

The VICTIM'S INFORMER

TEXAS CRIME VICTIM CLEARINGHOUSE

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HONORING OUR PAST

Creating Hope for the Future

By Angie McCown, Director
TDCJ Victim Services Division



*"What is past is prologue."
-William Shakespeare, The Tempest*

One of my favorite places to visit while in Washington DC is the National Archives Building where the quote, "What is past is prologue," is engraved

on the statue *Future* (1935, Robert Aitken), located at the entrance. The Rotunda displays the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the Declaration of Independence. When standing in the Rotunda, there is an overwhelming sense that we are standing on the sacred ground of those hard working men and women who shaped this country by laying the foundation for a hopeful future.

As many of you know the Texas Legislature convened the 86th Session on January 8, 2019, and the regular session will end on May 27, 2019. During this time many victims and victims' advocates will engage members of the Senate and the House of Representatives to discuss public policy to expand victims' rights and enhance services to victims of crime, with the goal of supporting the rights

of victims in the criminal justice system. Participating in the legislative process is one way to honor our past and create hope for the future by supporting victims' ability to seek the justice they deserve. The Texas Legislature Online website www.capitol.texas.gov is a tool that anyone can use to follow bills that are filed and to receive alerts about bills that may impact victims.

*"Where there's hope, there's life. It fills us with fresh courage and makes us strong again."
- Anne Frank*

In April, we will once again commemorate National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVWRW). This year's theme, "Honoring our Past, Creating Hope for the Future," offers each of us the opportunity to reflect on our past contributions to the Victims' Rights Movement, to honor how that past carried us to where we are today, and to focus on what we as Texas citizens and criminal justice professionals are doing to create a hopeful future for those harmed by violent crime.

I encourage everyone reading the Informer to think creatively about how you might engage your community to better support victims and to join your community in commemorating NCVWRW April 7-13, 2019. Explore ways in which you might contribute to the legislative change process to expand victims' rights and create hope for crime victims.

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DOING WHAT'S RIGHT

By Derrelyn Perryman, Texas Board of Criminal Justice



Sec. 30. RIGHTS OF CRIME VICTIMS. (a) A crime victim has

April 7-13 is Crime Victims' Rights Week. I've been thinking lately about what a 'right' really means. A quick search found this definition:

1. that which is morally correct, just, or honorable.

synonyms: goodness, rightness, righteousness, virtue, virtuousness, integrity, rectitude, uprightness, principle, propriety, morality, truth, truthfulness, honesty, honor, honorableness, justice, justness, fairness, equity, equitable, impartiality, lawfulness, legality

antonyms: wrong

2. a moral or legal entitlement to have or obtain something or to act in a certain way.

synonyms: entitlement, prerogative, privilege, advantage, due, birthright, liberty, authority, authorization, power, license, permission, dispensation, leave, consent, warrant, charter, franchise, sanction, exemption, immunity, indemnity, carte blanche...

The Constitution of the United States and The Constitution of the State of Texas, plus the laws enacted by our representatives, define in many ways what is right and wrong, which rights supersede others, and what the consequences should be for violating the rights of others. When it comes to victims of crime, the Texas Constitution makes it clear: Sec. 30. (a) A crime victim has the following rights: (1) *the right to be treated with fairness and with respect for the victim's dignity and privacy throughout the criminal justice process.*

It is true that sometimes there is a conflict between the rights of different people who are involved with one another in some way. In the criminal justice and victims' rights arenas we see this play out daily. It is a complex balancing between the interests of groups of people – victims, the accused, offenders, workers, taxpayers, communities, families. Victims of crime, and people who care about those fellow human beings who have suffered because of the criminal behavior of another person, have had to work hard to make sure that victims' rights were defined, refined, and recognized. Crime Victims' Rights Week is a time to pay tribute to the importance of those rights and those people and groups of people who have fought long and hard to achieve the progress we've achieved so far. There is more to do. Thank you for being part of this effort, from whatever perspective you come to this effort. Your day in and day out insistent on doing "that which is morally correct, just, or honorable" so that Victims of Crime can exercise their "... moral or legal entitlement" to their rights.

TEXAS BOARD OF PARDONS AND PAROLES

Victim Liaison Program Update

By Libby Hamilton, Victim Liaison
Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles



The Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles (BPP) hopes that 2019 is off to a good start for each of you. We are working hard to grow the Victim Liaison Program and increase the number of victims and survivors we can assist. Since our launch in February of 2017,

we have experienced a steady rise in the amount of calls and emails we are receiving, which is very exciting for us.

Each time a new parole commissioner or Board member joins the BPP, I am given the opportunity to sit down with them and provide one-on-one training regarding interviews and interactions with crime victims. With seven Board offices across the state and 21 individual voters, it can be challenging to achieve consistency across the Board, but it's one of our biggest goals.

Another of our goals is to help victims and survivors understand and be involved – if they want to – in the parole review process. We are currently working with Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) Media Services to create an informational video that will provide viewers a unique look at what it's like to visit a Board office and speak with a voter. The parole review process can be a very difficult and confusing time, so we hope to clear up some misconceptions and help victims feel more familiar and comfortable with the process if they choose to be involved.

One more update worth mentioning is our participation in the Crime Victims Committee for the Association of Paroling Authorities International (APAI). Together with representatives from all over the United States, Canada, Europe, and Africa, we interact through periodic conference calls to elevate the

awareness of crime victims' issues in the postconviction process and share ideas on how to improve our services.

