

The VICTIM'S INFORMER

TEXAS CRIME VICTIM CLEARINGHOUSE

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WELLNESS & RESILIENCE

By Angie McCown, Director
TDCJ Victim Services Division



"Joy, collected over time fuels resilience"
-Brene Brown

I hope everyone's summer includes time to be with family and friends, which is a critical component of wellness and resilience. Wellness and resilience seems to be the

topic of discussion in many circles today. We often talk about resilience as it relates to the victim/survivor population we serve, as well as how building resiliency with our victim services staff allows us to be better advocates. Although some people seem to be born resilient, research tells us that it can also be learned.

This summer the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) is focusing on wellness and resilience. Several of the initiatives will be covered on the TDCJ Facebook page. I would encourage you to like our page so that you can follow our progress on the path to wellness, so that everyone who works for TDCJ is in the best condition mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually to better serve you and all citizens of Texas.

Thanks to a grant from the Office of the Governor, Criminal Justice Division, the TDCJ Victim Services Division will bring in the Warrior's Rest Foundation this summer to provide training on topics such as the stress and trauma of a career in corrections, loss of a co-worker, suicide awareness, and warrior wellness. Warrior's Rest Foundation's mission is, "working together to build resiliency with first responders, their partners, and their families to foster healthy professional and personal lives." We are very excited to add their expertise to our wellness/resilience initiative. Stay tuned for the next issue of the Informer where we will have an article on Warrior's Rest.

"Health is a state of body.

Wellness is a state of being."

- John Stanford

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SAY IT ISN'T SO: Divorce After the Death of a Child

by Janice Harris Lord, LCSW-ACSW/LPC



It isn't so – sorta. As with everything else, simple responses to complex issues are rarely possible.

Do most good marriages survive the death of a child? Yes.

Very few studies on this subject were well done, but they indicate that somewhere between 16 and 20 percent of marriages fail after the death of a child. It is estimated that about 40 percent of *all* marriages in the United States end in divorce. We must also consider the rapidly changing demographic that fewer people are getting married now than in decades past. Therefore, fewer people are getting divorced. No studies were found of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ) couples whose children died. Anecdotal stories may be found on the Internet, but it is surprising how little valid research is available on this topic, given the number of child deaths every year.

So, it's a little silly for reasonable people to consider statistics when addressing divorce following child death. I can't tell you, however, how many times I have been asked, "Do most parents of children who die get divorces?" as if a precise percentage might be available and as if the death

of the child was the only reason for the divorce. It is reasonable to point out some of the challenges that parents of children who die face, based on the very few valid and reliable studies available.

One of the best studies out there was conducted with 428 bereaved parents, as compared with 428 similarly matched parents who had not suffered the death of a child. These persons had been followed for 35 years, one of the longest studies ever conducted (The [Wisconsin Longitudinal Study](#)). Among the 428 bereaved parents, 36 percent of their children died of external causes including homicide, suicide, and accidental deaths. Interestingly and surprisingly, neither cause of death nor time since death were associated with the parents' level of functioning. As they reached mid-life, most of the bereaved parents were not experiencing clinical levels of symptoms, such as depression or substantial life disruptions. However, those with unexpected loss – the types that generally make it into the criminal justice system and suicides – suffered longer-lasting grief and possible subclinical depression, reaching over several decades for the parents.

What accounted for differences between parents who experienced marital

disruption and those who did not? Religious participation and having other children. None of the other myriad of factors considered in the study accounted for significant differences. We can draw a few hypotheses for further study from that information. The study did find that a sense of meaning in life is a significant key to resilience among the grieving parents. Is it possible that religious participation and having other children provide enough meaning to a bereaved parent's life that they are not as likely to suffer as deeply as those without those two factors in their lives? Maybe. But, once again, be careful about making predictions. Every advocate knows that to suggest to grieving parents that they join a church, synagogue, or mosque or have a baby as a means of saving their marriage would be ludicrous and insensitive.

What Can Advocates Do?

Call the myth a myth. No one is quite sure where the myth of "90 percent of marriages fail following the death of a child" got started, but it is generally believed to have resulted from studies in the 1960s of parents who were already planning to divorce when their child died. When you hear this myth being quoted, call it out and point out that many, many factors go into a decision to divorce and that no research validates this myth.



Don't predict problems. Many of us remember the old days, when advocates and counselors used to predict Elizabeth Kubler Ross' five stages of grief as if they were the Gospel. As we all now know, those stages have never been shown to be valid in any empirical studies. And yet, how many people suffered needlessly because they thought they weren't grieving correctly, based on somebody's prediction about the stages. Here's another example. Some bereaved parents say that the second year seems to be harder than the first. Maybe it is – maybe it isn't. Whatever we experience at any given moment tends to feel like "the worst." But I would never predict to grieving parents that "next year is going to be harder than this one." If they say they have heard or read that somewhere, simply respond that some find it to be true and some don't. If they tell you, in the second year, that they think it is harder for them than the first year, you can affirm it by saying something like, "Yes, some bereaved parents find that to be true." This lets them know that they are not outside normal and natural reactions, which can be comforting, but it is not a prediction.

Listen well. Seasoned advocates have learned that listening well is far superior to giving advice. Kind eyes and a calm

demeanor go a long way in calming down an overactive nervous system. If bereaved parents start talking about problems in their marriage, listen exquisitely before you respond. Following are a few things that are evidence-based that you can mention if it fits.

- Masculine and feminine grieving styles differ. Notice that the statement is not "Men and women grieve differently." Over time, as roles have constantly changed, so have traditional notions about grieving. Now, more women grieve in what was traditionally believed to be "masculine" such as benefitting from going back to work relatively soon as a means of distraction, and not grieving openly as much as in previous decades or in other cultures. More men are now grieving openly and admitting to symptoms of depression than before. Yes, the styles continue to differ, but we should not generalize to "all men" or "all women."
- Sexual relationships following the death of a child are challenging. This challenge may have as much to do with differing reasons that masculine and feminine persons seek sex than because their child died. People on the more male end of the spectrum tend to want sex because it is comforting to them, and they believe it would be comforting to their partner. People on the more feminine end of the spectrum want to have sex because they are already feeling

"I think of Aaron and all that his life taught me, and I realize how much I have lost and how much I have gained. Yesterday seems less painful, and I am not afraid of tomorrow."

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

good and loving toward their partner. Therefore, a grieving mother may not be as likely to welcome sex as a grieving father might. Regardless of gender, there can be times when an intimate sexual encounter seems like it might help, but it's the last thing the partner wants. And neither can comprehend what is going on with the other. Talking through those times may be more fulfilling than having sex.

Respond respectfully to spirituality issues. If your agency receives government funding, such as Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) grants, you must be careful to not insert your own spiritual beliefs on clients or to proselytize in any way. However, some bereaved parents will bring up the subject and, when they do, it is appropriate to react with care as you might with any other issue they put before you. Some parents may say that their spiritual experiences with God gives them patience and understanding toward their partner. Others may say that their faith community feels like a burden because it has unrealistic expectations of their recovery; i.e. "If you had enough faith, you would rejoice that he or she is in Heaven and your marriage wouldn't suffer." Some may point out that friends in their places of worship have been supportive and caring. Others leave those faith communities because they feel misunderstood. Advocates would do well to have a list of pastoral counselors with expertise in marriage and family

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counseling and social workers or other therapists who are comfortable with clients who want to bring their spiritual lives into the counseling relationship. However, referral should come only after careful listening so it doesn't seem like passing them off too soon. On the other hand, know when you're in over your head and *own it*.

