



Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center

MCVRC Newsletter

July 2014 :: Volume 1, Issue 3

Dear Friends,

Summer is heating up and we are getting off to a great start. The Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center (MCVRC) is thrilled to announce that **two of its own 2014 legislative priorities became law on July 1st of this year.** One of the laws pertains to hearing-notification requirements for victims; the other requires that resources be made available to assist family members of homicide victims. Please read more details about the laws and why they are necessary on page 3. These results are key examples of our mission in action. Though we realize that these issues may seem small, they have a significant impact on those who are affected. Thank you for your support as we continue to tackle these important changes.

We would also like to invite you to the Garden of Remembrance Brick Laying Ceremony **Saturday, July 26th at 10:00 AM.** New memorial bricks will be laid at the Prince George's County Justice Center to honor homicide victims. Please see page 4 for further details. In addition, mark your

calendars now, the MCVRC Ceremony of Thanksgiving and Remembrance is **Saturday, November 15th.** If you would like to receive an invitation please contact us; our contact information is on the back of this newsletter. More information about the ceremony can be found on page 3.



The Garden of Remembrance Dedication Ceremony last year.

We hope to see you at one of our future events. In the meantime, please continue to follow our progress, you can receive news and updates via our social media pages; Like us on [Facebook](#) and Follow us on [Twitter](#)!

Thank you,
The MCVRC Team

A History of Advocacy

MCVRC's history of advocacy, service and achievement for crime victims has honored Stephanie Roper's belief that "one person can make a difference and every person should try." For more information on laws that have been enacted by MCVRC, please visit our website at <http://www.mdcrimevictims.org/laws-and-policies/history-of-crime-victims-rights-in-maryland/>

Newsletter Highlights

- > Brick Laying at the Garden of Remembrance, Saturday, July 26th
- > Annual Ceremony of Thanksgiving and Remembrance, Saturday, November 15th
- > Peer Grief Support Group held twice a month at the Upper Marlboro office location.

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New Laws to Benefit Crime Victims Takes Effect July 1, 2014

The Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center, Inc. (MCVRC) is pleased to announce that two of its 2014 legislative priorities became law on July 1, 2014. Those laws are:

- Crime Victim and Crime Victim's Representative – Electronic Notification (SB 922) and
- Criminal Procedure – Programs for Survivors of Homicide Victims (HB 355)

Crime Victim and Crime Victim's Representative – Electronic Notification

This law expands Maryland's notification requirements for victims of crime and their representatives. Under existing law, victims of certain Circuit Court cases receive notice via the U.S. Postal service. Under the new law, victims and victim's representatives in jurisdictions using the upgraded Maryland Electronic Court System (MDEC), will be able to request and receive notice of hearings by email. In October 2014, Anne Arundel County will be the first jurisdiction to implement the MDEC.

MCVRC Executive Director, Russell P. Butler indicated regarding Chapter 205 –

For too long, many victims have not received timely notice of court hearings requiring them to miss work when hearings have been continued. Timely notice of hearings by email will provide a better opportunity for access to justice by victims.

Notification regarding hearings is a key element so that victims can assert their other rights including the right to be present, the right to be heard, and the right to receive restitution.

Criminal Procedure – Programs for Survivors of Homicide Victims

This law creates infrastructure and funding authorizations to assist family members of homicide victims.

See "New Laws" on page 7

MCVRC Executive Director Quoted in Baltimore Sun Article

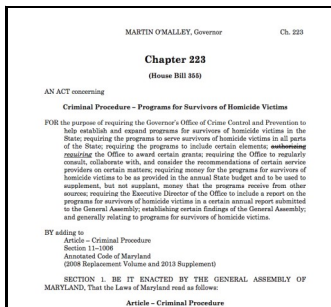
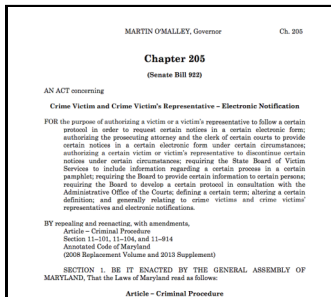
Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center Inc. (MCVRC) and its personnel have a reputation within the judicial system for being experts and advocates for victims' rights. It is no surprise, therefore, that when preparing the Baltimore Sun article entitled, *Early Prison Release Eyed*, Ian Duncan sought out the opinion of MCVRC's Executive Director, Russell Butler.

The article was written in response to the critical wounding of Police Sgt Keith McNeill. Officer McNeill was ambushed by

a convicted murderer who had been released from prison after serving less than ten years of a 15-year sentence for the murder of a teenager back in 2003. The focus of the article was understanding Maryland's complex system of credits, which often leads to vastly different conclusions about when an inmate is to be released.

