



PCVI News

Issue 3 / Volume 1



Welcome

As we prepare to commemorate the fourth annual National Victims of Crime Awareness Week in Canada, from April 26 to May 2, 2009, we are reminded of the impact that crime has on the lives and livelihoods of individuals, families and communities. The theme of this year's Week is *Supporting, Connecting, Evolving*. Now, more than ever, it is important to raise awareness of the issues faced by victims of crime. We must ensure that victims, their families and their friends are connected to the right people and programs that will help them rebuild their lives. And, we must continue to work together to explore new ways to reach out and support victims of crime. For more information, we invite you to visit the National Victims of Crime Awareness Week website at www.victimswweek.gc.ca.

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SUPPORTING | SOUTENIR
CONNECTING | RAPPROCHER
EVOLVING | PROGRESSER



Save the Date:

National Victims of Crime

*Awareness Week will be held from
April 26 to May 2, 2009.*

*Sign up for the mailing list
by emailing:*

victimswweek-semanticdesvictimes@justice.gc.ca

Federal Symposium launches National Victims of Crime Awareness Week 2009, April 26 to May 2

The Government of Canada will officially launch National Victims of Crime Awareness Week (NVCAW) 2009 on April 27 with a federal Symposium in Ottawa. Government officials and dignitaries will join 200 participants including victims, victim service workers, volunteers, academics and policy makers for the day-long event.

Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, the Honourable Rob Nicholson, and Minister of Public Safety, the Honourable Peter Van Loan, will be on hand to provide opening remarks. They will be followed by Martine Ayotte,

a childhood sexual abuse survivor from Abitibi-Témiscamingue, Quebec who will deliver the keynote address. Mrs. Ayotte has recently published a book 'La Proie' about her experiences.

A series of workshops will follow on topics that include: Meeting the Needs of Child Victims; Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women; British Columbia Disaster Response Model; Cultural Considerations for Supporting Aboriginal Victims; Services for Young People in the Sex Trade; and, Victims and Restorative Justice.

The Symposium will close with a plenary session entitled "Providing Services to Victims of Internet Luring and Exploitation", moderated by Steve Sullivan, the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime.

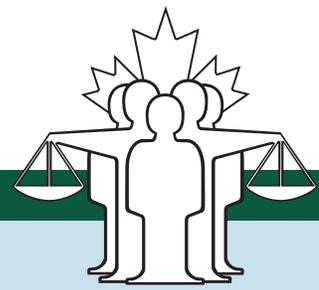
The theme of this year's NVCAW is *Supporting, Connecting, Evolving*.

It recognizes victim supports and collaborative approaches already in existence, along with the progress that has been made to enhance and expand services available to victims of crime. It also highlights the importance of continued work in these areas and the desire to explore new and evolving ways to better meet the needs of victims of crime and their families.

NVCAW is organized by the Department of Justice Policy Centre for Victim Issues, the National Office for Victims within Public Safety Canada and a National Organizing Committee made up of representatives from government and non-governmental organizations, victim service providers, victim advocates and victims of crime.

For more information or to register for the federal symposium, please visit www.victimswweek.gc.ca.





Local Activities

Across Canada more than 80 communities will be commemorating National Victims of Crime Awareness Week. The following is an overview of some of the activities taking place:

In **Avalon East, Newfoundland**, the Coalition Against Violence will host a series of fora aimed at discussing the needs and concerns of women in the restorative justice process.

A series of new print based resources aimed at the immigrant community will be launched at a community gathering organized by **PEI Victim Services**. The information package, including a wallet-sized card presenting pertinent information and essential contact numbers, will be distributed to participants.

CAVAC **Côte-Nord, Quebec** will undertake a community newspaper, radio and television advertising campaign to raise awareness of victim issues as well as the supports that are available locally for victims of crime. CAVAC will also distribute special information placemats to local area restaurants for use during National Victims of Crime Awareness Week.

On April 27, in **Kingston, Ontario**, the local police service will unveil a memorial plaque to honour women who have been killed by their intimate partner. The monument, only the second of its kind in Canada, will be located at the Kingston Police Headquarters.

Approximately 100 adults aged 55 and older are expected to attend a panel discussion

entitled “Criminal Justice 101 for Older Adults”, in **Winnipeg, Manitoba**.

Qu’Appelle Haven Safe Shelter in Fort **Qu’Appelle, Saskatchewan** will hold a one-day conference on May 1st featuring a presentation by Victims Voice founder Wilma Derksen entitled “Understanding the Aftermath of Violence.”

“Stomp the Stigma” is the title of a series of events being organized in **Yellowknife, NWT** during National Victims of Crime Awareness Week. Organized by Yellowknife Victim Services and the Native Women’s Association of Canada the events are designed to decrease the stigma surrounding victimization and increase community capacity to support people in crisis.

Interview with Priscilla de Villiers

Priscilla de Villiers is a long-time victim advocate and founder of CAVEAT (Canadians Against Violence). She is currently a member of the PCVI Victim Advisory Committee, the organizing committee for NVCAN, and board member of the Ontario Office for Victims of Crime. She continues to advocate for victims rights and provides advice to other victims groups.

Q Tell us about how you became involved in the victims movement?

A Like many other Canadians I lived a tranquil life in Burlington, a quiet city on Lake Ontario, insulated from the realities of violence and crime. Then a young woman was murdered at lunchtime on the Burlington Beach by a stranger and 14-year-old Lesley Mahaffey disappeared. Her body was later discovered encased in concrete in a nearby lake. Six weeks later my daughter Nina, too, disappeared while jogging, two kilometres from the spot where Lesley had last been seen. She had been abducted and murdered by a stranger, a sexual predator. Each night as I sat up waiting for news hoping

that she had been found, I decided that I could not live with myself ever again if I did nothing to protect other young women, other families, from the loss, the horror and the unbearable grief that violent crime presented.

Q How hard has it been to get attention directed towards victims of crime?

A Although as a family we were overwhelmed with support, compassion, gifts, prayers and kindness, society at large continued to avoid the harsh reality that the criminal justice system was failing to protect Canadians from violence which was completely preventable. A spokesman for a Law Society was quoted in the press saying of me as I began to speak out: “She is just a grieving mother raging for revenge. Ignore her and she will go away.” That is why my friends and I decided to start a grassroots organization dedicated to victims. Our goal was “Prevention, Education, Legislation and Victim Rights.” We practised that for the next 10 years. I continue with that work.

Q In your estimation, what remains the biggest challenge (in Canada) facing victims of crime and their families?

A Victims of crime and their families remain in an invidious position in the administration of justice: the courts in particular. The culture is exclusionary and there is no recourse when there are egregious breaches of Provincial Victim Bills of Rights. When restitution is ordered, victims have to embark on long and costly civil actions which are usually beyond most victims’ means or, in the case of violent crime, severely tax their emotional capacity.

Q What is the main message you would like the public to take away from NVCAN?

A Awareness of the toll that violent crime takes on their neighbours, colleagues and friends while showing that victims in their community can be helped to regain normal productive lives.