



Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center

MCVRC Newsletter

June 2015 :: Volume 2, Issue 2

MCVRC at the Lincoln Memorial

The work of advocating for victims' rights is one that is going on all across the country. In early June, Mothers In Charge, a victims' rights organization headquartered in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, held a national rally at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C. calling for the nation to start identifying homicide as a national epidemic. Several organizations were represented at the rally and more than 1500 survivors and supporters attended. Alonzo Robertson, our Survivors of Homicide Victim Network Coordinator, gave a rousing speech at the rally. Staff of the Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center, Inc. also hosted an information table. Below is Mr. Robertson's speech.

I bring you greetings on behalf of the Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center. I am Alonzo Robertson the Survivors' Network Coordinator for the State of Maryland and I am pleased to see that so many of you have come to our city to give voice to those who have been victims of this epidemic we call Homicide.

There is a story about a woman who was thrown in a deep dark and cold hole. She called out for help, but people pretended not to see or hear her. After some time a detective tossed a report into the hole and told her, "We are working on your case. This should keep you while you're in the hole." Later a Preacher came by and said a prayer, sang a song and passed her a holy book, "We are praying for you sister, while you're in the hole." Finally, a psychologist came by and over her cries and pleadings for help he tossed her a prescription and said "this will make you feel better while you're in the hole."

While we appreciate the work of the detective and the clergy and the doctor, what they did not appreciate was that nothing they said could ever make her feel better about being in that hole.

Cont. on 2

Words of Support and Encouragement

Thriving MCVRC Members

In the aftermath of violent crime, especially in the homicide of a loved one, the survivors may be generally classified in the following categories:

Those who never truly recover, but remain victimized or crippled by the crime's impact;

Those who are able to survive and function despite the crime's impact;

Those who not only are able to survive their experience, but become thriving survivors.

The MCVRC support group for families of homicide victims is privileged to have a diverse group of individuals who demonstrate the power of the human spirit to rise above the most tragic of crimes inflicted by another human being. Often these individuals also are re-victimized by a criminal justice system that they

Cont. on 2

Newsletter Highlights

- > **FUNDING:** Funding for the Survivors of Homicide Victims pg. 8
- > **ACTION:** Support fundraising events on Schedule of Events pg. 3

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“God help us, we wish we did not need [the people of the Maryland Crime Victims’ Resource Center, Inc.] , but God forbid [they were] not here when we need them the most.”

<http://pre-view.tinyurl.com/Baltimore-Homicide>



Lincoln Memorial cont.

Actions are what will make a difference. Your presence here today is making a difference.

Today we have people from California, Seattle, Wisconsin, Indianapolis, Connecticut and as far south as Florida. We have people from big cities and little cities. Your presence here today tells your neighbors that but for the grace of God this could be them. Your presence here today tells our politicians that homicide is an important issue. It is an epidemic and you want them to do something to make a change.

And what can they do? They can provide resources to families for legal support, for counseling, and burial services. They can help the Maryland Crime Victims’ Resource Center explain the legal process to the family members- Under our legal system the Defendant has an attorney, the State has an attorney, only the victim and the victim’s family don’t get an attorney to explain what is happening. They can provide counseling to the little brother and sister whose sibling has been murdered; and counseling to the mother and father who never thought they’d be burying their child.

And if the politicians can’t provide those services, let them get out of the way. Let them give money to the nonprofits like Mothers in Charge, and Parents of Murdered Children, and Mothers of Murdered Children. Let the non-profits do what they do best, because God help us, we wish we did not need these organization, but God forbid they are not here when we need them the most.

So let’s go back to that mother in the hole. She continued to cry out and a finally a Survivor by and immediately jumps in the hole.

The woman is totally shocked, “what did you do that for? Now we’re both in the hole.” “Yes” said the Survivor, “but I’ve been here before and I know the way out.”

Cont. on 5

Words of Support cont.

depended upon and trusted. Nevertheless, these individuals muster the courage and determination to triumph over tragedy.

We believe that these thriving survivors should be recognized and celebrated. We also believe that the peer support group, which provides a safe and comforting environment, enables them to share coping skills, gain strength from each other and empowers them to lead the best lives possible ... despite what they have suffered.