At the end of March, I will have the opportunity to meet with all members of the committee in Baltimore, Maryland to further discuss the APAI's Victims' Services Best Practices Guide. This booklet was distributed to association members in 2018, and was developed by Najah Barton of the U.S. Parole Commission and Randi Losalu from the Wyoming Parole Board. Within the document they outline ten actions that can help victims and survivors understand and implement their rights, including two of my personal favorites:

1. provide opportunities for parole board members and other staff to receive training about victims' rights and services, and
2. promote policies and practices that provide for victim accompaniment to parole proceedings by a victim advocate.

Accompaniment is a service that the Board and the TDCJ Victim Services Division (VSD) work together on, to ensure that victims who want that support can receive it. The Board has offices in Amarillo, Angleton, Austin, Gatesville, Huntsville, Palestine, and San Antonio. Between the VSD's Regional Victim Services Coordinators and me, an advocate is almost always available to accompany a victim to meet with the Board.

For questions or comments about the Board's Victim Liaison Program, please contact me at 512-406-5833, or libby.hamilton@tdcj.texas.gov.

CATCHING THE “CHAIN”

by Mike Jones, Texas Crime Victim Clearinghouse
TDCJ Victim Services Division

Almost every day, the Texas Department of Criminal Justice’s fleet of “chain” buses crisscross the state of Texas, moving offenders from unit to unit as well as to and from state and federal court appearances and medical transfers. The buses and their crews are also very busy processing newly-convicted felons from county jails across the state and transporting them securely to TDCJ Correctional Institutions Division (TDCJ CID) intake processing

units, including the James H. Byrd Unit in Huntsville for men and the Linda Woodman State Jail in Gatesville for women. In order to see how offenders are processed out of the county jails to TDCJ CID custody, Texas Crime Victim Clearinghouse staff started at the county jail level and visited the nearby Travis County Correctional Complex in Del Valle.

The morning started with a general tour of the jail complex. Before we entered the facility, we performed a parking lot, contraband self-check. Entering through the Visitation Center, the *fish bowl*, we cleared the security check in, which included emptying pockets and removing belts and boots, then a walk through a metal detector while our personal items went through an x-ray machine. Thanks to a titanium knee, one of us also was subject to a metal detector wand inspection along with a pat search. After we verified our identification to jail staff with our TDCJ badges, Officer Ian “Coach” McGarrahan led us out of the fish bowl for our unit tour.

We took a brief outside walk to the Health Services Building (HSB), where both men and women are housed in separate pods and separate from the general population. The walkways on the unit grounds are covered with corrugated metal and enclosed by chain link fencing;

intimidating razor wire loops along the upper edges. Two blue lines painted along the walkway indicate where inmates must walk, to the right of the blue lines.

On the men’s pod, we saw primarily general population male inmates, although many of them have some kind of mobility issue. The pod includes a day room and adjacent small outside recreation yard. Two levels of cells on each side of the day room are setup dormitory style and house four inmates each. The control desk is at the front of the pod. Here, yellow lines keep inmates at a distance from staff and controls. Meals are brought to the inmates and passed to them through a food slot or *bean slot* on the cell doors. There are no bars; thick steel and acrylic glass keep the pod secure.

The female pod we saw in HSB was a little different. Although it was set up the same as the male pod, this one houses female inmates with behavioral, emotional, and psychological issues. Many of the women

in here have been assaultive to staff or other inmates; some are potential suicide risks, and some have other issues that must be addressed. So that the staff can easily recognize the risks, the assaultive inmates wear orange and white striped uniforms instead of the black and gray stripes.

From HSB we took another walkway and met with Sgt. Alfred Wilson and Supervisor Michelle Holly in the Records/Classification section. The jail also has a



We're all wayfaring travellers,
Trudging down our separate roads,
Hoping, wishing, praying ...
Erin Hanson



full-time TDCJ coordinator, who assures that records, penitentiary or “pen” packets, and departing inmates are ready to go when the chain bus arrives.

In Texas, once the judgment and sentence are finalized, the court of conviction notifies TDCJ Classification and Records that an inmate is “state ready.” When TDCJ is ready to receive state ready offenders, Classification and Records notifies the county jails which inmates will be picked up. The Texas Government Code requires that the TDCJ accept prison offenders within 45 days of the postmark date from which the county provides complete paperwork for a sentenced offender. At the Travis County jail, only a few select staff members know which inmates are being picked up that day for transport to TDCJ CID when the list is finalized. Although inmates know they’ve been convicted and will end up in a TDCJ CID facility, for security reasons they don’t know exactly

what day that’s going to be. The Travis County jail is also a processing hub, and the surrounding counties bring their TDCJ-bound inmates here for processing and transport to TDCJ CID.

Getting processed to participate on a ride on a TDCJ *blue bird* is called, “catching the chain,” because offenders are fitted with handcuffs and sometimes belly chains and leg irons before they are loaded. The TDCJ chain buses are a stark white and look like fortified school buses; they are nicknamed blue birds, because much of the fleet of the specialized vehicles have been manufactured by a company called Blue Bird.

Routinely, TDCJ chain buses arrive at the jail early in the morning, before sunrise. The outbound inmates catching the chain are told only a short time before their bus arrives, just enough time for them to organize any personal property they have.

The chain buses are staffed with three transportation officers, the driver along with officers riding on the swing seat and in the back of the bus. Officers alternate driving duty.

The inmates are daisy chained – handcuffed together in pairs – and brought by the jail’s C-Tac (Correctional Tactical) Team to the outbound processing area, where they report to Office Specialist Leonor Toj to confirm their personal property. Security is maintained by the C-Tac Team. This morning there are 31 inmates on the chain, including one high-profile inmate and two returning to TDCJ from bench warrants.