Tread carefully with the "other children" issue. As noted above, research does show that having other children tends to help. But this is best brought up by the grieving parents, not the advocate. It can too often sound like the death shouldn't feel so bad because of the other children when, in fact, some parents may feel like the wrong child died or, more commonly, that regardless of other children, absolutely no other person can fill the holes in their hearts because of the death of this child.

Anticipate exceptions. Generalizations are almost always dangerous. This short article has been based on a little bit of research among families willing to be researched. The families that an advocate may serve, especially criminal justice system advocates, may vary widely. These advocates deal with families in which children have been murdered by their own parent(s) or step-parents. They serve families in which men and women come and go with varying levels of commitment. They face terrifying facts in criminal justice cases that are beyond the comprehension of the general public. Each of these cases must be assessed and treated uniquely. Parents haunted with traumatic imagery surrounding their child's death may be helped by referral to therapists certified in trauma-focused therapies such as Eye Movement Desensitization and

Reprocessing (EMDR) and Thought Field Therapy (TFT).

In summary, your attitude shows. Just knowing that most marriages survive the death of a child, whether or not it is spelled out, will be revealed in other comments you make to relatively healthy grieving couples. Watch for the following signs of healthy marriage relationships and affirm them when you can. Some bereaved partners experience even deeper commitment and unity. Some notice that they have become softer and gentler with one another. Most express a new sense of the fragility of life, which makes them more sensitive to the suffering of their partner. Marriages and families do survive the death of a child, much more often than not.

"Where do you get the strength to go on, when you have used up all of your own strength? Where do you turn for patience when you have run out of patience, when you have been more patient for more years than anyone should be asked to be, and there is no end in sight?"

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

CRIME VICTIMS' RIGHTS

We've come a long way ...

by Derrelynn Perryman, Texas Board of Criminal Justice



The first time I ever heard of victim services was on a television show called Hill Street Blues. The police chief's ex-wife decided to try to do things to help victims and called herself a Victims Aid Counselor. It was 1984. Not long after that I heard about this amazing program at the Austin Police Department where real people actually worked with victims of crime along with the police. I didn't learn about the larger Victims' Rights Movement until a few years later, when I did an internship in 1991 with a similar program at the Arlington Police Department. And that's how it began for me. Since that time, I've seen some astounding changes in both the criminal justice system's response and in community-based agencies' efforts to support and empower victims of violent crime.

There was a time when victims of crime had the right to be present during the crime itself ... and that was about where their rights and the criminal justice system's concern ended. We've come a long way. In fact, here in Texas we have been leaders in the movement towards establishing recognition of the rights victims should have had all along and building up the network of support, policies, and services that ought to be a given when the criminal acts of another person cause harm to someone.

Today we can be proud of the fact that victims' rights are established in our Texas Constitution, our Texas Code of Criminal Procedure and the Texas Family Code. We can also be proud of the fact that Texas law establishes our Crime Victims' Compensation fund and mandates victim liaisons at all stages of

the criminal justice process. We also see the outstanding work being done statewide by community based agencies: continued advocacy, research, resource development, service coordination, prevention efforts, policy development, and provision of direct services to help meet crime victims' needs in the aftermath. All of these things are happening because of the hard work, dedication, and determination of victim advocates, allied professionals, and selfless volunteers.

There is still more to do, and we can always do better. Not all services and support are in place yet for all victims in all parts of the state. I do feel confident that working together we can bridge those gaps and continue to improve access and assure the highest quality services are ready and available to anyone who needs them. This confidence exists primarily because I have seen what the Victims' Rights Movement can do!

As always, *thank you for what you do for victims!*



FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGY CENTER AT TEXAS STATE

Supporting the Texas Criminal Justice System

by Daniel J. Wescott, Director & Sophia R. Mavroudas, Coordinator
Forensic Anthropology Center at Texas State

Please be aware that this article is about forensic anthropology research and education and contains language and images pertaining to human remains, all of which are donated to the Forensic Anthropology Center at Texas State. Although many of our readers may find this information important and helpful, it may not be appropriate for everyone.

When buried, skeletonized, badly decomposed, or burned human remains are discovered in Texas, forensic anthropologists from the Forensic Anthropology Center at Texas State (FACTS) are available to aid law enforcement agencies, Justices of the Peace, and forensic pathologists in recovering remains, documenting scenes, identifying victims, determining

the manner of death, and estimating the postmortem interval (time-since-death). The purpose of this article is to provide the reader with information about the role of forensic anthropologists in medicolegal death investigations and how FACTS supports criminal justice professionals and the Central Texas community through research, education, outreach, and service.

The Role of the Forensic Anthropologist

Forensic anthropology is the application of anthropological methods and theory to legal matters. The role of the forensic anthropologist is to examine human remains and the crime scene to recover as much information and evidence as possible to aid in the identification of an individual as well as to better understand the circumstances surrounding death. This is done by combining a forensic anthropologist's expertise in archaeological techniques, skeletal anatomy, human variation, and stages of decomposition. As part of the investigation, the forensic anthropologist's role can begin before human remains are ever found. Using traditional survey methods or technology such as ground penetrating radar or drones equipped with hyperspectral cameras, forensic anthropologists are experts at locating surface scattered remains or clandestine burials. Once a scene is discovered, a forensic

anthropology team maps the location of the remains and associated evidence to provide a clearer picture of how the body was disposed, scavenged, or moved. The forensic anthropologist is fundamental at this stage for the complete recovery of all skeletal elements. Once the remains are documented and removed from the field, they are brought to the laboratory for analysis. The forensic anthropologist can then use the information from the remains and the scene to estimate the postmortem interval.

In the laboratory, the biological profile is created. The biological profile consists of the anthropologist's estimation of age, sex, ancestry, stature, and health from the skeletal remains and is used mainly to exclude potential identification matches. For example, if the forensic anthropologist can determine the individual is female, all males can be excluded from the search

of missing persons. Once the biological profile is used to narrow down the list of potential missing persons to a manageable number, the forensic anthropologist can then aid in identification by matching pre-death and post-death records such as radiographs, dental evidence, and health records. As part of the biological profile, the forensic anthropologist also conducts a thorough examination of the skeletal remains for evidence of trauma. Trauma analysis of the bones provides



Image 1: FACTS students teaching children at the San Marcos Science Technology Engineering & Math (STEM) Career Fair.



information about whether detectable wounds occurred before, after, or at the time of death. Part of this analysis includes the identification of the type of trauma (e.g., blunt, sharp, projectile) which aids in the determination of the cause and manner of death. Together, a forensic anthropologist's work in the field and in the laboratory benefits victims of crime, families of missing persons, and criminal justice professionals, and can be applied to a single body or multiple bodies in cases involving mass disasters or crimes against humanity.

