and enhance our quality of life. Additional information on the Texas Victim Assistance On-Line Training will be provided in future publications as it becomes available.

Interested or have questions?

Contact Erica Linneman
Program Supervisor
Texas Crime Victim Clearinghouse

erica.linneman@tdcj.texas.gov
512-406-5915

Therapy Dogs: A Mission to Heal

By Lee Boedeker
Volunteer, Therapy Dogs International

Smokey

Therapy Dogs International (TDI) is a non-profit organization established in 1976. It spearheaded the utilization of dogs in a therapy capacity in the United States. TDI is the largest and most experienced therapy volunteer organization; dedicated to serve this country by providing services and visitations to hospitals, nursing homes, and any other locations where therapy dogs can provide soothing therapeutic services. The growth and success of TDI is due in large part to the increasing acceptance of the many health benefits inherent in the dog-human interaction. Today there is an ever-growing body of research showing emotional, mental, and physical health is profoundly enhanced through our interaction with pets. Stroking a dog can lower one's blood pressure and increase relaxation response. Interaction with animals can reduce depression and anxiety. The value of this unique and compelling experience is immeasurably comforting. The services of TDI are provided exclusively on a volunteer basis.

TDI's experiences working in hospitals and other institutions provide a firm basis for our dog-handler teams to visit disaster sites. The experiences in disaster stress relief work have proven there is a definite need for specialized therapy dogs at disaster sites. The dog teams help comfort families, give companionship and assist family members, volunteers, staff, security and military personal. The requirements to become a disaster stress relief (DSR) dog and dog handler team is so stringent, that out of the 24,000 dogs registered with TDI only 64 dogs are currently certified as DSR dogs.

On September 7, 2011, I received a call from Ursula Kempe, President and CEO of Therapy Dogs International (TDI). Ursula asked if I had heard about the fires in Bastrop, TX and if I could take Smokey, my DSR dog, to Bastrop to see what we could do to help the victims of the fire. I was told to meet up with another TDI team, Susan and her DSR dog, Michaelango, in Austin.

On Thursday, September 8th, I spent the entire day on the phone trying to get in touch with the Incident Commander in Bastrop. When I finally got what I thought was the correct phone number for the command center, it was actually the call center for volunteers. I was told my information would be passed along to the appropriate person, and someone would call me soon. As I relayed the response to Susan, we agreed we were likely not going to be contacted, so we made the decision to go to Bastrop and find the command center ourselves. I left Wichita Falls and made it to Austin early Sunday morning to pick up Susan and her dog Michaelango, and then we headed for Bastrop. We missed the turn-off and ended up driving through part of the burn area. As we drove through, you could see the smoke rising from the ground. What we did not realize was that the fire had just passed through this area. We were some of the first vehicles to enter the area. When we made our way back to Bastrop, we learned that the command center was located in the convention center. What we encountered was beyond what we were expecting. There were two large parking lots. One parking lot had firefighters and fire trucks from all over the United States. Many trucks were from places like New Mexico, Arizona, Washington, and Montana; all waiting to be told where they were to start their quest to beat back the monster fire that was raging in the area. We let the dogs out of the car to let them stretch their legs and get a feel of what was going on. It was clear the dogs knew just what they were there for. We made our way into the convention center where the command center personnel were setting up to give the daily briefing of the events from the previous day. As we approached a check-in desk, we announced we were representatives from Therapy Dogs International Disaster Stress Relief dog teams.

We were directed to a building across the street, where the crisis counselors were located. We met with Angie McCown, Director of TDCJ – Victim Services Division. We discussed our reason for being in Bastrop with our Disaster Stress Relief Dogs. Angie told us that they were just getting organized to find the best approach to start counseling victims of the fire. She asked if

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we could come back the next day and visit with them.

We made our way back into the convention center where the victims of the fire were standing shoulder to shoulder waiting to hear news of when they could return to their homes and find out if they were still there or not. As we entered the room, you could see and feel the tension throughout the entire room. As the dogs started to make their way through the crowd, fathers, mothers, and children would stop what they were doing to pet the dogs. Most adults would have a story to tell the dogs about their own pets they had to leave and hope they survived. As people petted the dogs, you could see the tension levels ease. Children would get on the floor and play with the dogs as if they had no worries at all. Parents made remarks that "this was the first time that they have seen their children enjoy themselves since being forced to evacuate". As the briefings concluded, we found the entrance to enter the command post. As we entered we let the dogs use the special abilities that they have. It was truly amazing, the dogs could pick out the people who were the most stressed out in the room. Soon the atmosphere changed and you could see smiles on the faces of the volunteers. Many had left their pets and families to come and help. Those who had pets at home would soon be sitting on the floor with the dogs telling them how they miss their own pets. As the day wore on and we had to leave; everyone in the room stopped and requested that we make a return visit and make sure we bring the dogs.