The limited items that leave with an inmate to TDCJ include a birth certificate, driver license, medications, legal papers, and a wedding ring and a watch. Everything else the jail has been storing for the inmate must go to someone the inmate designates, who then must come to the jail to collect. Some property that the inmates purchase through the jail commissary, like envelopes, can be donated for indigent inmates.

Inmates who have any money in their commissary accounts or “on the books” will have that amount credited to their TDCJ commissary accounts once everything has been processed. The property going with the inmates is sealed in a paper bag.

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The outbound processing area has two sets of metal benches bolted to the floor. The two sets of benches are separated by a short cinder block wall. At one end of the room are five changing rooms, where the outbound inmates are strip searched. When the inmates are brought into the outbound processing area, they are seated on the benches on one side of the wall. When the jail staff are done with each pair of outbound inmates, TDCJ correctional staff take over.

As each pair of inmates have their jail handcuffs removed, they are strip searched by TDCJ staff, given a one-piece white TDCJ coverall (*jumper*) to wear, and again handcuffed back into pairs, this time with TDCJ cuffs. After the offenders are strip searched, dressed, and daisy chained back together, they are given a sack lunch (a *johnny*) and seated on the benches on the other side of the cinder block wall while the remaining inmates are processed.

Once everyone and everything is processed, the offenders leave the processing area in a group and shuffle along the fenced and razor-wired walkways to the awaiting blue bird. Once everyone and everything is verified and secured on the bus, they're off to either Huntsville or ...

Offender intake

The James H. Byrd Unit in Huntsville is a traditional two-story, *telephone pole* style unit. With a wide main corridor and cell blocks protruding from each side, it looks like a telephone pole that has been laid flat on the ground. Although it has served as a main reception facility for male offenders since its dedication in 1964, it also serves as a transfer facility for offenders moving from one unit to another and also those going to and

returning from medical appointments. On average, the facility receives and transfers around 1,200 offenders each week.

Newly-received offenders may stay until their processing is complete. Minor offenders, those under 18, are transferred to the Ellis Unit within 10 days, and Death Row offenders are transferred after processing to the Polunsky Unit the same day they arrive. No adult offenders have any contact with the minor offenders. The unit has a permanent population of around 230 offenders who live on the unit. They clean, cook, and serve food, and wash, dry, and fold clothes and bed linens. The unit is unusual in that it has no day rooms, except for the wing where G1 (General Population Level 1) and G2 class permanent offenders live.

In the unit classification room, housing assignments for incoming offenders are predetermined, based on a number of factors, such as offense type, custody level, gang affiliations, predatory history, medical status, age, and height and weight. Colored tags – salmon, blue, green, and white – hanging from hooks on the count board designate offender race, so that the ethnic distribution throughout the unit can be easily determined. The count tabs have basic information about the offenders they represent. Unlike most units, the count board at the Byrd Unit changes extensively each day because of its large transient population.

Arriving offenders unload into the intake area. Here, they are strip searched again, their personal property is processed, they get the opportunity to shower, and they are issued a set of prison whites. To tell them apart from the permanent

unit offenders, who are issued the typical two-piece prison whites, the newly-received offenders get a set of white jumpers. They also get boxers, basic toiletries, bunk sheets and a blanket, along with a buzz haircut. When the new offenders transfer out to their unit of assignment, they'll receive the two-piece whites to wear.

The intake area is very busy, and attentive correctional staff are managing transactions in the property processing area. Secured by thick steel bars, a holding tank on the back wall faces the "teller" area, and along each side wall are banks of individual cells. Under tight supervision, offenders scurry here and there in prison whites.

Every new offender processed during intake is issued a TDCJ identification number. (Offenders with previous convictions and incarcerations receive new TDCJ numbers for new convictions.) The offenders are photographed, fingerprinted, and given a comprehensive physical exam along with other testing. They also are interviewed about their educational, sociological, physiological, and psychological history. The intake questions are designed to determine issues, such as criminal history, gang affiliation, special medical needs, suicidal histories, alcohol and drug addition, educational history, and emotional or behavioral concerns. All of the information is compiled and used to determine the offender's class, custody level, skills, special needs, and his or her permanent unit of assignment.

Before they are transferred to their permanent unit of assignment, newly-received offenders remain on the Byrd or Woodman Units. In addition to the testing and processing they receive

during their time on the intake units, offenders are also given the opportunity to learn how to productively adjust to life in prison. During the orientation period, through video training and peer education classes, new offenders have the opportunity to learn what programs are available and what rules they must obey. By the time they leave the Byrd Unit and head to their permanent unit, they will have the information they need to transition from the free world to serving their sentences, and staff at the units around the state are prepared and waiting for the offenders they will receive.

Like most units, the Byrd and Woodman Units have multiple custody levels. Custody levels designate where and with whom an offender may live, what kind of job they can have, and how much supervision they need. At one end of the scale, G1 and G2 level offenders on the unit typically live in a dormitory-style wing. G1 offenders can live in trusty camps and can work outside of the security fence without armed supervision. G4 and G5 level offenders usually have lengthy disciplinary records and must live in cells. G5 offenders have assaultive or aggressive disciplinary records. G3 level is reserved for offenders with sentences of 50 years or more.

Three Squares a Day

The Byrd Unit kitchen prepares about 4,000 meals each day, including an array of specialty diets. As we toured the kitchen, it was full of an alluring aroma from breakfast. Enchilada casserole was on the lunch menu. The kitchen posts the current day's menu along with the menu for the next day. And, yes, offenders have their favorites. On the

Byrd Unit, the dining hall is always full on fried chicken day.