Forensic Anthropology Center at Texas State

The mission of FACTS is “to advance forensic science and anthropology by providing a unique environment that stimulates innovative, creative, and interdisciplinary research, education, outreach, and service.” To this end, FACTS personnel provide the criminal justice system and local community with technical, scientific, and humanitarian expertise and state of the art facilities, equipment, collections, and datasets that advance forensic anthropology and other forensic sciences. To fulfill our mission, FACTS faculty conduct independent as well as collaborative interdisciplinary research focused on the human decomposition process and human skeletal variation/identification methods. The results of this research are disseminated to the medicolegal

community through peer-reviewed journal publications and training workshops. FACTS also enriches the medicolegal community by offering **high quality workshops** and **specialized training opportunities** in forensic anthropology-related topics to law enforcement and medicolegal professionals. Additionally, FACTS provides **forensic anthropological case services** for medicolegal and other relevant parties as well as **osteological consultation** for archaeologists, cultural resource managers, government agencies, and private entities. Finally, FACTS personnel provide **educational opportunities** to the community and promote a public understanding of forensic science and the role of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) through an **extensive outreach program** that includes providing lectures and tours to local schools and interest groups (Image 1).

FACTS was established in 2008 within the Department of Anthropology at Texas State University. Physically, the center comprises a 26-acre outdoor decomposition/taphonomy facility known as the Forensic Anthropology Research Facility (FARF) located on Freeman Ranch, the Osteological Research and Processing Laboratory (ORPL) also on Freeman Ranch, and the Grady Early Forensic Anthropology Laboratory (GEFARL; Image 2) located in the Grady Early Building in San Marcos. The

main function of these laboratories is to facilitate the study of donations made to FACTS through the Willed Body Donation Program (Image 3). As part of the program, FACTS accepts deceased individuals for research and educational purposes. These donors can either be preregistered donors (living donors) meaning that when they were alive they signed up to donate to FACTS upon death, or next of kin (NOK) donors meaning the legal next of kin donates someone after they pass away. Once a donor arrives at FACTS, they are first placed at FARF to monitor the decomposition process and help inform estimates of time-since-death. After they are decomposed, the skeletal remains are picked up and brought to ORPL for processing. Here, the donations are cleaned and labeled and made ready for curation into the Texas State University Donated Skeletal Collection (TXSTDSC). Finally, all the donations are curated in perpetuity into the TXSTDSC at GEFARL, where each donation is part of FACTS' ongoing skeletal biology research. This laboratory is equipped for state-of-the-art 3D imaging (including high-resolution x-ray computed tomography), 3D printing, histomorphometry, and osteometry.

FACTS is one of eight centers in the United States that has an outdoor human decomposition facility with an associated body donation program, and the only laboratory to have high-resolution x-ray

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Image 2: Grady Early Forensic Anthropology Laboratory.

computed tomography capabilities and a donated skeletal collection in the same laboratory. The use of FARF and the TXSTDSC is open to external researchers worldwide interested in carrion ecology, decomposition, taphonomy (processes that occur to biological organisms after death), skeletal variation, forensic anthropology methods, and many other applications. The outdoor facility is also open for law enforcement and medicolegal death investigation training.

Law Enforcement Training

FACTS supports the criminal justice system by offering a variety of training courses geared specifically to law enforcement and the forensic science community. Participants of the workshops benefit from the scientific expertise of the faculty and gain hands-on experience which promote high standards of professional practice and competency. Participants can also receive Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) and American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigation (ABMDI) continuing education credits. Regularly offered courses include Identifying Human from Nonhuman Bone, Outdoor Human Remains Recovery, Forensic Taphonomy of Texas, Human Osteology, Forensic Anthropological Methods, K9

Human Remains Detection, Forensic Facial Reconstruction Sculpture, and 2D Forensic Facial Reconstruction (Image 4). In addition, FACTS provides unique specialized training for police cadets, Justices of the Peace, Texas Rangers, FBI agents, and U.S. Army and Air Force criminal investigation teams. Any law enforcement group of ten or more individuals can arrange private specialized training with FACTS personnel and/or resources. Finally, FACTS offers an array of competency/proficiency assessment for anthropologists, search and recovery members, and medicolegal death investigators.

Cold Case and Humanitarian Services

Another way that FACTS supports the criminal justice system is by providing forensic anthropological services. Local, national, and international law enforcement call upon FACTS for anthropological expertise. This can include help to search for clandestine human remains, recover the remains once discovered (Image 5), and conduct complete skeletal analyses. This can also include consultations on time-since-death estimations, skeletal trauma interpretation, and expert witness rebuttals. These services greatly benefit local law enforcement and the families of victims. A special program at FACTS called Operation Identification (OpID), founded and led by Dr. Kate Spradley, facilitates the identification and repatriation of human remains discovered near the South Texas border. As a result, the program specifically serves the criminal justice system as well as the families of the missing unidentified migrants who die crossing the border. Working in collaboration with other universities as well as governmental and non-governmental organizations, OpID



Image 3: FACTS Willed Body Donation Program website.

has recovered over 250 sets of remains and positively identified over 30 individuals.

The Forensic Anthropology Center at Texas State is here to serve the criminal justice system, victims, and victim's families by providing expertise and facilities to conduct research and aid in

medicolegal death investigations. FACTS has six forensic anthropologists and numerous graduate students on staff to aid the criminal justice community. For more information about FACTS please visit <https://www.txstate.edu/anthropology/facts/>.

Image 4 (Right): Students learn facial approximation methods at FACTS from internationally known artist Karen T. Taylor.



Image 5: FACTS personnel documenting and recovering human remains at an outdoor scene.

THE MICHAEL MORTON ACT

by Jaime Esparza, 34th Judicial District Attorney, El Paso, Hudspeth, and Culberson Counties

With the exception of exculpatory evidence in the possession of the police or prosecutor (what has come to be known as “Brady” evidence, named after the United States Supreme Court’s 1963 opinion in *Brady v. Maryland*), a criminal defendant has no constitutional right to discovery of the evidence and information in the prosecutor’s file. However, in direct response to the *Brady*

Decision, in 1965 the Texas Legislature enacted article 39.14 of the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure to provide criminal defendants a statutory right to discovery of, and access to, certain evidence and information in the possession of the police or prosecutor, even if such evidence and information is not exculpatory.

Each prosecutor’s office handles its discovery obligations under article 39.14 differently. Some offices strictly adhere to the specific dictates of article 39.14 and disclose to the defense only what is expressly required by the statute, and do so only in a manner that is expressly required by the statute. Other offices take a more liberal, open-file approach and disclose and make available to the defense more than what is expressly required by article 39.14. Neither approach is inherently right or wrong, so long as the defendant is ultimately given timely and sufficient access to all of the evidence and information to which he or she is entitled.

The Michael Morton Act, which took effect on January 1, 2014, expanded the prosecutor’s duty under article 39.14 to provide access to the information in the prosecutor’s file. Before Morton, many decisions as to what was required to be disclosed remained within the prosecutor’s discretion, based on such factors as whether the information was believed to be relevant to the case or whether it would be admissible in trial. The Morton Act took most of this discretion away from

the prosecutor and requires disclosure of almost all non-privileged information in the prosecutor’s file, regardless of whether that information is believed to be relevant and/or admissible.

