

VICTIMS' RIGHTS BRIEF

For Arizona's Justice System Administrators, Practitioners and Advocates



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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Page 2: 2015 Attorney General's Distinguished Service Award Recipients (Continued)

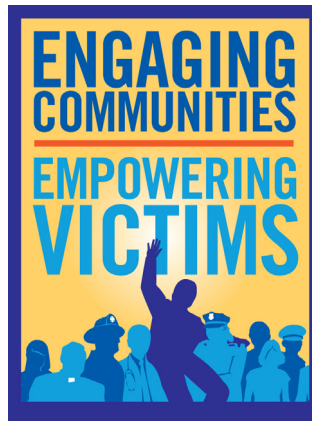
The **Victims' Rights Brief** is published by the Arizona Attorney General, Office of Victim Services. The goal in generating the Brief is to promote justice and healing for crime victims by sharing information and fostering sensitivity within the justice system.

To learn more about victims' rights visit us at www.azag.gov/victim-services

If you have questions, suggestions or an idea for an article, contact **Colette Chapman** at (602) 542-8848.

Arizona Attorney General Mark Brnovich Recognizes Distinguished Service during National Crime Victims' Rights Week

The National Crime Victims' Rights week, sponsored by the Office for Victims of Crime, was held April 19-25, 2015. This year's theme "*Engaging Communities. Empowering Victims.*" emphasized the role of the entire community as we collectively support and empower victims of crime to direct their own recovery. In observance of the National Crime Victims' Rights Week, Attorney General Mark Brnovich presented the Attorney General's Distinguished Service Awards honoring individuals and organizations for their exemplary service and dedication in serving victims of crime.



This year's recipients of this esteemed award include: **Ms. Martha Hennek**, Advocacy /Direct Services; **Scottsdale Family Advocacy Center Domestic Violence Advocacy Team (DVAT)**, Service Coordination; **Ms. Deborah Fresquez**, Innovative Practices; **Arizona Supreme Court, Commission on Victims in the Court (COVIC)**, Public Policy; and the **Prescott Valley Police Department Family Violence Unit, Leadership.**

2015 Distinguished Service Award Recipients

ADVOCACY/DIRECT SERVICES

MARTHA HENNEK, OFFICE ASSISTANT, MOHAVE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Martha "Marty" Hennek is the Victims' Rights Compliance (VRC) Officer at the Mohave County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) Victims' Rights Program. Marty has dedicated more than 14 years of her life assisting victims of crime through the criminal justice system as well as diligently working with field officers to ensure victims are given applicable rights at the time of contact. Because of Marty's initiative and her strong working relationships with field officers, the agency has developed a meticulous tracking system to ensure that every victim is identified and receives his/her victims' rights. Marty's commitment to victims of crime was demonstrated by working with the MCSO's Patrol Division to create this system of checks and balances in order to simplify the tracking process in their shared records management system. Her dedication to serving victims of crime is also displayed by going above and beyond the call of duty to perform routine follow-up calls to confirm after-hour notifications and ensuring victims receive appropriate assistance. With her guidance, the Mohave County Sheriff's Office has become a model agency for providing victims' rights.



Photo Credit: Timon Harper

(Continued on Page 2)

2015 Distinguished Service Award Recipients (Continued)

SERVICE COORDINATION: *SCOTTSDALE FAMILY ADVOCACY CENTER, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACTION TEAM (DVAT)*

In 1995, individuals from the Scottsdale Police Department joined individuals in the City Prosecutor's Office to create a collaboration in order to ensure a stronger response to incidents of domestic violence in the Scottsdale community. This partnership later resulted in the creation of the Domestic Violence Action Team (DVAT). Today, the team is unique in its inclusion of professional Crisis Intervention Specialists, Detectives, Prosecutors, Victim Assistance Advocates, and Probation Officers working together to improve the crisis stabilization services to domestic violence victims and the prosecution of domestic violence offenders. The team's commitment to service provision was recently demonstrated by the implementation of a "domestic violence lethality assessment" for use by first responders. This created a new procedure directing that a Crisis Interventionist be called to a scene when a victim responds that their partner had threatened or used a weapon against them, threatened to kill them, children or pets; or ever "strangled" them. As a result of the team's collaborative efforts, domestic violence victims are better served and perpetrators are being held accountable. Through the team's hard work, compassion and commitment in establishing strategic partnerships to serving domestic violence victims, the DVAT is one step further toward ending the cycle of violence in the Scottsdale community.