Offenders who have money on the books can also purchase an array of items from the unit commissary to supplement food provided by the unit. Commissary is a privilege, and it can be restricted based on offender behavior.

Female Offenders

Although it may not handle the number of offenders that the Byrd Unit sees, the staff at the Linda Woodman State Jail in Gatesville stay very busy processing newly-received offenders to the unit. Whether they are male or female, new offenders go through similar extensive processing.

At the Woodman intake area, there is a large U-shaped counter. Behind the counter, unit staff process all of the incoming offenders. On the back wall is a large bank of cubby holes, stuffed with red mesh bags. These bags contain ready-made supplies, such as toiletries, shower items, and other necessary products for incoming female inmates.

As on the Byrd Unit, haircuts are managed. If a newly-received female's hair is an abnormal color or does not meet hair cut standards, she is given a trim to bring her hair cut as close to policy as possible. As her hair returns to its natural color, she will have to maintain it according to the unit rules. Male and female offenders must also have trimmed fingernails, but fingernail length is a more prevalent issue for female offenders. Almost as soon as they enter, female offenders are handed clippers to trim nails to proper length.

Female offenders go through the same comprehensive initial testing and interviews as incoming male offenders.

Just like their male counterparts, they are interviewed about their educational, sociological, physiological, and psychological history. Again, the intake questions are designed to determine issues, such as gang affiliation, special medical needs, suicidal histories, alcohol and drug addition, educational history, and emotional or behavioral concerns. They go through the same orientation and peer support education. There is a good chance that the female offenders being processed at Woodman may remain in Gatesville. Although there are other female units in Texas, many of the units, such as Crain, Hilltop, Mountain View, and Murray, are part of a large Gatesville complex.

Whether offenders are beginning to serve a short sentence or life without parole, it is crucial for TDCJ CID staff to correctly assess and place offenders in the best place for unit security, staff safety, and the offenders' well-being.

COMPLEX TRAUMA IN CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION

by Tomi Grover PhD; North Texas Regional Administrator; Child Sex Trafficking Team
Office of the Governor, Greg Abbott



Jessica's Story

Jessica is an ordinary 14-year-old who does well at school but often seems tired in class. At the first of the school year, her teachers chalk her issues up to normal youthful habits of staying up late and texting with friends.

The truth is Jessica has a secret she has kept since she was nine. Her mom's live-in boyfriend has been molesting her for years. He has been threatening to hurt her mom if she tells, so she stays quiet.

Recently, Jessica's new boyfriend, a senior at school, has insisted she sneak out of her house at night. He has taken her to his friends' parties and provided her with drugs and alcohol. Several times he demanded she have sex with others at the party. He told her she owed him this to pay for the drugs he had provided.

The sleeplessness, physical pain, and trauma that Jessica has endured are showing in her schoolwork, and her grades are down considerably. By the end of the second 6-week grading period, Jessica's teachers contact her mother to discuss the grades and attentiveness situation. The teachers ask Jessica to see the school counselor before the parent-teacher conference is scheduled. Jessica is withdrawn and fearful when she meets with the school counselor. Jessica begins to weep uncontrollably when asked if someone has been hurting her.

Childhood Trauma

CHILDREN MAY EXPERIENCE TRAUMA in many ways. Some examples include bullying, violence, disasters, medical issues, physical abuse, sexual abuse, terrorism, major loss, and even accidents. Some trauma may result from adversity faced in a child's home life such as substance abuse, financial stress, homelessness, mental health disabilities, and many other challenges.

Layer after layer of traumatic events have a compounding effect and can become "complex trauma." In Jessica's case, the sexual abuse, threats of violence, exploitation, and other traumatic experiences were chronic and severe. These layers of abuse and trauma began to

impact her performance at school and her ability to cope with the situation at home.

Traumatic events often affect a child's overall well-being. Children may have negative physical, psychological, relational, and social outcomes because of their experiences. The more unresolved trauma in a child's life, the more vulnerable they may become to other difficulties. The child may become easy prey for a person who wants to recruit them into situations where they take advantage of or exploit them.

According to the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, "[c]hildren whose families and homes do not provide consistent safety, comfort, and protection may develop ways of coping." Their

copied mechanisms may allow them to survive the situation and continue to function for a while, even if those mechanisms don't appear to be optimal to others trying to understand them. As the number of challenges grows in a child's life, their ability to cope starts to diminish.

Dealing with Complex Trauma

There have been various interventions developed for working with individuals with complex trauma. Counselors can work individually with children and potentially with the whole family. The aftermath of complex trauma can be life altering.

i carry your heart with me(i carry
it in my heart)i am never without it(anywhere
i go you go ...

e.e. cummings



Child Sex Trafficking Team
Office of the Governor, Greg Abbott

For children like Jessica who have experienced complex trauma, the level of care required is intensive and long-term. Some key areas for communities and organizations to address in order to prepare to care for victims include:

- **Multiple, coordinated services** to meet the many needs, such as housing, medical, education, etc.
- **Flexible services** and financial help to support meeting their needs.
- **Training** for professionals responsible for decision-making about care and who are working directly with these children.
- **Including child sex trafficking survivors** in the development of services.

For more information on understanding and addressing childhood trauma, visit the National Child Traumatic Stress Network website: <https://www.nctsn.org>.

How to Protect Children

Today, children just like Jessica are in communities and schools across Texas. These victims of sexual abuse are vulnerable to exploitation, and while they often will not disclose their victimization, they are in need of support from adults who recognize symptoms and take appropriate action.