For many prosecutors’ offices, the Morton Act required extensive changes to how they handle their discovery obligations, as a lot more of the evidence and information in the prosecutor’s file is now automatically required to be disclosed to the defense. For my office, the Morton Act did not require a major change to how we do our business.

When I took office in 1993, I implemented an open-file policy, thereby allowing the defense attorney to see everything (other than privileged information) in our file. This policy is not unique to my office, as many other prosecutors’ offices employ similar open-file policies. In the pre-digital age, the defense lawyer would come to our office and go through our file to see everything we had – police reports, witness statements, photographs, videos, etc. As a general rule, we did not provide copies of those items to the defense lawyer or allow the defense lawyer to make copies of those

items, but he or she could take notes or even dictate the contents of the file into a recorder. A few years ago, we developed and implemented a computerized system in which all of the information in our file (those same police reports, witness statements, photographs, videos, etc.) is made available to the defense lawyer through an online application called “the Portal.” Now, the defense lawyer handling a particular case has 24/7 access to our file in that case by simply logging into our “Portal” from his or her own computer. As such, through our existing open-file policy and its implementation through the “Portal,” we were already substantially complying with the newly enacted requirements of the Morton Act.

One common concern voiced by some victims and witnesses, based on our open-file policy and now the full-disclosure requirements of the Morton Act, is that the defendant might gain access to the victim’s or witnesses’ personal information and use that information for retaliation or intimidation purposes. And this concern has been heightened to some degree by our use of the computer “Portal,” as the

defense lawyer now has the capability to download and make copies of the documents and information in our file through the “Portal.” Various protections currently in place – both in the Morton Act provisions themselves as well as our office’s procedures in implementing those provisions – act to minimize the risks of such improper disclosure and use of personal information.

First, to the extent practicable, our office redacts the victim’s and witnesses’ personal identifying information from records, documents, and reports before those items are made accessible on the “Portal.” So, even though the defense lawyer can freely access those documents, the victim’s and witnesses’ personal information has been removed.

Second, to the extent that any of the victim’s and witnesses’ personal information is still subject to view in the “Portal,” the Morton Act expressly provides (with certain very limited exceptions) that the defense lawyer (or the defendant

him- or herself) may not disclose any information from the prosecutor’s file to any third party. Moreover, even though the defendant is entitled to view the information in the prosecutor’s file, the defendant is not entitled to have or keep a copy of that information, nor may the defense lawyer provide any such copies to the defendant. These restrictive provisions within the Morton Act itself work to ensure that the victim’s and witnesses’

Provisions within the Morton Act ensure that the victim’s personal information is not disseminated ...

personal information is not disseminated to anyone who might want to intimidate or harm the victims or witnesses. While these restrictive provisions of the Morton Act require some degree of self-policing by the defense lawyer to be effective, we have not experienced any significant increase in instances of a victim’s or witness’s personal identification being improperly provided to the defendant or leaked to any of his or her associates and thereafter used for retaliatory or intimidation purposes, and any such occurrences continue to be exceedingly rare.

In sum, while the Michael Morton Act removes most of the prosecutor’s

discretion in determining what is relevant to the case and would be admissible in trial, and requires the prosecutor to disclose to the defense virtually all non-privileged information in the prosecutor’s file, regardless of relevance or admissibility questions, these expanded disclosure requirements have not, in practical effect, resulted in any perceptible increased risk of retaliation against, or intimidation of, victims or witnesses. In my view, full disclosure of the information in the prosecutor’s file generally promotes a more efficient resolution of the criminal case, as both sides are better able to assess the strength of the case against the defendant. With the above-noted protections regarding the personal information of the victims and witnesses in place, this full disclosure does not come with a cost of increased risk of intimidation or retaliation against those victims and witnesses. Our office’s victim advocates have, for the most part, been successful in explaining these protective measures to our victims and witnesses and alleviating any of their lingering safety concerns, resulting in a continued high degree of victim/witness cooperation with our prosecution efforts.



The Travis County Sheriff’s Office Victim Services Unit is seeking persons of excellent moral standing with the sensitivity and self-awareness necessary

to provide effective assistance to those in crisis. TCSO VSU Volunteers provide immediate assistance to victims of various criminal and crisis circumstances including, but not limited to family violence, sexual assault, child and elder abuse, aggravated assaults, robberies/burglaries, suicides, structure fires, death notifications, natural/accidental deaths, and major traffic accidents. Assistance can include crisis intervention,

providing information on the rights of crime victims, personal advocacy, safety planning, death notifications, sexual assault forensic exam accompaniment, providing resources, and transportation. Volunteers need to be 21 or older, with a reliable, insured vehicle, a working cell phone and a schedule that allows for four-hour shifts of on-call duty per month (total of 16 hours per month minimum). Volunteers must complete a comprehensive training program and accompany a series of calls before being cleared to take calls independently. The next Volunteer Training is scheduled for September.

For more detailed program information and how to apply, please visit the following link: <https://www.tcsosheriff.org/victim-services/volunteers> or contact Linda Anderson, TCSO VSU Volunteer Program Coordinator at 512-854-8444 or linda.anderson@traviscountytx.gov or TCSOVS@traviscountytx.gov.

VICTIM IMPACT STATEMENT

Quarterly Activity Report

by Janice Sager & Mike Jones (updated from a previous article)
Texas Crime Victim Clearinghouse

Back in 1987 when the Texas Crime Victim Clearinghouse, then a program of the Office of the Texas Governor, made its initial report to the 70th Texas Legislature, it concluded that the Victim Impact Statement, although “still a relatively new procedure,” was “largely ignored or forgotten by the criminal justice system.” The Clearinghouse believed then as it does today that the Victim Impact Statement is the “most effective voice that the victim can have” in the criminal justice process.

The 69th Texas Legislature passed House Bill 235 and created the statute in the Code of Criminal Procedure that detailed crime victims’ rights in Texas, defined “statutory victim,” and established the use of a form called the Victim Impact Statement. The statute as it read then also required the Texas Crime Victim Clearinghouse to prepare and submit a report “on the implementation of the Victim Impact Statement” to the 70th Legislature.

If you review Article 56.05 of the Code of Criminal Procedure today, you will discover that the Texas Crime Victim Clearinghouse in partnership with the Board of Pardons and Paroles (BPP) and the TDCJ Community Justice Assistance Division (CJAD) is still required to “develop a survey plan to maintain statistics on the numbers and types of persons to whom state and local agencies provide victim impact statements during each year.” If you have been a victim

assistance coordinator in a county or district attorney’s office for even a short time, you most likely have come across this survey plan, the Victim Impact Statement Quarterly Activity Report.

Besides the statutory requirement that the Clearinghouse collect and maintain statistics, why is the Quarterly Activity Report important?

Because of the dedication and hard work of many people, the Victim Impact Statement is no longer ignored in criminal justice system, and key decision makers recognize the importance of the Victim Impact Statement as well as their obligation to consider it when making vital decisions along the way. The Victim Impact Statement may serve as the single most important right victims have in our complex criminal justice process. Not only is the Victim Impact Statement a personal record of the impact and effect of violent crime on victims and their families, it serves as their voice throughout the process. (In some cases, it may serve as their voice beyond their own lifetime.) If they choose to participate, their Victim Impact Statement can impact and influence how justice is ultimately served.