Listed below are examples of activities, services and projects that many have chosen for themselves and to honor their murdered loved one:

- Volunteer in the MCVRC office – answer calls, do general office and newsletter assistance
- Become active leaders in specialized groups, like Concerns of Police Survivors or Parents of Murdered Children
- Volunteer for MCVRC’s annual Garden Ceremony of Remembrance
- Testify for legislation on state and federal level to help other victims and survivors
- Participate in Victim Impact presentations in State Prisons
- Support and comfort other survivors with their presence at trials or hearings
- Serve on the State Board of Victim Services and chair awards ceremony

Cont. on 3

Schedule of Events

Peer Support Group for Families & Friends of Homicide Victims

Every Other Tuesday Evening: 7-9 PM. Call First.

Fundraiser at Wendy's of Bowie, MD

Second Wednesday of Every Month, 5-8 PM

Fundraiser at Chesapeake Grille & Deli - Bowie

Entire Month of July

6786 Race Track Rd, Bowie, MD 20715

(301) 263-4441

Fundraiser at Chesapeake Grille & Deli - Dunkirk

July 19-26th

10092 Southern Maryland Boulevard, MD 20754

(410) 286-5939

September 19 MCVRC's Annual Ceremony of Remembrance

@MDCrimeVictims
Twitter Feed

"As the use of the Internet increases, we need to be aware of the potential net crimes that may occur."



fb.me/1DNngqA2vK

Words of Support Cont.

- Sponsor and coordinate a walk to commemorate the National Day of Remembrance for Murder Victims
- Plan and coordinate fundraising activities to support MCVRC services to crime victims
- Sponsor or participate in scholarship programs and awards
- Provide school supplies to children in memory of their loved one
- Do community outreach in churches and other organizations
- Honor their loved one by sponsoring and cleaning up a segment of a road or highway.

As you can see, thriving survivors make the choice to not allow the perpetrator to take anything else from them or to rob them of a good and happy life. As long as they live and thrive, their loved ones are honored and remembered in the best way possible. They demonstrate to the world that despite what they endured, their broken places are made stronger through service to others. MCVRC salutes them! We are blessed to have them in our world. #

"SPREAD THE WORD!!! All Howard County Homicide Families, Support"

Join us online!

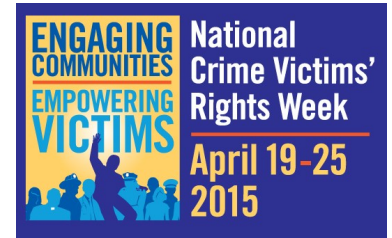


MCVRC's Executive Director Case Update

Russell Butler, Esq., Executive Director of Maryland Crime Victims Resource Center, Inc., argued the case of Griffin v Lindsey before the Maryland Court of Appeals of Maryland on 4 June 2015.

This case addresses restitution rights for victims and asserts that plea agreements cannot be used to eliminate a victim's right to restitution. This case is brought by the defendant who argues that the Court of Special Appeals erred in reversing a trial court decision that had failed to recognize the victim's right to restitution.

<http://www.courts.state.md.us/coappeals/media/2014/coa20150604caseno88.mp4> #



Meet the Staff and Volunteers!



Brandy Thompson joins the MCVRC as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. Before joining MCVRC, Brandy worked within an in-patient hospital setting. She attended patients on the medical and behavioral health unit. Prior to the hospital experience, Brandy worked with youth in foster care, group home and independent living facilities. She assisted youth and families who experienced trauma in their lives. Brandy is originally from Southern Maryland. Brandy obtained her Master's Degree at the Howard University School of Social Work and has recently obtained her LCSW-C License.

TOLL-FREE NUMBERS

Direct Services for Victims of Crime

Americans Overseas Domestic Violence Crisis Center.....866-USWOMEN
 Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline...800-4-A-CHILD
 Mothers Against Drunk Driving..... 877-MADD-HELP
 National Domestic Violence Hotline..... 800-799-7233
 TTY 800-787-3224
 National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline 866-331-9474
 Parents of Murdered Children, Inc..... 888-818-7662
 Rape, Abuse, & Incest National Network...800-656-HOPE

Information and Referrals for Victims of Crime

Battered Women's Justice Project...800-903-0111, ext. 1
 Bureau of Indian Affairs, Indian Country Child Abuse Hotline 800-633-5155
 Federal Trade Commission Identity Theft Hotline 877-ID-THEFT
 TTY 866-653-4261
 National Center for Missing and Exploited Children 800-843-5678
 National Human Trafficking Hotline..... 888-3737-888
 National Organization for Victim Assistance 800-879-6982
 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Helpline.....877-SAMHSA-7
 TTY 800-487-4889