Russell Butler is quoted as stating that because of the Maryland's complex sentencing rules "it can be difficult for victims and their families to discern the

Timely notice of court hearings by email will provide a better opportunity for access to justice by victims.



"Mr. Butler, Esq. noted that one solution to this problem would be for judges 'to describe sentences as a range between the maximum and the minimum, rather than a fixed number.' "

The Baltimore Sun

Baltimore Sun cont.

time a [convicted defendant] is expected to serve under Maryland sentences.” He notes that Judges are supposed to indicate at sentencing when a prisoner will be eligible for parole, but they rarely do. The result is that the public has an expectation that a convicted defendant will serve one period of time, but that expectation does not consider their eligibility for parole and when convicted defen-

dants are released months, or years, earlier than expected, the public gets the feeling that they are “beating the system.”

Mr. Butler, Esq. noted that one solution to this problem would be for judges “to describe sentences as a range between the maximum and the minimum, rather than a fixed number. That practice is common in other states.

The attorneys at the MCVRC regularly educate their clients about the legal process including the possibility that a convicted defendant will receive an early release date, and the factors that are considered when making that decision.

New to MCVRC and need to speak to a victim advocate or representative?
Complete the A2J Online Application anytime day or night

MCVRC Peer Grief Support Group

MCVRC offers a peer grief support group for survivors of homicide victims statewide. The group meets at our Upper Marlboro location, 1001 Prince George’s Blvd., Suite 750, twice a month on Tuesday evenings from 7pm – 9pm. Here are a few voices sharing how the group has supported them during their recovery process journey:

My name is Alphonso Gibbs, Jr., a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, and I am a member of the Maryland Crime Victims’ Resource Center support group, run by Mrs. Roberta Roper. I joined that group in December of 2012, after my son, Justin, was killed in northern California in October of that year. The support group has been critical to my ability to work my way through the pain of Justin’s murder. He was my only child, and at 20, was just beginning to live his life. Thus far, those responsible for Justin’s death have not been found, and the support group has helped me to move past the lack of closure, and find purpose in living my life. Projects like the Garden of Remembrance give me a place to go when I feel the need to connect to Justin-as the garden includes a walkway with a brick that has his name engraved in it.

Topics discussed with my peer support group members have provided me with extremely cogent and salient information that has helped me through some of my most painful moments-to date.

Alphonso Gibbs, Jr., LCSW-C, LICSW

See “Support Group” page 6

Peer Grief Support Group

When: Twice a month,
Tuesdays 7pm - 9pm

Where: 1001 Prince George’s
Blvd, Suite 750

Why: “...the support group has helped me to move past the lack of closure, and find purpose in living my life.”

Brick Laying at
the Garden of
Remembrance,
**Saturday July
26th at 10:00
A.M.**

Brick Laying at the Garden of Remembrance

There will be new memorial bricks to honor homicide victims laid on **Saturday, July 26th at 10:00AM**. The Garden is a peaceful haven for reflection and commemoration, and is a memorial to those whose lives were taken by criminal violence. The Garden is located at the Prince George's County Justice Center on Judges Drive (facing Route 4) in Upper Marlboro. You are welcome to visit the Garden at any time. A special thanks goes to the people at Maryland Park and Planning for their excellent care of the Garden.

MCVRC 2014 Ceremony of Thanksgiving and Remembrance

The Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center, Inc. will hold its annual ceremony to honor the memories of those whose lives were taken by criminal violence on a new date this year: **Saturday, November 15, 2014**. Because there are so many crime-victim related events taking place during April, a decision was made to have the MCVRC ceremony held during the fall, in a *Ceremony of Thanksgiving and Remembrance*.

The *Ceremony of Thanksgiving and Remembrance* will begin at the Garden of Remembrance at the Upper Marlboro Justice Center on Judges Drive (facing Route 4), and will follow past traditions. After the balloon launch, the ceremony and a reception will continue at the County Administrative Building on Governor Bowie Drive. Families and friends of homicide victims, as well as MCVRC supporters are invited to attend and share this ceremony. Invitations will be mailed to past attendees. If you have not attended past ceremonies or are new to MCVRC and wish to receive an invitation, please contact the MCVRC office at 301-952-0063.

MCVRC Personnel and Volunteers

MCVRC sadly announces the sudden passing of Laurenda Detter, a survivor and volunteer with the MCVRC. Her skills, professionalism and pleasant personality complimented the work of MCVRC. She will be remembered and sorely missed.

Ms. Benita Nelson-Tutt was highlighted in the December 5, 2013 Prince George's Sentinel. She spoke about the life of her son Herman Tutt. She emphasized his affinity for working with animals and his desire to be a veterinarian. Herman Tutt was murdered in 2008 and the assailants are still at large. In the article, she asks the public for tips about this murder. Ms. Nelson-Tutt is currently a volunteer at the MCVRC in Upper Marlboro, Maryland. She is often the first person victims and victims' family members speak to when they call the MCVRC for assistance.