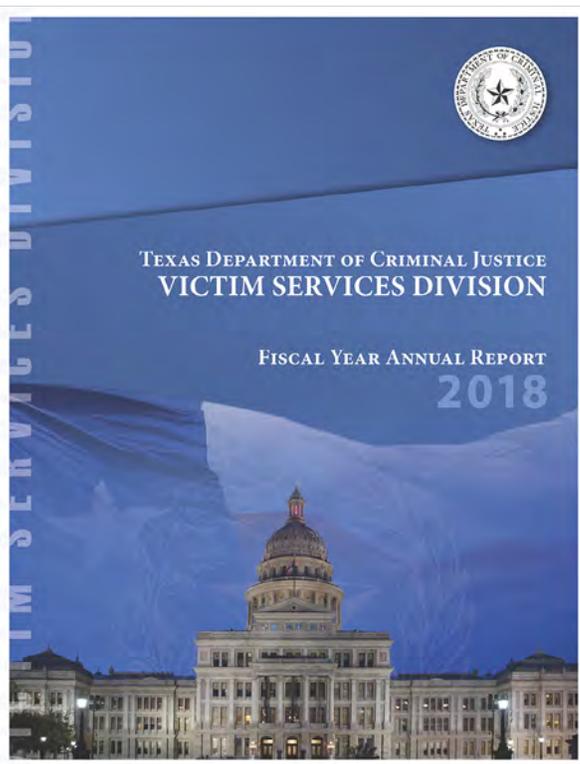
But what does the Quarterly Activity Report tell us?

The Clearinghouse continues to collect statistics on the “numbers and types of persons to whom state and local agencies provide victim impact statements during

each year.” Historically, the Clearinghouse collected these statistics on a semiannual, calendar year basis. In calendar year 2010, we began to collect them quarterly, and since September 2011, the statistics have been collected on a fiscal year timeframe.

In fiscal year 2010, the TDCJ Victim Services Division published VIS statistics in its first annual report. (You can find the current annual report on the TDCJ website at www.tdcj.texas.gov/documents/VSD_Annual_Report_2018.pdf.) In the VSD Fiscal Year Annual Report 2018, counties that reported stated that 99,660 Victim Impact Statements were provided to victims by county and district attorney’s offices during the fiscal year. These numbers indicate that prosecutors’ offices across the state are working very hard to ensure that victims of crime are receiving Victim Impact Statement packets and that nearly 100,000 victims were afforded their right to complete a Victim Impact Statement. 14,293 victims, 14.3 percent returned Victim Impact Statements to the counties during the same time period. Roughly 85 percent of counties returned VIS Activity Reports. Statistics collected for fiscal year 2017 from county

The Victim Impact Statement is the most effective voice that the victim can have in the criminal justice process.



“Give sorrow words; the grief that does not speak knits up the o-er wrought heart and bids it break.”

-William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*

and district attorney’s offices that reported revealed that the return rate of Victim Impact Statements provided during those years was 15.3 percent.

Of the 216 reporting counties, 32 counties reported they did not provide or receive back any Victim Impact Statements. Keep in mind that the Clearinghouse solicits reports from all county as well as district attorney’s offices. Since many county attorney offices only deal with misdemeanor offenses, they may not encounter victims as defined in the Code of Criminal Procedure, and so would have no statutory obligation to provide Victim Impact Statements.

Since over 85 percent of victims who were provided Victim Impact Statements decided not to return them, it is important to identify the reasons why so few victims complete and return Victim Impact Statements. First, not all cases that get indicted are adjudicated, so there is no reason for the victim to return the

statement. Also, some victims do not want to have anything to do with the criminal justice process. Finally, many victims believe the wheels of justice will rumble on and the system will take care of everything.

However, many victims may not return their Victim Impact Statement because they are unclear of its role and importance in the process; they may confuse it with other

documents and forms they receive; they fear the offender having access to it; or it may be too emotionally difficult to complete a Victim Impact Statement at the time they receive it.

If a victim chooses not to submit a Victim Impact Statement, that is his or her right. If he or she does not submit one because the form or the process is confusing or unclear, then the criminal justice system has not fully served that victim. Innovative practices must be explored that will increase the likelihood that victims will complete and return Victim Impact Statements.

Every odd year, according to Article 56.03(h) of the Code of Criminal Procedure, the Clearinghouse convenes a Victim Impact Statement Revision Committee. The committee consists of representatives from the BPP and TDCJ-CJAD along with the Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD), the Texas District

and County Attorneys Association, the Office of the Attorney General of Texas, and county and district attorney’s offices across the state. Recent committees have included at least one victim representative as well. In addition to complying with statute and incorporating updates based on new legislation, the committee works very hard to assure that the Victim Impact Statement serves victims as is intended. The committee takes great care to design a form that is easy to complete, includes all the information it needs to collect and that it is easily distinguishable from other forms, such as the Crime Victims Compensation form. In order to set victims at ease, the victim contact information, which is protected by law, is separate from the victim impact portion and clearly indicates that the information is confidential. The instructions included with the packet have been designed to be clear and concise as well.

Still, only 14 percent of the Victim Impact Statements are completed and returned. Even fewer make it to TDCJ Classification and Records for inclusion into offender files for review by the BPP and to be forwarded to the TDCJ Victim Services Division for notification purposes. Some Victim Impact Statements that are not forwarded to TDCJ are sent to TJJD if the offender is a juvenile and to community supervision and corrections departments for offenders who are sentenced to

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community supervision (probation). The only way these Victim Impact Statements would get forwarded to TDCJ is if the juvenile offender ages out of TJJD and is transferred to TDCJ or if the offender's probation is revoked and is transferred to TDCJ. At this time, we do not collect statistics on how many Victim Impact Statements come to TDCJ from TJJD or local community supervision and corrections departments.

If we have designed a useful Victim Impact Statement packet and the county and district attorney's offices across the state are providing them to victims, how can we make sure that victims who want to exercise their right get that opportunity?

Front end efforts and follow-up procedures are what may be needed to address many of the reasons Victim Impact Statements are not completed and returned. Front end efforts would include making sure the victim knows what he or she is receiving in the Victim Impact Statement and how it will be used and protected throughout the process. Follow-up procedures, already in place in some counties, include letters or phone calls to find out if the victim received and understands the Victim Impact Statement.