In response to the identified needs of children in Texas, a strategic plan to address these issues is being implemented by Governor Greg Abbott. He created the Child Sex Trafficking Team (CSTT) to help meet the needs of children victimized through sexual exploitation and trafficking. CSTT is working diligently to help teachers, parents, communities, and child serving agencies

to recognize these children and respond appropriately. The team is also working to ensure children like Jessica have access to a variety of coordinated services available to help them heal.

The Child Sex Trafficking Team strategy has five parts:

- **Protect** children from sexual exploitation.
- **Recognize** child sexual exploitation in all its forms.
- **Recover** victims with protective and empowering – not punitive – responses.
- **Restore** survivors through trauma-informed and responsive services.
- **Bring justice** by holding exploiters accountable.

Due to the space limitations for this article, we will focus on protecting children; for more information on

continued on next page ...

• **Complex Trauma Possible Signs**

- **Noticeable changes to normal behavior**
- **Inability to focus**
- **Frequently acts distracted**
- **Changes in school performance**
- **Unusual anxiety**
- **Relationship changes (home, social, dating)**
- **Unusual tiredness**
- **Observable physical changes (scars, marks, tattoos)**
- **Complaints or observation of medical issues**

<https://www.nctsn.org/what-is-child-trauma/trauma-types/complex-trauma/effects>

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the broader strategy of the Child Sex Trafficking Team, please visit: <https://gov.texas.gov/cstt>.

Benjamin Franklin said that “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” The greatest benefit to children is in protecting them from exposures to trauma and specifically, sexual abuse. Preventing complex trauma can begin with simple prevention steps. This will reduce the risks they face. Prevention of sexual abuse and exploitation will take commitment and determination.

Here are five action steps to help your community:

- Learn the facts about child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation.
- Minimize the opportunity for a child to become a victim (online or in-person).
- Talk about child sexual abuse with parents and teach them to talk with their children.
- Recognize the signs and understand the clues and cues that are not obvious. Some children show no signs whatsoever. However, many do but the signs go unrecognized. Here are some common signs:
 - Physical signs of sexual abuse are not common, but these can include

redness, rashes/swelling in the genital area, and urinary tract infections. In addition, physical issues like anxiety may manifest as chronic stomach pain or headaches.

- Emotional or behavioral signals are common. These can range from “too perfect” behavior, to withdrawal and depression, to unexplained anger and rebellion or running away from home.
 - Sexual behavior and language that are not age-appropriate can be a red flag. Children may act out sexually with classmates or peers.
- React responsibly in order to help the child. Specific action steps include making a report to the state’s child welfare agency, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services – they offer a hotline (1-800-252-5400) as well as online options for reporting: www.txabusehotline.org.

More information on these steps and how to implement an educational plan can be found on the Darkness to Light website at <https://www.d2l.org/education/>. This organization’s Stewards of Children® training is both effective and widely used in Texas. Local Children’s Advocacy Centers are another great place to start

with community efforts around child abuse prevention. Check for the advocacy center near you at the Children’s Advocacy Centers of Texas website: <https://www.cactx.org/find-a-local-center>.

Communities should consider supplementing child abuse prevention trainings with programs specific to the commercial sexual exploitation of children. Many local human trafficking task forces and coalitions are available for such training at no cost.

Jessica’s story demonstrates she was in an environment that was putting her at risk. Her mother was either unaware or not protective of her daughter. Their relationship was not in a place to talk about what was happening. Who could have seen Jessica’s issues earlier? Would a trusted adult have known what to look for? Would they have believed her if she did tell them? Moreover, would that adult have known what actions to take?

We can and must do something to protect our children from the complex trauma of child sexual abuse and exploitation. For more information and resources related to the Governor’s Child Sex Trafficking Team, please visit: <https://gov.texas.gov/cstt>.

Time Travelers

In all our wrongs

i want to write him,
in a time
where i can find him.

Before the tears

that tore us;
when our history was
before us.

-Lang Leav

Reprinted with permission

APPROXIMATELY

79,000

**MINORS AND YOUTH
ARE VICTIMS OF
SEX TRAFFICKING
IN TEXAS ★★**

The data and the graphic used with permission from Busch-Armendariz, N.B., Nale, N.L., Kammer-Kerwick, M., Kellison, B., Torres, M.I.M., Cook-Heffron, L., Nehme, J. (2016). Human Trafficking by the Numbers: Initial Benchmarks of Prevalence & Economic Impact in Texas. Austin, Texas: Institute on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault, The University of Texas at Austin.

2016

APPROXIMATELY

234,000

**WORKERS ARE
VICTIMS OF
LABOR TRAFFICKING**

THERE ARE CURRENTLY AN ESTIMATED

313,000

**VICTIMS OF
HUMAN TRAFFICKING
IN TEXAS ★★ ★★ ★★**

**TRAFFICKERS
EXPLOIT
APPROXIMATELY**

\$600 MILLION

**FROM VICTIMS OF LABOR TRAFFICKING
★★ ★★ ★★ ★★ IN TEXAS**

“Stories are for joining the past to the future. Stories are for those late hours in the night when you can’t remember how you got from where you were to where you are. Stories are for eternity, when memory is erased, when there is nothing to remember except the story.”

-Tim O’Brien, *The Things They Carried*

OFFENDER VISITATION

Reprinted and updated from The Victim's Informer, Volume 15, Number 4

Every weekend Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) correctional staff gear up to receive thousands of visitors to institutional facilities across the state. TDCJ recognizes that visitation plays an important role in maintaining bonds between offenders and their friends and family. It keeps offenders socialized, so they may be

less likely to reoffend upon release. Visitation is essential for maintaining offender morale and is an "integral component of the rehabilitation process." Although the visitation process at TDCJ units is very complex, it is conducted in the most accommodating manner possible while maintaining order and security.