MCVRC had the pleasure of having Ms. Nakaya Lane, a 2014 graduate of Marymount University, to serve as a volunteer this summer. Her clear and concise writing skills were immediately recognized and utilized. In her short time with us, Ms. Lane was able to craft legal memoranda that will be used to facilitate MCVRC's efforts to protect victims and their family members. Ms. Lane plans to study law at Hofstra University.

Louis Armendariz has volunteered to serve as MCVRC Social Media Consultant. After reviewing our technical resources, intended goals, desired demographic target, etc., he will provide insightful guidance on the means to maximizing the impact of the social media platforms that MCVRC uses (Twitter, Facebook, Linked-In, e-mail, etc). With his help, we will move the MCVRC into the 21st Century.

Merry O'Brien and Lorenzo Evans will be leaving the MCVRC to pursue other opportunities. They will both be sorely missed. Our thanks to both for their efforts to help crime victims!



Garden of Remembrance
Dedication ceremony April
27, 2013.



Roberta Roper, Board
Member Chair (left) with
an MCVRC supporter
(right).

Annual Ceremony of
Thanksgiving and
Remembrance
**Saturday, November 15,
2014**

Victims' Rights Week

Maryland celebrated 2014 Victims' Rights Week from April 6-12. There were many events held throughout the week to honor crime victims that highlighted the theme, "30 years: restoring the balance of justice."

The Governor's Office of Crime Control & Prevention (GOCCP) in conjunction with the Maryland State Board of Victim Services hosted a luncheon where individuals and groups who were instrumental in assisting crime victims during their recovery were recognized. Also, a new award in the memory of Vincent Roper, the cofounder of MCVRC, was presented posthumously to Ms. Vera Price. Her husband, the Rev. Wayne Price, accepted the award on her behalf.

MCVRC graciously acknowledges the service and support of its dedicated 2014 Board of Directors. The members are as follows:

BRIAN J. FRANK, ESQ.

Treasurer

Lexington Nat'l Ins. Corp.
Baltimore County
(2016)

STEVEN KELLY, ESQ.

Vice-Chair /Survivor

Silverman, Thompson, Slutkin, White LLC
Baltimore County
(2014)

JAMES NORTON

Gen Dynamics DC Operation –Def.
& Homeland Security
Washington, D.C.
(2016)

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Justice, Univ. of Baltimore
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Director, AA Co
Juvenile V/W Program
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(2016)

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Survivor
Prince George's County
(2014)

LATOYA A. FRANCIS-WILLIAMS, ESQ.

Attorney in Private Practice
Baltimore County
(2017)

RUSSELL P. BUTLER, ESQ. *Executive Director*

(Former Board Member – Now Advisor)

PROF. BYRON WARNKEN
Univ. of Balt. School of Law
Baltimore County

Stay informed
with the latest
MCVRC
developments.
Show your
support and tell
others how
much you care.
Join us on
social media!



DID YOU KNOW?

Speaker's Bureau –

MCVRC has persons
for speaking
engagements about
MCVRC services as
wells as to inform
about victims' rights
to corporations,
foundations,
community
organizations, and
others.

www.mdcrimevictims.org

MCVRC is thankful for all of the financial support received to assist us in carrying out our work for crime victims:

Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services

William J. & Charlene M. Passmore

Ernest S. Washington

Woman's Club of Laurel

Katherine P. Kelley

Rotary Club of Beltsville Foundation

Stephen C. & Jacqueline J. Mack

Angelique Dudley

In Memory of

In Memory of Karen & Karissa Lofton
Charlene Weaver

In Memory of Stephanie Roper
Joan & Juan Torres

In Memory of Darrel Sallie
Carol Sallie

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



Photo By: Kathryn Harper

Support Group cont.

June 10, 2001, is the day that defines our lives. It is the day of the horrific murders of our son, Mike, and his friend, Lea Anne Brown. Mike and Lea were accosted by a group of five men who had been on a crime spree throughout the previous evening. Mike and Lea became the ultimate victims of the group's rampage as they were brutally beaten, put in the trunk of Mike's car and driven to a remote location where those two wonderful people were shot multiple times. For this crime, the men were rewarded with \$30 they took from Mike and \$20 that they were able to get from Lea's bank account at an ATM machine. Our family, previously untouched by anything remotely like this, was stricken with grief and confusion, not knowing which way to turn.

Thirteen years ago, as we were reeling from the realization that our youngest child had been brutally murdered, we learned about the Stephanie Roper organization now named the Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center, where we could attend a support group...MCVRC provides tangible help and hope for survivors.