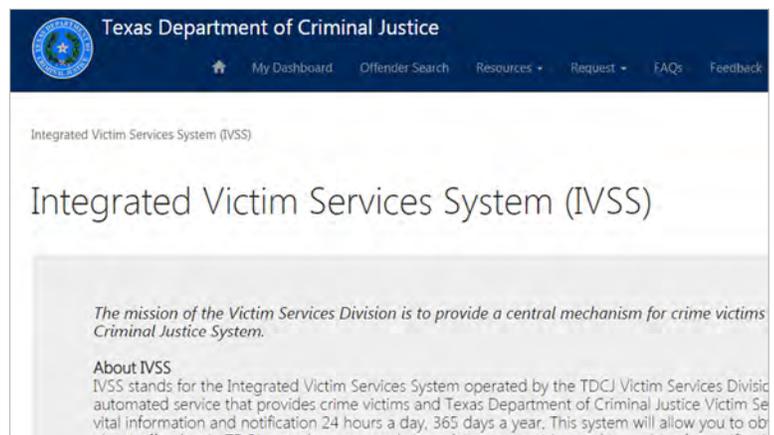
In many counties, implementing these kinds of programs is much easier said than done. Small counties may not have the staff to call or follow-up with victims. Very often the victim assistance coordinator

already wears many hats or may provide victim assistance as part of their overall job duties. A large county may have a large staff, but the number of victims they serve is astounding. In fiscal year 2018, four of the largest counties in Texas –Dallas, El Paso, Harris, and Tarrant – provided nearly half of all Victim Impact Statements distributed statewide, a total of 46,711. Providing services to victims and affording them their basic statutory rights is difficult even with a large victim services staff. Going beyond that by providing front end and follow-up services will require some creative initiatives, such as enlisting volunteers and interns or using new technology.

There is a misconception across the state that Victim Impact Statements are the sole responsibility of the victim assistance coordinators in county and district attorney's offices. Prosecutors' offices and their victim assistance coordinators bear a tremendous responsibility for Victim Impact Statements. However, they are not alone. Statute clearly mandates that the courts, district clerks, sheriff's offices and corrections agencies are charged with their own responsibilities related to Victim Impact Statements. For this reason, the Clearinghouse has partnered with other state and local

agencies to develop training programs as well as sample protocols designed to inform, educate and guide all agencies and criminal justice professionals who have legal responsibilities regarding Victim Impact Statements.

As these sample protocols continue to develop and as the criminal justice community and the general public become more aware of and educated about the availability, uses, and importance of the Victim Impact Statement, the Quarterly Activity Report will continue to be one of the main tools we have available to gauge whether or not these efforts are working at the state and local level. Return rates of Victim Impact Statements do not tell the whole story. As long as we continue to develop programs from what we learn from the Quarterly Activity Report and strive to get participation from every county and district attorney's office in the state, these statistics can be clear indicators that the efforts set forth back in 1983 are continued by the dedicated criminal justice professionals who now serve victims in our state. The victims of crime in our communities deserve no less.



As a means to assist victims in completing the Victim Impact Statement, we will soon have an electronic VIS that will be available to complete in the portal. Victims will be able to create, submit and view their Victim Impact Statements through their portal account. The system will allow victims to save and continue for later so as to not overwhelm them by having to do it all at once.

Our partners at District Attorneys' offices will not only be able to process electronic VIS's but submit their quarterly Victim Impact Statement statistics through the portal as well.

CARDBOARD KIDS & CHILDSAFE GET CREATIVE TO STOP CHILD ABUSE

submitted by ChildSafe Children's Advocacy Center, Bexar County

It started earnestly enough. A CEO and her development, marketing, and public relations team sat around a coffee shop asking, "How do we break barriers to start a

conversation about child abuse in our community – to recognize and report it?" It was a tough question about a difficult topic surrounded by a culture of silence.

The San Antonio community continually has the highest per capita numbers of child abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect cases in the state of Texas. In 2018, there were 5,865 confirmed child abuse and neglect victims in Bexar County and nine child fatalities, according to the Texas Department of Family Protective Services. Disturbingly, for every 10 children who are abused, only one will ever report, leaving nine others to keep the terrible secret. Kim Abernethy, CEO of ChildSafe, Bexar County's only children's advocacy center is a tenacious leader who likes to think outside the box. She and her team created Cardboard Kids®, a community-wide child abuse awareness campaign that runs during April, National Child Abuse Prevention Month. Launched in 2014, the campaign's goal was to draw attention to the pervasiveness of child abuse, while engaging and empowering the community to intervene and prevent further abuse. Cardboard Kids are two-foot tall cardboard figures. Each cut-out represents one of thousands of children who are abused and neglected at the hands of adults in the San Antonio community each year.

Last year there were three million social media impressions of ChildSafe and #cardboardkidsSA during the month of April.

After the first year's successful campaign, ChildSafe approached Valero Energy Foundation for their support. The foundation, with their relentless commitment to children, had the foresight to understand the impact of the campaign, and since 2015, has been the sole sponsor. What began with 5,800 cardboard cut-outs in 2014 has grown to over 120,000 distributed and displayed in Bexar County in April 2019! "That is why we created Cardboard Kids, a campaign that gives victims a voice and empowers the community to stand up to the secrecy of child abuse," Abernethy said.

ChildSafe sets-up distribution points at area malls in March where individuals, families, civic groups, schools, businesses, and others pick-up their free Cardboard Kids and instruction packets. Participants take them back to their homes, company offices, classrooms, and other sites across the city to decorate. Using Cardboard Kids as a visual symbol with which children can identify, teachers in classrooms and parents and caregivers at home visit the campaign website to learn

valuable tips on how to talk to children about personal boundaries as well as good and bad touching.

Cardboard Kids® are placed all over San Antonio on "Reveal Day," the first Thursday of April each year. Citizens are asked to display their decorated Cardboard Kids where they live, shop, work, eat, or go to school. When others see a Cardboard Kid that day, they are asked to take photo of it and share via social media using #cardboardkidsSA on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook to build a dialogue about child abuse.

Last year there were approximately three million social media impressions of ChildSafe and #cardboardkidsSA during the month of April. The campaign has clearly resonated with the community. What organizers say they did not

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Cardboard Kids at Langley & Banack, Inc.

THE MOMENT OF HEALING

by Marie Kampire, Parole Officer

In a period of 100 days in 1994, an estimated 800,000 to 1,000,000 people were murdered in Rwanda. The period of violence included mass killing of children along with extensive sexual violence against Rwandan women and young girls. Following the end of the Rwandan Civil War and the Genocide, the country's social, judicial, and economic structures were in shambles. Human resources were depleted, and those who survived were traumatized, having witnessed mass killings and lost so many of their family members. Those who remained were left behind with few unaffected places to live, little to eat, and faced the threat of widespread disease.

Even as the international community gradually became involved, rebuilding the country would be a formidable task. With its normal judicial system destroyed and in order to expedite the judicial process, the Rwandan government established law in 2001 to apply the Gacaca Courts to deal with the sheer number of genocide

crimes. Although they had customarily been used to settle local community conflicts, the Gacaca Courts were employed to speed up the process of trying genocide suspects, initiate national unity and reconciliation, and demonstrate the capacity of the Rwandan people to resolve their own problems. Traditional Gacaca Courts were designed to identify the truth, encourage offenders to accept responsibility for their actions and initiate restorative measures, and allow victims the opportunity to offer forgiveness. Whether or not the Gacaca system applied these ideals effectively to the immense number of genocide crimes remains a matter of controversy. The Gacaca Courts officially closed in 2012 having tried over one million cases.

The following article is by Marie Kampire, a parole officer in the Greenville District Parole Office. The article has been minimally edited.

Came the moment I waited for, something I wished to happen for many days and many nights. Not only I but many other Rwandans wanted to see the end of the tragedy that took lives of so many and left the country deserted. I remember my mother before she died; her everyday prayer was to see the end of the war and the genocide in Rwanda.

