

# VICTIMS' RIGHTS BRIEF

For Arizona's Justice System Administrators, Practitioners and Advocates



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The **Victims' Rights Brief** is published by the Office of the Arizona Attorney General, Office of Victim Services. The goal in generating the Brief is to promote justice and healing for crime victims by sharing information and fostering sensitivity within the justice system.

To learn more about victims' rights visit us at [www.azag.gov/victim-services](http://www.azag.gov/victim-services)

If you have questions, suggestions or an idea for an article, contact **Colette Chapman** at (602) 542-8848 or email [colette.chapman@azag.gov](mailto:colette.chapman@azag.gov).



This year we work to  
"Serve victims, build trust, and restore hope."

This year's National Crime Victims' Rights Week was held April 10-16, and the theme: "*Serving Victims. Building Trust. Restoring Hope.*" highlighted the importance of providing early intervention and victim services to establish trust from the beginning for victims, which in turn, restores hope for healing and recovery. Trust may be of particular concern in certain communities that may feel isolated from or invisible to mainstream service providers and the criminal justice system.

This year, we reaffirm our commitment to creating a victim service and criminal justice response that assists *all* victims of crime and works to build trust and hope in underserved communities. We express our sincere gratitude and appreciation for those community members, victim service providers, and criminal justice professionals who are committed to improving our response to all victims of crime so that they may find relevant assistance, support, justice, and peace.

In honor of the individuals and groups who have demonstrated an extraordinary dedication and vision in serving victims of crime, Attorney General Mark Brnovich presented the Attorney General's Distinguished Service Awards on April 11, 2016 to the award-ees listed on the following pages.

*"We're never so vulnerable than when we trust someone - but paradoxically, if we cannot trust, neither can we find love or joy."*

*Walter Anderson*

## ADVOCACY/DIRECT SERVICES

### *VERDE VALLEY SANCTUARY*

Since 1993, the Verde Valley Sanctuary (Sanctuary) in Cottonwood, AZ has served the Verde Valley and the surrounding region as a safe haven for victims of family violence and sexual assault. The Sanctuary staff is passionate about victim services and it shows in their work providing assistance to victims 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. As Cottonwood's only women's domestic violence and sexual assault shelter, the Sanctuary serves victims with a variety of needs including: shelter, community outreach, legal advocacy, court accompaniment, transitional housing, and prevention resources. Staff members assist victims in obtaining orders of protection as well as accompanying victims to court appearances. This process can be very emotionally upsetting to victims and the support the Sanctuary provides victims is very helpful and supportive. Another unique aspect of the Sanctuary is their two thrift shops located in Sedona and Cottonwood, AZ. Second Chance Thrift Shop in Cottonwood utilizes current and former shelter residents to assist in the daily operations, while providing a work re-entry program that includes a life skills/work readiness program for women in the shelter who may have limited work experience or are returning to the work force. The income from both shops provides an important source of revenue, which helps to cover some of the shelter operating expenses. The Sanctuary's work with victims of family violence and sexual assault has provided invaluable assistance, healing and resources to countless victims in the Verde Valley area.



Pictured (L-R): Meily Rodriguez, Valerie Tapia & Melinda Swiger, Verde Valley Sanctuary; Attorney General Mark Brnovich

## SERVICE COORDINATION

### *COCHISE COUNTY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FATALITY REVIEW TEAM*

The Cochise County Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team was formally established in March of 2012. This multi-disciplinary team is comprised of approximately 15 members from a variety of agencies within Cochise County including those in the areas of victim advocacy, prosecution, law enforcement, mental health services, and child welfare, all with the common goal of strengthening a coordinated response to domestic violence. The benefits of this diverse approach has allowed the review team to work in a cohesive capacity with all criminal justice stakeholders in Cochise County and has greatly empowered its members while being consistent with the team's vision statement that, "there are no boundaries to a coordinated community response." Prior to the development of the fatality review team, this degree of service coordination did not exist within Cochise County. Now it is not uncommon for an advocate from a domestic violence shelter to contact law enforcement and share concerns about a case and even assist with developing a plan that best utilizes each stakeholder. The Cochise County Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team continues to be an excellent example of service coordination through their continuing efforts to reduce domestic violence in the Cochise County community.



Pictured (L-R): Oralee Stokes, Cochise Family Advocacy Center, Inc.; Lieutenant Chris Hiser, Sierra Vista Police Dept.; Attorney General Mark Brnovich; Commander Jon Kosmider, Officer Lori Burdick & Officer Diana True, Sierra Vista Police Department

## INNOVATIVE PRACTICES

### *REBECCA BEGAY, CITY OF MESA PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE*

The courtroom atmosphere is often inherently intimidating to a victim. Recognizing the need to provide a safe and secure environment for victims, Rebecca "Becky" Begay proposed that the Mesa City Prosecutor's Office create a "Victim Safe Room" in the Mesa Municipal Court building. Her idea grew into reality when the court agreed to convert an office previously used by defense attorneys into the safe room Becky proposed. Now, crime victims in Mesa have a space specifically designated to meet confidentially with a victim advocate for such purposes as: reviewing their rights, preparing impact statements and applications for protective orders, and viewing in-custody proceedings outside of the courtroom and away from the defendant on a closed circuit television monitor. The new safe room not only provides a safe and secure space for victims and their families, but also better serves the emotional and physical needs of crime victims in Mesa. Becky has been with the Mesa City Prosecutor's Office for more than 20 years where she has spent most of her time as the Supervising Legal Secretary in the Victim Services Unit. She is known for her ability to review processes and think "outside the box" to create innovative solutions to address issues within the office. During her tenure, Becky's ideas have greatly enhanced the Mesa City Prosecutor's Office's ability to service crime victims and her exemplary efforts at bringing her ideas to fruition have been invaluable to the victims she serves.



Photo Credit: Creative Image In Motion

Pictured (L-R): Rebecca Begay, City of Mesa Prosecutor's Office;  
Attorney General Mark Brnovich

## LEADERSHIP

### *PASTOR BRIAN STEELE, PHOENIX DREAM CENTER*

Pastor Brian Steele is the Executive Director of the Phoenix Dream Center (PDC) and has been involved with the organization since 2007. The PDC is a volunteer driven non-profit organization which exists to serve various at-risk populations, including victims of human trafficking, by providing resources, opportunities and supportive services to help clients realize their dream of living a self-sufficient life. Pastor Steele has been instrumental in implementing various programs at the PDC including the only housing program in the state to serve adult victims of human trafficking. It is his leadership and years of experience that have led to program success and healing to countless victims. He has also worked closely with service providers to identify and provide support to victims of human trafficking. This has been demonstrated through several initiatives designed to empower local service providers to unite and access resources to improve their programs. One example has been to connect local providers with the national anti-trafficking organization, Polaris, in order to increase the visibility of these groups and access to services for victims. Recently, he convened providers to outline a plan to strengthen victim services over the coming years with the Arizona Human Trafficking Council and the City of Phoenix Human Trafficking Task Force. Pastor Steele has gone above and beyond his call of duty, and through his efforts, Arizona has become united in the vital goal of better serving victims of human trafficking.



Photo Credit: Creative Image In Motion

Pictured (L-R): Attorney General Mark Brnovich; Pastor Brian Steele,  
Phoenix Dream Center