Training, Technical Assistance, and Other Services for Victims of Crime

Child Welfare Information Gateway..... 800-394-3366
 National Children's Alliance..... 202-548-0090
 National Council on Juvenile and Family Court Judges775-784-6012
 National Crime Prevention Council202-466-6272
 National Criminal Justice Reference Service (OVC Resource Center)800-851-3420
 TTY 301-240-6310
 National Resource Center on Domestic Violence.....800-537-2238
 TTY 800-553-2508
 National Sexual Violence Resource Center 877-739-3895
 TTY 717-909-0715
 OVC TTAC 866-OVC-TTAC
 TTY 866-682-8880
 Resource Center on Domestic Violence: Child Protection and Custody 800-527-3223

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Clif Bridegum, our intrepid computer systems administrator, and his wife Melissa are new parents. Colt Bridegum a bouncing baby boy was born this month. He and Melissa are healthy and being pampered by Clif. Congratulations Clif and Melissa!

Please join us in saying goodbye and congratulations to **Samantha Prinsen**, **Kim Gunishaw**, and **Lyda Gould**. Ms. Prinsen has taken on a position as US States Attorney for the District of Columbia. A former prosecutor this allows her to go back to the putting criminals away, but with a better understanding of the rights, interests, and concerns of victims. Kim Gunishaw, a long time advocate and recent winner of the Governor's award for victims' services has left to pursue other endeavors. Ms. Gould regularly volunteered to lay out our quarterly newsletter. She has resigned her position at General Dynamics to spend more time with the new addition to her family, baby Grayson Gould. We wish them the best.

Meet the Staff and Volunteers! (Cont.)



Inger Bjercknes. Please welcome Ms. Bjercknes to our team of volunteers. Ms. Bjercknes enjoys spending time with her family, traveling, and walking in the mountains. Ms. Bjercknes is also a volunteer with Hospice

Seeking Support?

We invite you to join the MCVRC Support Group

When: Every Tuesday evening from 7pm to 9pm

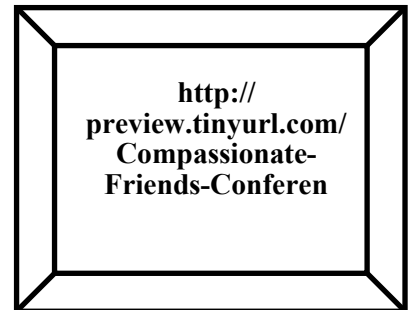
Where: MCVRC Office

Please call to attend our next session.

Catherine Ahrnsbrak. Catherine Ahrnsbrak has joined MCVRC as a legal intern. She is a third year law student at the University of South Carolina School of Law. She is interested in Children’s Law and intends on moving to Maryland upon graduation. While at MCVRC she will work on Guardian ad Litem matters.



Benita Nelson-Tutt. Benita Nelson-Tutt will lead two workshops at the 38th Annual Compassionate Friends National Convention in Dallas, Texas. The themes of her presentations will be understanding and learning how to cope with loss as a result of murder, and understanding the legal system and the challenges that it imposes on the family. Ms. Nelson-Tutt is a volunteer at the Prince George’s County Office of MCVRC. #



Lincoln Memorial Speech (Cont.)

Today, you are standing beside someone that is either in the hole or has been in that hole before.

Stephanie Roper of the Maryland Crime Victims’ Resource Center had a saying, “One person can make a difference, and everyone should try.” My challenge to you is to imagine “what we can do if we all tried together.”

I am Alonzo Robertson of the Maryland Crime Victims’ Resource Center and I thank you for being the voice of those who are no longer with us. #



MCVRC Staff and Volunteers Receive Awards at the 2015 Governor’s Victim Assistance Awards Luncheon

@MDCrimeVictims
Twitter Feed

*“As the use of the Internet increases, we need to be aware of the potential net crimes that may occur.”
fb.me/1DNgqA2vK”*

Please join us in congratulating Victor Stone, Kimberly Gunishaw and several MCVRC volunteers on their receipt of accommodations at the 2015 Governor’s Victim Assistance Awards Luncheon. Each year the Governor shows appreciation and recognition to an individual, agency, organization or group who does meritorious work on behalf of crime victims or in furtherance of the crime victims’ movement in Maryland. The award recognizes outstanding work done in the area of victim advocacy and services that exceeds expected work responsibilities, and exemplifies a high level of commitment and dedication to the field of victims’ rights and services and to the victims themselves.

This year, MCVRC was pleased to have two of its staff and four of its volunteers receive statewide recognition for their work for victims of crime both at the office and on their personal time.