That moment I had wanted and had hoped for everyday finally came, the end of the civil war of 1990-1994 and the Genocide. It was totally different; Rwanda was a new country, and I lost some people I loved and things I loved, including our family house that was near Lake Kivu

and had a beautiful view of the lake. After almost everything was destroyed, there was no food or crops in the fields, and there were no provisions. Blessings are to those United Nations Peacekeepers who stopped on the road and offered us cookies, biscuits, and canned food. We lived with this until the government got some provisions from the World Food Organization, supplies of beans and corn. One meal a day was enough to survive. With all the challenges around and not knowing where to start, my mother took us to the field to go plant vegetables and potatoes. Other people did the same, choosing to plant what would generate food quickly. At the same time the

government was looking for solutions to the problems left by the war and genocide.

All that was left was a country with no infrastructure, just like uninhabited desert, and the broken hearts of the victims and post traumatic disorders for most of the people affected by the war and the genocide. It involved almost the entire Rwandan population; some were saviors at some point; some were perpetrators of the genocide or complicit. The government had the task to bring these people to live together again and to rebuild the country. To be able to reach this tough goal, the government had to offer justice and create channels of reconciliation. Many actors in the community played important roles

Global Victim Services

Texas has long been at the forefront of progressive victim services and restorative justice in the United States. Providing victims of crime the opportunity to participate and have their say in the criminal justice process is at the core of this movement. Even as victims and victim advocates have worked together to attain each component of the victim "Bill of Rights," what victim services means in Texas may not necessarily be the same in other states or in other countries. In this series, we hope to focus on what victim services and restorative justice mean in different parts of the world, as told by those who live it.

to get people to live together, which was not easy. One of them was my high school principal, Marie Madeleine Mukamuzima. Every morning before we started class, she would encourage all students to live together with no discrimination. She encouraged student not to dwell on the past, but to look forward for a better future. She monitored the students closely, discouraging all groups that were not in school for studying purposes. I remember her daily morning words, "Your only focus here should be your studies: it is not what happened to you; it is not the wrong things your parents have done. It is not the past, it is your future, and if you do not want to comply with that then your place is not here." We were trained to live in harmony, regardless that some were orphans of the genocide or the war, others had parents in prison accused in the genocide, and others whose parents became fighting "soldiers" during the war. It was not easy to get together, play together, sit close to each other in class and help each other in class whenever it was needed, but Marie Madeleine Mukamuzima made it happen, she was a hero.

The same thing that was happening in the school was also happening in the community. The government had the same task of getting people in the community together, to work together and rebuild their communities. It was also important to encourage people to tell the truth about the genocide and provide justice for both victims and the accused of the genocide.

There were a big number of victims and there were a big number of perpetrators of the genocide, and they were all living in fear of one another. However, we had to overcome these fears of continuing genocide on the side of victims and fear of revenge on the side of families of perpetrator of the genocide.

There were so many wounded people and people disabled physically and psychologically after the war of 1990-1994, the genocide, and its extension to the neighboring country of DRC Congo in the pursuit of Rwandans. After all, people had to come together to rebuild the country and live together, and these people were the victims of the genocide, the perpetrators of the genocide, and the survivors of the war. Some of the means in getting this to happen was justice and reconciliation, which raises the question, "How do you judge and reconcile?"

The Rwandan government embarked on this dilemma. After I finished high school, I saw many things happening in terms of encouraging people to live together and build new infrastructures, such as schools and hospitals. The road to reconciliation happening is in the process of trying to know the truth on what happened. I saw a new way of judging this international crime, "The Genocide," in terrific testimonies of people being trained to ask for forgiveness and people being trained to forgive and live in harmony with those who victimized them.

The classic Rwandan system of jurisdiction and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda was not able to provide a quick justice to almost 800,000 accused of the genocide in prison since 1994-2004. The Rwandan leaders came up with the traditional jurisdiction called "Gacaca" and the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission. The mission of the Gacaca jurisdictions was to process quickly the genocide trials and find the truth to what happened. The Commission for the Unit and Reconciliation helped the population, including prisoners, communities and victims, to get ready for a mass release of genocide perpetrators.

The process of Gacaca started when I was still in college. I was not able to participate in the communities at the local level where they were electing judges to hear the trials of the accused genocide. However in my community, I believe they elected people with integrity as it was supposed to be or according to the guidelines they were given. I was able to go to hear trials for the first time during school vacation, where they started in selected pilot sectors. Many prisoners who were brought to trials were priding guilt and if they were asking for forgiveness, they were given lower sentences which most of them had already completed in prison by that time and they were allowed to go home. The husband of our neighbor, Mukangarambe, was in prison accused of participating in the genocide. Every

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Moment of Healing; continued from previous page

time they brought prisoners to trials, we were afraid that he was being released and that he may kill people again. Sometimes Mukangarambe herself, while speaking to her friends, wanted to know how people in the community would feel about her husband returning to the community if he got released. She feared that they would seek revenge.

The war and the genocide were traumatic. Then came the moment for me: listening to what happened and learning the truth of who killed my friends, neighbors, teachers or any other person I was connected to and who destroyed our beautiful house at Lake Kivu. It was traumatic and painful. However, it was also healing. It was also an opportunity for the perpetrators of the genocide to confess and ask for forgiveness to the community. In the process of getting people ready for all that, the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission hired pastors, priests, and other motivational speakers to teach about pardon and reconciliation.

Ingando is a type of military course given to people to teach military techniques and tactics for a particular reason.

Itorero ry'igihugu' is a culturally-based course encouraging the core values and traditions of Rwandans, patriotism, and the vision of the country towards development.

I attended different sessions where they brought other victims who gave testimony about how they managed to forgive and this was helpful. Priest Ubald Rugirangoga, a victim of the genocide, was one of the preachers who actively taught about forgiving and healing. During one of his conferences I attended, he stated that forgiving is like swallowing a bitter pill, or if you want to heal a wound, you must

scrub it to get all the dirt out. So many people were carrying infected wounds that need to be healed, they had to undergo the painful treatment; they have to forgive to heal emotional wounds. Forgiving and reconciliation was a must, or if not, living together and working together was a must.

Other types of events that were happening in terms of teaching reconciliation and encouraging people to focus on what they have in common were “Ingando Solidarity Camps and Itoreros.” I attended an Ingando Solidarity Camp in summer of 2000. It was all about peace education, problem solving, leadership, and solidarity. We had to complete this training to be admitted to the university. On top of the academic

admission requirements, we had to have the certificate of completion from this camp. Another teaching program, called an, “Itorero ry'igihugu,” was happening in organizations that were providing counseling services and associations that focused on cultural and development activities that got people together. All of this happened, even though it was hard and painful to get together, to work together, and to continue to live together in the same community after the tragedy of the genocide. It was centralized, and it was a must. Reconciliation or forgiving – which was led or politicized – was not a matter of when you felt ready to forgive. We learned very quick to forgive and move forward and, even if some people may not have forgiven from their heart, they had to learn the culture of tolerance and acceptance to live together.