The first thing people should know about offender visitation is that it is a privilege for offenders and not a right. Visitation privileges are based on the offender's custody level and disciplinary record. Unit wardens have discretion to allow, take away, or restrict visitation privileges according to an offender's behavior. Offenders are not assigned to units to accommodate visitors or how far they may have to travel. They are assigned to units based on many factors, such as age, length of sentence, recidivism and institutional history while ensuring offender treatment and security needs are met.

Visitation Basics

There are two types of visitation: regular visitation and contact visitation. (No, there are no conjugal visits in Texas.) Regular visitation is conducted with glass or wire between the visitor and the offender, so the offender has no physical contact with the visitor. Contact visitation allows physical contact between the offender and visitor. At a contact visit on many units, the offender and visitors sit at a table similar to a picnic table. Offenders and contact visitors may briefly embrace

and kiss before and after the visitation period and may hold hands above the table during visitation. Adults must sit on the opposite side of the table from the offender; children can sit on either side. Only general population levels one, two, three, and four (not in disciplinary status) offenders are allowed to have contact visits.

An offender may have up to ten adults on his or her visitation list. Only the offender can request to have someone approved for his or her visitor list. He or she can request to add and remove visitors from the list once every six months, with approval by unit administration. The offender must supply a current address for each approved visitor on his or her list, which is required to match what is on the valid driver's license or picture ID the visitor uses to enter the unit.

Visitation is usually conducted on Saturday and Sunday from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. Death Row visitation, which must be scheduled in advance, is conducted on the Polunsky Unit from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. Visitation is 8:00 am to

noon on Wednesday and from 5:30 pm to 10:00 pm on Saturday. The visitation schedule at Death Row on the Mountain View Unit is similar, except that it ends at noon on Tuesday and at 9:30 pm on Saturday.

Normally, eligible offenders can have one, two-hour visit per visiting cycle; the visiting cycle begins on Monday and ends on Sunday. Some units may adjust this schedule to include Friday, depending on the volume of visits, space and staffing limitations. Facilities that house administrative segregation populations may arrange visitation through the week by appointment.

If a state holiday – except for Christmas



Visitation at a TDCJ unit. Photo courtesy TDCJ Media Services

Day – falls on a Monday or Friday, visitors may be allowed to arrange visits on these days.

Offenders are allowed only two adult visitors at a time during visitation. If an offender has more than two adults who want to visit during a visitation cycle, he or she may split the two hours between them. TDCJ does not necessarily limit the number of children allowed to visit an offender, but the number of children allowed is based on the availability of space and the visitor's ability to control the children. Children 17 and younger must be accompanied by an adult. However, with prior written approval from the unit warden, children 16 and 17 may be allowed to visit on their own if they do not have an adult available to accompany them.

Offenders convicted of sexual offenses against children or offenses causing bodily injury to a child are restricted from having contact visits with anyone under 17. An offender may have a general visit with a child under the age of 17, only if the offender is the legally recognized parent of the child and the child was not the victim of the offense. The legal guardian must complete an affidavit attesting that the offender is the legally recognized parent of the child and that the child was not the victim before the visit can occur.

Special Visits

Visitors who live more than 250 miles from the unit may request to have a

special four-hour visit. A total of eight hours visiting with a maximum of four hours per day on two consecutive days may be permitted by special arrangement. Offenders can have only one special visit each month.

The Visitation Process

All vehicles and visitors are subject to search upon entering TDCJ property. Security staff at the unit's vehicle checkpoint verify visitor IDs and visibly search the inside of the vehicle. They may search a vehicle more thoroughly if they believe a sufficient reason exists. Alcohol, tobacco, controlled substances, as well as any item that could be made into a weapon or instrument to aid in an escape are strictly forbidden on the units. Other items not allowed inside the unit are any food items, diaper bags, brief cases, cameras, lighters or matches, cell phones or pagers, computers, and digital recorders. Anyone who is found to be in possession of contraband may be removed from an offender's visitation list. All visitors who enter the unit must empty their pockets, remove their belts and shoes, and are screened by a metal detector. Their personal items pass through an x-ray machine (on units where they are available). All visitors are pat searched. If staff believes a sufficient reason exists, a visitor may be strip searched, but the visitor must give his or her written consent to be searched. However, any visitor who refuses to be searched must leave the unit and will not be allowed to visit. Pat and

strip searches are conducted only by staff of the same sex as the visitor.

Visitors are required to dress very conservatively. Shirt and shoes are required. Shorts and cutoffs are not allowed. No revealing clothes or clothes that are offensive in nature are allowed. White shirt or blouse and white pants or skirt worn together are prohibited. (Offenders on TDCJ operated facilities wear all white clothing, so staff must be able to easily determine visitors from offenders.) Visitors who do not satisfy the dress code may leave and change into appropriate clothing if they want to enter the unit.

Essentially, visitors are allowed to bring limited items into the unit. They must have valid IDs. Visitors are allowed to bring in a small wallet, clear plastic bag (Ziploc® type) or change purse. Visitors may bring up to \$25 in coins to purchase items from vending machines. Visitors with infants or small children may bring in a limited number of baby items, such as a limited number of diapers and wipes; these items also must be in a clear plastic bag.