We returned with six dog teams to continue the work that was started during the last visit. The command center had opened up more of the burn area so we were able to expand our presence. We decided to visit Tahitian Village, which was said to have been burned to the ground. As we entered, we took note that very few people had made their way back to see firsthand what was left of the place they called home. We stopped at one burned out residence where two sisters were just standing in awe looking at the ruins of what had been their home. We approached the siblings and explained who we were and what we do. Immediately the sisters started petting and hugging the dogs. The comments of the sisters were that by allowing the DSR dogs to visit they realized some people really do care to give their time and to share the love of their dogs. The sisters also made the comment that "after we rebuild we will always remember the day that the dogs came to visit". After we left Tahitian Village and made our way to the Bastrop Christian Outreach Center, Cedar Creek United Methodist Church, and Celebration Church, we saw the same scene at each place. Fire victims who lost their worldly possessions gathered together surviving one day at a time, until they find another place they can call home again. Many people would confide in the dogs and tell their story of how they had escaped the fire with only minutes to spare.

We left the centers and made our way up to the base camp where the firefighters were staying. At the camp we were introduced to Dale Johnson, the base camp manager. We explained our mission and he allowed us to visit with the fire fighters in the camp. As the crews were getting ready to head into the fire, they were full of energy and very upbeat about the job ahead of them. The dedication of those volunteers was a great credit to their profession.

As time passed and the containment of the fire reached 90 percent, we made one last visit to the command post. While things were being packed up and put away, the comment we heard repeated was, "We were so glad that TDI was able to have DSR dog teams come to Bastrop". "The DSR dog teams provided the best emotional therapy ever".

Therapy Dogs International's Disaster Stress Relief Dogs and handlers were there in Bastrop as a volunteer service. The volunteers absorbed all costs associated with their stay. When the next disaster happens, if it is a fire, hurricane, tornado, or earthquake these dedicated people are ready for a phone call, with someone saying, "Are you ready to go? They need our help".

calendar

June 09-12, 2012
2012 National Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) Conference

Omni Shoreham Hotel,
Washington, DC

http://www.casaforchildren.org/site/c.mtJSJ7MPIsE/b.5405963/k.A2FE/Annual_Conference.htm

July 22-25, 2012
15th National Conference Domestic Violence & 37th National Conference on Men and Masculinity

Doubletree by Hilton,
Denver, Colorado

http://www.ncadv.org/conferences/GeneralConferenceInformationandOverview-2.php

July 23-25, 2012
Sexual Assault Family Violence Investigator Course (SAFVIC) Conference on Violence Against Women

El Tropicano - Riverwalk Hotel,
San Antonio, Texas

http://www.safvic.org/SAFVIC-VAWT-Info.aspx

August 6-10, 2012
National Victim Assistance Academy (NVAA)

Jacksonville Riverwalk Hotel,
Jacksonville, Florida

https://www.ovcttac.gov/views/TrainingMaterials/dspNVAA.cfm

August 13-16, 2012
24th Annual Crimes Against Children Conference

Sheraton Dallas Hotel,
Dallas, Texas

http://www.cacconference.org/

August 19-22, 2012
38th NOVA Conference

Sheraton San Diego Hotel & Marina,
San Diego, California

http://www.trynova.org/conference

September 5-6, 2012
Texas Council on Family Violence (TCFV)
2012 Statewide Conference

AT&T Executive Education & Conference Center,
Austin, Texas

http://www.tcfv.org/trainings-events/event-calendar

September 19-21, 2012
National Center for Victims of Crime
2012 National Conference

Hilton New Orleans Riverside,
New Orleans, Louisiana

http://ncvc.org/ncvc/main.aspx?dbID=DB_2012NationalConference207

New Agency Announcement!

Office of Violent Sex Offender Management (OVSOM)

Through the enactment of Senate Bill 166, 82nd Legislature, 2011, the Governor and the Legislature transferred the functions related to the sex offender civil commitment program that were currently performed by the Council on Sex Offender Treatment (CSOT) at the Department of State Health Services (DSHS), to the Office of Violent Sex Offender Management. Under Government Code, Chapter 420A, this newly created agency is solely responsible for monitoring and providing treatment of civilly committed sex offenders under Health & Safety Code, Chapter 841.

The mission of OVSOM is to enhance public safety by developing and implementing strategic management policies to protect the citizens of Texas and enhance protection of victims and potential victims through research based management of sexually violent predators and sex offenders.

The OVSOM philosophy recognizes that the civil commitment of a sexually violent predator is necessary for the protection of the citizens of the State of Texas. This philosophy includes the long-term comprehensive and offense specific supervision and treatment of sexually violent predators.