However, during the post-genocide period, many injustice activities were carried out; speaking out equaled disappearing or dying due to an unknown reason. This is what I call the sequel of the genocide. I believed that one day this would come to an end and there would be peace and justice. I emigrated from Rwanda at the end of March 2013 and landed in Dallas, Texas. Then, in 2014, I moved and joined my aunt and her family in State College, Pennsylvania. It was very

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Photos of victims of the Rwandan Genocide at the Genocide Memorial Center in Kigali

Moment of Healing; continued from page 18

beautiful and peaceful there; Park Forest, our neighborhood, was like a haven. My daughter rode a bike with other kids in the neighborhood. Small kids walked to the nearest school, and they were safe. I never heard of any crime happening. The beautiful mountains, tall trees, and wild vegetation reminded me of the hills of Rwanda, and I wished the peace and safety there could be transferred to Rwanda. The moment came when I started to feel that my home town in the USA was where I had landed, Dallas, Texas, and felt that I

had to go back. While looking for a job, I learned of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice and decided to apply to work in the state prison, the Beto Unit in Palestine, Texas. I found some healing in working in this prison; I looked at all prisoners around me as the felons I knew in the past. On a cell block of almost 200 men felons, I spent eight hours or more a day supervising them behind bars while fulfilling my responsibilities as a correctional officer.

I learned a lot. I looked at them and forgave them as if they were the ones in Rwanda who had offended against me. I am currently working as a parole officer, and I like what I do.



Marie Kampire



Detail from stained glass window at the Kigali Memorial Center; photo by Juliet Hutchings; reprinted with permission.

Cardboard Kids; continued from page 15

anticipate was the number of victims who have been empowered to speak up because of this campaign. In year three of the campaign, a nine-year old girl came through ChildSafe's doors seeking help for sexual abuse that she had been enduring for two years. When asked, "What made you tell now?" she responded, "I saw Cardboard Kids in my school and knew it was safe to talk." That one child is now part of 60 children who have walked through the doors of this dynamic nonprofit and received early intervention because of the campaign.

ChildSafe is a trauma-focused care center for children and teenagers who have been traumatized by abuse, neglect, or sexual abuse. They provide forensic interviews,

advanced counseling, case management, and advocacy services to the most vulnerable in Bexar County, and they work with law enforcement and prosecutors to bring perpetrators to justice. As a result of increased community awareness and successful outreach efforts, ChildSafe has seen significant growth in the number of services they provide, the number of staff employed, and the number of children and families reaching out for assistance. ChildSafe will treat approximately 6,600 clients this fiscal year.

Because the demand for services has increased so dramatically, ChildSafe's leadership knew they needed a larger and more centrally located campus to fulfill its mission. They bought acreage on San Antonio's Eastside and are in the final construction phase of building a new, state-of-the-art campus for Children's Advocacy Centers across the nation. What makes this building unique is that its design is built to inspire and restore not just the children and families seeking services, but also for the staff and multidisciplinary team members that will co-locate at the facility, including Child Protective Services, San Antonio Police Department, Bexar County Sheriff's Office, Bexar County District Attorney's Office, and Bexar County Juvenile Probation.

ChildSafe's new campus integrates its philosophy that

nature is restorative, a concept that is at the core of their adventure therapy program, and applied to the design of this new facility. "What we have is a campus that is calming and nurturing, and welcomes clients into peaceful and comforting spaces," said Randy McGibeny, MA, LPC, ChildSafe's Chief Program Officer. In fact, the two-story, 65,000 square foot building will be surrounded by 43,000 square feet of green spaces, rooftop gardens, courtyards, outdoor therapy and activity areas for clients and staff who continually provide essential services under extraordinary conditions. Salado Creek, which runs on one side of ChildSafe's 15-acre tree-filled campus, connects a nearby community park. Together, they offer greenspace, trails, and a fresh water creek.

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On Cardboard Kids Reveal Day, the Voices Club and other organizations at the University of Texas at San Antonio decorated and displayed 4,000 Cardboard Kids across the campus. Above are some of the Cardboard Kids along with Peggy Eighmy (left) First Lady of UTSA, and Kim Abernethy (right) ChildSafe CEO.



Cardboard Kids at Salon Volt



Cardboard Kid ready for Fiesta!

“The new Salado Creek Campus will become a sanctuary for children, their families, and the professionals who care for and protect them,” said Abernethy. “It will be a beacon of hope and an asset

for the entire community,” she said. To learn more about ChildSafe, visit www.childsafe-sa.org. The community grand opening will be the first week of August 2019.



Top: More Cardboard Kids at the University of Texas at San Antonio; below: Cardboard Kids at St. Phillip's College, a San Antonio community college.

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:

July 2, 2019 for September/October issue

October 2, 2019 for December 2019/January 2020 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 or text 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

Honoring Our Past. Creating Hope for the Future.

National Crime Victims' Rights Week
APRIL 7-13 • 2019



Above are a few scenes from the April 11th Bexar County NCVRW Victims' Memorial and Annual Wreath Laying Ceremony. Top left: Doves are released; top center: Guardians of the Children San Antonio Harley-Davidson Road Glide and wreath; top right: Lisa Leitch and the TDCJ Victim Services Division wreath; above, left to right: TDCJ Victim Services Division staff Mike Rainer, Stephanie Lopez, Lloyd Bjorgo, Jenny Brantley, Lisa Leitch, and Marquis Bowser.



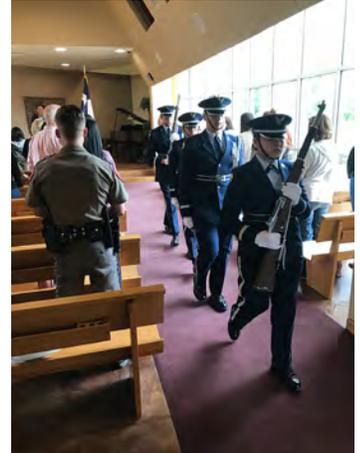
(Left to right above): Chris Jenkins, TDCJ Victim Services Division; Carolyn J Hudson, Silent Screams, Inc.; Claudia Arnick, Dallas County District Attorney's Office; and Krissy Boulom, Dallas Police Department. During the Dallas area NCVRW events, these veteran victim advocates discussed victim's rights and the services their agencies provide for victims during a panel interview for the Silent Screams Speaks Radio Show April 9th.



Honoring Our Past.

Creating Hope for the Future.

National Crime Victims' Rights Week APRIL 7-13 • 2019



Scenes from the Midland County NCVRW Ceremony: Left to right: Reading of Proclamation by Midland County Commissioner Randy Prude; Memorial Tribute by Lydia Frescaz for Victims of Crime, "Live Day By Day," remembering those we have lost; Midland County District Attorney Laura Nodolf; and Midland High School Air Force ROTC Color Guard Retiring of the Colors. Photos by Natasha Webb.



A few scenes from the Lubbock County NCVRW Ceremony: Above left to right: Reading of Proclamation by city of Lubbock Mayor Dan Pope; opening remarks, (at the podium) President of Crime Victim Coalition, Mary Duncan and (handing out award) Becky Garcia, TDCJ Victim Services Division to Police Chief Roy Bassett, who was elected by the Frenship ISD Board of Trustees as Chief of Police; and Police Chief Bassett, Michelle Lewark, domestic abuse survivor, and Lubbock Honorable Judge Curtis Parrish.



Right: Lubbock Crime Victims Coalition