After check-in, visitors are seated in the visitation area at an assigned table on the side of the table designated for visitors. The contact visitation area is arranged to control where offenders sit in relation to other offenders and visitors for safety reasons as well as to eliminate offenders passing contraband items to each other.

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There are indoor and outdoor visitation areas. Some female units also have designated play areas for children.

Visitors can buy soft drinks and snacks from vending machines in the visitation area for themselves and the offender they are visiting, but all items must be consumed during the visit. TDCJ does not own the vending machines or collect money from them. Only visitors and staff are allowed to operate the vending machines, and all purchased items are inspected by unit staff before they are given to offenders.

Offenders are strip searched before they enter the visitation area. If they need to leave the area, to use the restroom during the visiting period for example, they are strip searched before they reenter the visitation area. (The time it takes to go to the restroom counts on their visitation time limit.) Offenders are required to wear their TDCJ-issued whites, and shirts must be tucked in. Offenders are forbidden from passing any items to other offenders or visitors. Visitors cannot switch from visiting one offender to another.

Visits must be conducted in a quiet and

orderly manner. During the visitation process, correctional staff monitor the visitation areas. They also remain available to answer visitors' questions or take complaints. They alert the visitors and offenders when the end of their visitation time is getting close and when the visit is over. Staff may monitor conversations between visitors and offenders. Prior to the offender being brought into the visitation area, other security staff have already verified things such as the type of visit allowed, the relationship of the visitors to the offenders, Visitation Restriction status, and the distance the visitors have traveled if they are requesting a special visit. A family liaison officer is also available to assist offender family members and other persons during visits and aid those persons in resolving problems that may affect permitted visits with offenders.

The Duty Warden has the authority to cancel or deny a visit if he or she has reason to believe the visit or visitor may compromise the safety and security of the offenders, staff, other visitors, or the unit. He or she may also remove a person from an offender's visitation list. Visitors who appear to be under the influence of drugs

or alcohol, who refuse or fail to produce sufficient identification, who refuse to be searched or have their vehicle searched, or who knowingly violate TDCJ visitation rules will not be allowed to visit and may be removed from the visitation list.

Other Types of Visitation

Offenders may request visits from spiritual advisors who are not on the offender's visitation list. The spiritual advisor must provide sufficient credentials, such as a minister ID, a license, or an ordination certificate to obtain permission to visit. Prospective employers also may be given permission to visit offenders, but they must provide sufficient identification in order to visit.

At the warden's discretion, offenders who are seriously or critically ill may receive visitors outside the normal scope of visitation rules. These offenders may be housed at a unit, a free world hospital, or the Hospital Galveston (a TDCJ medical facility). The warden and unit medical staff determine where the visitation will occur depending on the offender's health condition.

Under strict guidelines, visits between offenders may be granted as well as visits between current or former TDCJ employees. Attorney visits and legal visits between offenders are governed by a Board Policy 03.81, "Offender Access to the Courts, Counsel, and Public Officials Rules."

Visitation with family and friends helps offenders adjust to institutional life, gives them something to look forward to, and encourages them to behave appropriately. The offender who has regular contact with his family and friends may be less likely to reoffend when he is eligible for parole or release.



Although hair styles have changed since this photo was taken years ago at the Goree Unit, everyone still gets dressed up for visitation. Did you notice the ashtray? TDCJ went smoke free in 1995. Photo courtesy Texas Prison Museum

DO WE BLAME THE VICTIM?

by Mike Jones, Texas Crime Victim Clearinghouse

“Blaming the victim is a way of reassuring ourselves that the world is not as bad a place as it may seem, and there are good reasons for people’s suffering. ... It makes everyone feel better – except the victim ...”

Harold S. Kushner, *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*

A long time ago in a previous life, I was a young grocery store manager. Every now and then the company’s loss prevention manager, Mr. Rowe, would round up all of us young managers for some loss prevention training. Before every training session Mr. Rowe would say, “I believe people are basically good.” Then he’d start talking about a bunch of bad stuff like shoplifting, employee theft, armed robbery, hazardous situations, and so on.

From what I remember, Mr. Rowe was a former law enforcement officer. So, I assume he had witnessed his share of horrible things during that career. When he became the loss prevention manager at the company I worked for, his job was to try to prevent or at least mitigate employee danger and financial loss, so he was still dealing day in and day out with not so lovely issues. But, as far as I know, Mr. Rowe never gave up on his belief that people are basically good.

Over the many years and throughout my career with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice Victim Services Division, I have tried to hold onto the memory of Mr. Rowe and his tenet of trust. But, one thing I’ve learned is that there are a lot of people out in the world who are not good, not even basically. In our day-to-day lives, most of us want to believe that the world is a good and just place. If we work hard,

plan right, and do good things, bad stuff won’t happen to us. But it does ...

When Victim Services Division staff are conducting training for any of our audiences, one of the issues we bring up during the training is that victims of violent crime may have also once believed that the world was a good and just place, that people are basically good. However, having lost someone to or having been the victim of a violent crime, that optimistic outlook on the world and on people in general is one of the significant things that is forever changed in his or her life. But even for people who work with victims of violent crime for lengths of time, the belief that people are basically good takes a hit. We look over our shoulders; we are leery in crowds; we lock doors that we hadn’t before; we panic when we don’t hear from our kids as soon as we think we should. But, many of the people we are training have never experienced violent crime at a personal level, so their outlook may still be rosy.