Agency Objectives

- Eliminate the proliferation of sexual assault and enhance protection of victims;
- Increase awareness by educating, training, and disseminating information regarding the most current empirical research on effective management practices to the community and professional organizations/agencies regarding the systematic management of sex offenders;
- Enhance public safety through the systematic management and treatment of sexually violent predators in outpatient treatment programs;
- Provide guidance and recommendations based on empirical research regarding sex offender legislation and public policy;
- Disseminate information regarding the management of sex offenders to the public, and promote and enhance the coordination and communication between members of containment model agencies;
- Enhance collaboration and communication among states regarding effective management strategies for extra-jurisdictional sex offenders; and
- Promote research in sex offender management areas including strategies, assessment, treatment, recidivism, and sexual assault.

Contact Information:

Office of Violent Sex Offender Management
P.O. Box 149347
Mail Code 4300
Austin, Texas 78714-9347
Phone (512) 873-8112
Fax (512) 873-8080
Email: lupe.ruedas@ovsom.texas.gov
Website: http://www.ovsom.texas.gov/

Victim Offender Mediation/Dialogue (VOMD)

Do you know that one of the rights of crime victims in Texas is the right to request victim offender mediation? The VOMD process can only be initiated at the request of the victim, and offender participation is voluntary. If an offender chooses to participate, he/she must admit guilt and express remorse for the offense. Either party may withdraw from the VOMD process at any time. Participation in the VOMD program has no impact on the offender's prison, parole, or community supervision (probation) status. Therefore, it is assured that offenders are not participating in order to enhance their chances for parole approval. This process involves a preparation phase with the goal of a person-to-person meeting. However, in cases that do not result in such a meeting, creative alternatives are explored.

VOMD provides the victim the opportunity to describe the impact of the crime to the offender and to ask questions which may have remained unanswered as a result of the offender's plea of "not guilty". It can be one component of recovery and can mean regaining control and moving forward in life.

How long is the VOMD process?

Every case is unique and the preparation process varies in length for each case. However, the preparation usually lasts between 4 and 6 months from the time a mediator is assigned to the case, and the actual mediation day. Meeting with an offender is a very important step, and the VOMD staff will make every effort to begin each case as soon as possible.

Does the offender have to agree to mediation?

While offender participation in VOMD is voluntary, many offenders agree to participate. If the offender chooses not to participate, other options are available in the mediation program such as the delivery of a letter from the victim to the offender by a VOMD staff member.

Can a support person come to the mediation session?

This is something that will be discussed with the mediator and the VOMD Program Supervisor. Victims are encouraged to have a support person in a waiting area of the prison during the mediation. Breaks will be taken as often as needed during the meeting.

How can I initiate a case?

Contact the Victim Offender Mediation Dialogue Program by phone at (800) 848-4284 or 512-406-5929 or by email: yesenia.bravo@tdcj.texas.gov.

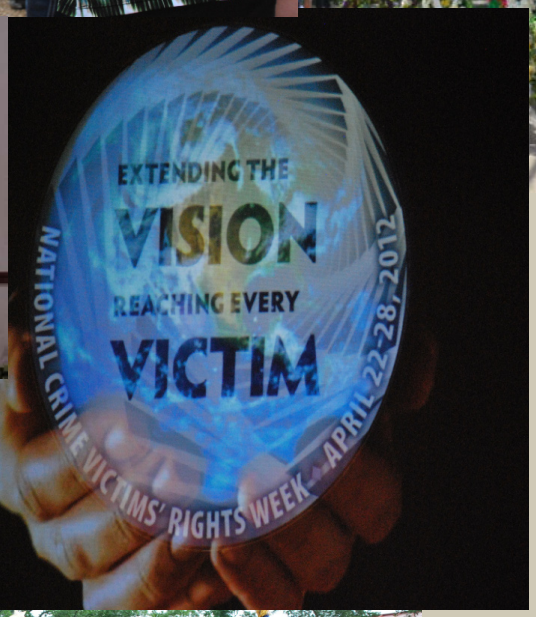
OUR GOAL IS TO PRINT NEWS OF INTEREST FOR VICTIMS AND VICTIM ADVOCATES

The Victim's Informer newsletter is published quarterly. Articles, meeting notices, and other submissions should be sent to TDCJ Victim Services Division, Texas Crime Victim Clearinghouse, 8712 Shoal Creek Blvd, Suite 265, Austin, Texas 78757-6899; faxed to 512-452-0825; or e-mailed to tdcj.clearinghouse@tdcj.texas.gov. For questions or comments, please call us at 800-848-4284 or 512-406-5931.

Please Note:
You may access the publication at the TDCJ VSD Internet website.
If you wish, we will notify you via e-mail each time The Victim's Informer becomes available on the TDCJ VSD Internet website and provide an electronic link to The Victim's Informer.
Send your e-mail address to:
tdcj.clearinghouse@tdcj.texas.gov

Angie McCown, Director
Texas Department of Criminal Justice
Victim Services Division
victim.svc@tdcj.texas.gov
8712 Shoal Creek Blvd., Suite 265,
Austin, Texas 78757

National Crime Victim's Rights Week



2012 Recap