Victor Stone, an attorney at MCRVC received the Outstanding Victim Services Professional award. Mr. Stone writes appellate arguments and amicus briefs for MCVRC on behalf of victims. His arguments have helped to advance victim’s rights throughout the nation.



Rhonda Pearson of “Parties that Pop” received the Outstanding Contribution to Victim Services Award (Individual) for her contribution to the Annual Ceremony of Remembrance hosted by MCVRC. Cont. on 6



“SPREAD THE WORD!!! All Howard County Homicide Families, Support Group Meeting. Contact MCVRC for details.”

Join us online!



MCVRC Staff and Volunteers Receive Awards (Cont.)



Kimberly Gunishaw, a victim’s advocate, and several MCVRC volunteers, namely Vondale Mack, Major Elaine Moore, Margery Patton and Gale

Seaton received the Outstanding Contribution to Victim Services (Group) award for their volunteer work as “Walk a Mile in My Shoes.” This event brings people together on the annual National Day of Remembrance for Murder Victims. It was started to pay tribute to loved ones lost to murder, and to encourage others to walk in remembrance of those lost to homicide. #

MCVRC Keynote speaker at Western Region’s Ceremony of Remembrance Memorial Service



Pauline Mandel served as the Keynote speaker of the Western Maryland’s Regional Ceremony of Remembrance Statewide Memorial Service on Sunday, April 19th. She spoke on the topic of victims’ rights and on identifying ways that the MCVRC helps victims and victim’s representatives operate in the “new normal” that exists after violent crime or the death of a loved one through violence has become a part of one’s life. #

@MDCrimeVictims
Twitter Feed

“As the use of the Internet increases, we need to be aware of the potential net crimes that may occur.”
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“SPREAD THE WORD!!! All Howard County Homicide Families, Support Group Meeting. Contact MCVRC for details.”

Join us online!



Roberta Roper speaks at Morehouse College Alumni Association Meeting

In mid-April, the Greater DC Area Chapter of the Morehouse College Alumni Association held a meeting at the MCVRC headquarters. Ms. Roberta Roper was their keynote speaker. She spoke on the tragedy of her daughter’s death, the subsequent disregard she and her family experienced at the hands of the legal system, and their success in changing the laws for victims in Maryland and throughout the nation. The impact of her presentation was emphasized, when two members of the Association revealed that they had used the services of the MCVRC when their family members had been murdered. One of the members was so impressed with the work of MCVRC that he initiated plans to have a Homicide Victim Survivor Support Group established in La Plata, Md. A location and facilitator have been identified. The support group is scheduled to begin in the Fall of 2015. #

@MDCrimeVictims
Twitter Feed

“As the use of the Internet increases, we need to be aware of the potential net crimes that may occur.”
fb.me/1DNggA2vK



“SPREAD THE WORD!!! All Howard County Homicide Families, Support Group Meeting. Contact MCVRC for details.”



Passage of Legislative Proposals

MCVRC is pleased to announce the passage of two legislative proposals in the 2015 Maryland Legislative session: Criminal Procedure - Victims of Crime - Notification Regarding DNA Profile; and Video Lottery Facility Payouts - Intercepts for Restitution Payments.

Notification in cold cases – This law provides that, unless disclosure would impede or hinder a law enforcement investigation, the police shall notify victims and victim’s representatives in cold cases involving crimes of violence when DNA evidence of a suspected perpetrator exists, is entered into the DNA database, and when a potential identification is received.

Cont. on 8

Join us online!



Improvements in the collection of restitution -

Similar to legislation that passed in the 2014 legislative session for child support, this law provides for the interception of video lottery winnings from those delinquent in restitution and to have those payments paid to the victims/victim's representatives who are owed the restitution.

@MDCrimeVictims
Twitter Feed

*"As the use of the Internet increases, we need to be aware of the potential net crimes that may occur."
fb.me/1DNggA2vK"*



"SPREAD THE WORD!!! All Howard County Homicide Families, Support Group Meeting. Contact MCVRC for details."

The MCVRC and the Survivor Network wish to acknowledge the work and support of Maryland Senate President Miller and Maryland House Judiciary Chairman Vallario for their continuous support of these legislative initiatives. #

Funding for the Survivors of Homicide Victims

In February 2015, the Maryland General Assembly held two budget hearings pertaining to the Survivors of Homicide Victims Grant recipients. Initial recommendations from House and Senate budget analysts were that the Governor should cut the funding currently used to support and improve services to Homicide victim survivors.