In the 1960s, a social psychologist named Melvin Lerner conducted a series of studies on what he termed the just-world fallacy, the idea that we believe that people get what they deserve. The world is a predictable place and we can control what happens to us. You “reap what you sow” in other words. Just as the participants in Lerner’s studies felt that the victims in the

experiments contributed to their suffering, in order to comprehend, rationalize, and perhaps subconsciously cope, people who have not experienced violent crime may tend to believe at some level, the people who have endured violent crime must have done something in some way that allowed that to happen to them or their loved ones. If we conduct our daily lives differently than crime victims, then surely violent crime cannot happen to us. But it can ...

Many, many victims already place more guilt on themselves than they deserve for the violent crime they have endured. As advocates, we must help them to understand that there are people in our world who do bad things and that they do these bad things to good people; blaming or second guessing crime victims does little to help make their healing process less difficult.

We cannot change what any offender did in the past. What we *can* do is help victims try to cope with the depth of what happened to them; empower them so they may exercise their rights; assure them as they re-frame their perceptions of justice, safety, and their world; and show them that there still are a lot of basically good people around them.

NATIONAL VICTIM AWARENESS DATES

APRIL 2019

National Crime Victims' Rights Week

National Crime Victims' Rights Week, proclaimed in 1981 by President Ronald Reagan, is a weeklong observance every April in which our nation joins together to honor crime victims and survivors, and those who advocate on their behalf. National Crime Victims' Rights Week is a time to acknowledge the devastating impact of crime on victims and communities in the United States, it's an opportunity to devote our collective energies to ensure that victims are not forgotten within the justice system; it also serves as an opportunity to recognize those who serve crime victims as critical partners in our collective efforts to promote safety and justice for all. National Crime Victims' Rights Week for 2019 will be commemorated April 7-13. This year's theme, "Honoring Our Past. Creating Hope for the Future," celebrates the progress made by those before us as we look to a future of crime victim services that is even more inclusive, accessible, and trauma-informed.

End Violence Against Women International Conference

EVAWI's annual conferences focus on sexual assault, intimate partner violence, stalking, human trafficking and elder abuse. They consistently bring together law enforcement personnel, prosecutors, victim advocates, judges, parole and probation officers, rape crisis workers, health care professionals, faith community members, educators, researchers and others in this three-day conference highlighting promising practices and emerging issues to effectively respond to these crimes in all of our communities.

With three full days of training, April 22 – 25, 2019 in San Diego, offering six general sessions, a choice of 67 workshops

and over 100 presenters, you are sure to learn something you can bring home and apply on the job. Moreover, with over 2,100 professionals expected to attend, you can anticipate countless opportunities to meet, rejuvenate and share ideas with other colleagues.

The 2019 Post Conference sessions will provide attendees an opportunity to participate in a full day course focused on either Human Trafficking: Identification & Trauma Informed Response Best Practices, or a course on Self-Care in High Intensity Work.

Event website: <https://www.evawintl.org/>

MAY 2019

National Correctional Officers and Employees Week

In 1984, President Ronald Reagan issued Proclamation 5187-National Correctional Officers' Week, in which he called "upon officials of State and local governments and the people of the United States to observe this week with appropriate ceremonies and activities," to recognize "the contributions of correctional officers to our Nation."

National Correctional Officers and Employees Week, May 4 – 10, 2019 honors the thousands of women and men working in corrections in adult and juvenile federal, state, local, and private facilities. Corrections professionals put their health, safety, and lives on the line every day to maintain public safety, to reform, and rehabilitate our nation's offenders. As President Reagan recognized in 1984, correctional officers do more than guard offenders. They treat, counsel, train, teach and rebuild lives.

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"You just don't think that — same stupid quote — you just don't think it's going to happen to you."

- Adam Housley (after the November 7, 2018 Borderline Bar & Grill mass shooting, where 23 were injured and 12 died, including his niece, 18-year-old Alaina Housley)

Peace Officers Memorial Day and Police Week

Peace Officers Memorial Day and Police Week is an observance in the United States that pays tribute to the local, state, and federal peace officers who have died, or who have been disabled, in the line of duty. The formal memorial is on May 15, and Police Week is the calendar week in which the memorial falls. The event is sponsored by the National Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) and is implemented by the FOP Memorial Committee. Other events of National Police Week include an annual Blue Mass, Candlelight Vigil, Wreath Laying Ceremony, and the National Concerns of Police Survivors Conference.



Weeping Angel. 1894. Sculpture by William Wetmore Story

“ ... as time goes by, we move on.
That’s what everybody said.
But everybody was wrong.
Because, when you lose a child, time does not go by.
It just comes to a dead halt.”

Character Joanne Harris (Alicia Coppola),
“Intersection,” *Major Crimes*, March 29, 2017

INFORMATION ABOUT THE VICTIM’S INFORMER

The Victim’s Informer e-newsletter is published quarterly. Articles and other submissions should be sent to the TDCJ Victim Services Division (VSD), Texas Crime Victim Clearinghouse, 8712 Shoal Creek Blvd, Suite 265, Austin, Texas 78757-6899 or emailed to tdcj.clearinghouse@tdcj.texas.gov. If you would like to submit materials, the deadline dates for articles, meeting notices, and other submissions are below. For questions or comments, please call us at 800-848-4284 or 512-406-5931.

Deadlines for articles and other information:

April 2, 2019 for June/July issue

July 2, 2019 for September/October issue

Please Note: You may access the publication at the TDCJ VSD website by going to https://www.tdcj.texas.gov/publications/victim_informer_newsletter.html. If you wish, we will notify you via email each time The Victim’s Informer becomes available on the TDCJ VSD website and provide an electronic link to The Victim’s Informer.

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Angie McCown, Director
Texas Department of Criminal Justice
Victim Services Division
victim.svc@tdcj.texas.gov