Photo Credit: Timon Harper

INNOVATIVE PRACTICES: *DEBORAH FRESQUEZ, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM ADVOCATE, VICTIM WITNESS SERVICES FOR COCONINO COUNTY*

Deborah Fresquez has a long, reputable career in serving victims of domestic violence in Coconino County. Using that knowledge and drive, Deborah created and facilitates a weekly domestic violence support group, which provides a safe and supportive atmosphere for women that are experiencing domestic violence and are at the various stages of their healing process. While mothers are meeting, their children are receiving healthy relationships training. In addition to working tirelessly as an advocate, Deborah also orchestrates the Coconino County Domestic Violence Impact Panel and serves as a member of the Fatality Review Board. She has also organized awareness trainings in Havasupai, a small isolated community at the bottom of the Grand Canyon, and plans to make it a regular occurrence. The various activities, boards, and groups she is a part of go above and beyond her job description as a domestic violence advocate with Victim Witness Services and have made a lasting impact on the community. Her compassion and dedication shines through everything in her work, as she continues to fight daily to ensure victims' rights are respected, honored and upheld within the community.



Photo Credit: Timon Harper

PUBLIC POLICY: *ARIZONA SUPREME COURT COMMISSION ON VICTIMS IN THE COURT (COVIC), ARIZONA SUPREME COURT*

Recognizing that victims' constitutional rights should be applied uniformly throughout the state, the Arizona Supreme Court's Commission on Victims in the Court (COVIC) was established in March 2006 to better address this need. COVIC has a broad and balanced membership, which includes judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, victims, victim advocates, probation officers, a forensic nurse, law enforcement and public members working together to improve the treatment of crime victims. Its members strive to ensure that all judicial officers and court staff understand the fundamentals of victims' rights and their treatment by the courts. COVIC advises the Arizona Judicial Council (AJC) by reviewing and submitting policy recommendations and procedures to improve victim access and ensure fair treatment during their involvement in the criminal justice system. Most recently, COVIC played a critical role in promoting the enhanced collection of restitution. It has also proposed and seen successful adopted changes to court rules involving victim identification privacy and the appropriate representation in dependency actions. Identifying areas of need for crime victims in the court, COVIC has been instrumental in improving processes and policies navigating through the justice system and beyond, all while maintaining the neutrality essential to the justice system. Arizona can take pride in having developed a commission that maintains neutrality while still addressing issues that directly impact victims of crime. As it stands, COVIC remains the only court-sponsored commission on victims in the country and serves as an example for court participation on victims' rights issues.



Photo Credit: Timon Harper

LEADERSHIP: *FAMILY VIOLENCE UNIT, PRESCOTT VALLEY POLICE DEPARTMENT*

The Prescott Valley Police Department experienced an increase in the number of domestic violence (DV) calls to their department and realized they didn't have a comprehensive law enforcement response to address the needs of victims. Recognizing the need for a specialized unit to address the increasing number of DV calls, the Family Violence Unit (FVU) was created to ensure quality treatment for victims while conducting thorough investigations to hold perpetrators accountable. Early on in the development of the unit, they organized the area's first Coordinated Community Response Team (CCRT), whose mission is to end violence in Prescott Valley. Recognizing that case coordination occurs across jurisdictions, they expanded the CCRT to include all of Yavapai County. Through the CCRT they recognized their important leadership role in the coordination, participation and support of community events. As a result of this, the FVU garnered community support from the Prescott Valley Town Council and other town officials to support the *Take Back the Night Candlelight Vigil* as well as the *Start By Believing Campaign*. Exercising principles and practices of outstanding leadership to ensure better treatment of victims of interpersonal crimes while preserving and protecting their rights, the FVU is an example of how law enforcement can provide effective leadership for its response to victims of crime. Other agencies in north central Arizona are looking to replicate this model to emulate the successes that the FVU has experienced. This unit's leadership, integrity and commitment to crime victims have helped find a better way to end domestic violence in the community. The FVU remains the only specialized law enforcement unit to address interpersonal crimes in all of central and northern Arizona.



Photo Credit: Timon Harper