MCVRC sent Pauline Mandel, Esq., and Alonzo Robertson, Esq., (Program Manager and Coordinator for the Survivors Network, respectively) to advocate on behalf of these victims. Armed with several letters of support from (i) members of the Statewide Survivors of Homicide Victims Network members and (ii) recipients of the services which would be impacted by the proposed elimination of funding. They successfully argued for the continuation of this funding.

A special thanks goes out to Governor Hogan, Chris Shank of the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention, Maryland's Senate President Miller, Maryland House Judiciary Chairman Vallario, Maryland Delegate Keith Haynes, and the various Survivor Network members and volunteers who sent letters of support. #

Join us online!



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A special thank you goes out to our contributors. Their generous support makes it possible for us to support others. (Contributions between October 2014 to February 2015)

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A special thank you goes to our contributors. Their generous support makes it possible for us to support others. (Contributions between October 2014 to February 2015)

If you would like to make a contribution to support our mission, please click on the image below ...



Photo By: Kathryn Harper

N

Ilene J. Nathan
Arthur and Heather Nesbit
Network for Good

O

Oasis of Upper Marlboro Desert of Md.
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Betty Oberman*
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Thomas Ott
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Lawrence and Kathleen Owens

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Latoya Francis-Williams and Craig Williams
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Woman’s Club of Laurel

*** Contribution made in memory of a victim**

Design Your Brick or Submit Information for the Tree:

To place an order for a brick or tree, please complete this form and return it to:

Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center, Inc., 1001 Prince George's Boulevard, Suite 750, Upper Marlboro, MD 20774.

For additional information, please call: 301-952-0063 or email: rroper@mdcrimevictims.org.

First Line (max. 15 characters):

Second Line (max 15 characters):

Adjustments will be made for names longer than 15 characters.

Donor Information (please print)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Example:

First Line: EVAN MORRIS

Second Line: 1989 – 2011

Payment Information

Enclosed is my check payable to MCVRC

Please charge my credit card:

Name on card: _____

Card Number: _____

Expiration Date: _____ CSC/CID (3 or 4 digits): _____

Type of card: VISA Master Card

Authorized Signature: _____

Please send the completed form along with payment to the: Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center, Inc., 1001 Prince George's Boulevard, Suite 750, Upper Marlboro, MD 20774.



Become A Member!

Victim Supporter \$25

As a Victim Supporter, you will receive a free subscription to the MCVRC newsletter including advance notification of all special events.

Victim Friend \$50

As a Victim Friend, you will receive a free subscription to the MCVRC newsletter including advance notification of all special events, and a memorial ornament on the MCVRC-sponsored Holiday Tree of Remembrance.

Victim Advocate \$100

As a Victim Advocate, you will receive a free subscription to the MCVRC newsletter including advance notification of all special events, a memorial ornament on the MCVRC-sponsored Holiday Tree of Remembrance, and a 25% discount on all special event tickets.

Lifetime Membership \$500

As a Lifetime Member, you will receive all benefits of a Victim Supporter for your lifetime.

Organization Membership \$500

As an Organizational Member, your organization will receive the MCVRC newsletter including advance notification of all special events, and three complimentary ornaments on the MCVRC-sponsored Holiday Tree of Remembrance.

To make a donation by mail please make checks payable to "Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center Inc." and mail to "1001 Prince George's Blvd, Ste 750, Upper Marlboro, MD

Donate



Volunteer!

Court Accompaniment – Assist victims through the criminal justice process by providing accompaniment and support at criminal justice proceedings.

Special Events – Help with organizing and setting up special events, such as media conferences, fundraisers and banquets.

Office Assistance – Work alongside our key staff by providing office assistance as your time allows. Schedules are flexible to match your availability.

Community Events – Staff neighborhood gatherings, and other events as needed to provide more information about The Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center.

Pro Bono Assistance – Attorneys to provide pro bono assistance to crime victims experiencing civil matters that are a result of the victimization.

MCVRC utilizes volunteers as well as a limited number of full-time and part-time staff in key positions. Please consider becoming one of our volunteers.

Contact Us!

Main Office:

Phone: 301-952-0063
Phone: 877-842-8461
Fax: 240-929-0526
1001 Prince George's Blvd.
Suite 750
Upper Marlboro, MD
20774-7427

Baltimore Offices:

Phone: 410-234-9885
Fax: 410-234-9886
218 E. Lexington Street
Suite 401
Baltimore, MD 21202

DC Office:

Phone: 202-531-3346
Fax: 202-747-7518
Ronald Reagan Building &
International Trade Center
1300 Pennsylvania Ave.,
NW Suite 700
Washington, DC 20004



YouTube

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