Frank & Margery Patten

"Our family, previously untouched by anything remotely like this, was stricken with grief and confusion ... MCVRC provides tangible help and hope for survivors."

"The new law requires the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention to help establish and expand programs available to the families of homicide victims."

New Laws cont.

The Maryland General Assembly found that:

"[S]urvivors of homicide victims in the State:

- (1) lack necessary counseling and follow-up services to:
 - (i) treat the survivors with dignity, respect, and sensitivity; and
 - (ii) inform the survivors of the rights to which they are entitled by law; and (2) have the help of only extremely limited support services in some parts of the State."

The new law requires the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention to help establish and expand programs available to the families of homicide victims. Services include, but are not limited to counseling, legal, mental health, and advocacy.

MCVRC Founder and Board Chair, Roberta Roper stated:

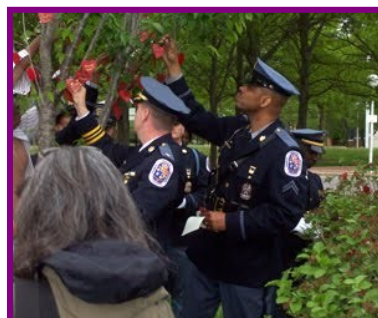
Families of homicide victims have been the long forgotten step-children in Maryland's array of victim service programs. There has never been dedicated funding to provide support, legal and therapeutic services to families of homicide victims. As a result, many survivors of homicide victims are left to endure on their own without any sense of hope and healing.

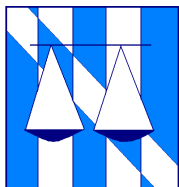
Of the many lessons learned over MCVRC's thirty-two year history, one of the most important is that crime does not discriminate. Its direct and indirect consequences impact every segment of society: from babies to senior citizens of every culture, ethnicity and economic status. However, for those who are marginalized by other factors such as poverty; or physical or geographic limitations, the needs are equally great and deserving.

With the enactment of this new law, there is a first-time opportunity to offer restorative services to individuals and families who are struggling with the trauma, grief, and other needs occurring as a result of homicides.

Prince George's County Police Department, Members of the Community Services Division, and Special Operations Division participate in a past Remembrance Ceremony during Victims' Rights Week by hanging hearts with the names of fallen officers on the tree of remembrance. (Right)

For more information on MCVRC legislative initiatives, please visit our website at <http://www.mdcrimevictims.org/laws-and-policies/history-of-crime-victims-rights-in-maryland/>. MCVRC is a non-profit organization that provides assistance to victims and victims' representatives. For help, please call MCVRC at: 301-952-0063 or visit our homepage at: www.mdcrimevictims.org.





Maryland IOLTA Honor Roll



The Maryland State Bar Association and Maryland Legal Services Corporation acknowledge with special appreciation Honor Roll Members. These financial institutions pay premium interest rates on IOLTA in support of civil legal services for low-income Marylanders.

American Bank – Montgomery & Prince George's Counties & Washington, DC

Congressional Bank – Montgomery County, Washington, DC & Northern Virginia

First Shore Federal – Wicomico & Worcester Counties

HSBC Bank USA, N.A. – Montgomery County

MainStreet Bank – Northern Virginia

Midstate Community Bank – Baltimore County

Premier Bank, Inc. – Montgomery County & Washington, DC

Sandy Spring Bank – Anne Arundel, Frederick, Howard, Montgomery & Prince George's Counties

Severn Savings Bank – Anne Arundel County

Standard Bank – Allegany County

For a complete list of all financial institutions approved to accept IOLTA deposits, visit www.mlsc.org.



"A Taste of Compassion"
Cookbook, \$20.00

Here are other ways that you can support MCVRC:

Cookbook project — "A Taste of Compassion," the cookbook commemorating the establishment of the Stephanie Roper Committee and Foundation (now known as the Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center) has over 350 recipes and it's beautiful! Purchase your copy today! Hardback copies are \$20 and CD copies are \$10. Shipping is \$5. Please contact 301-952-0063 to purchase your copy.

Cars 4 Causes – you may donate cars or boats to [Cars 4 Causes](#)

Click to Support:

Network for Good – Make a monetary donation through [Network for Good](#)



Switch Energy Providers – Signing up to Viridian and designating MCVRC can lower your monthly BGE/Peppo electricity bill while supporting MCVRC's vital mission. Doing so will result in a reduced rate and savings for you. In addition, \$2 per month donation by Viridian to MCVRC each time you pay your utility bill! There is no enrollment, cancellation or other fees. For more information, or to enroll, visit: Viridian.com/mcvrc or call 866-663-2508. Use the Code 14869. Please contact us at 301-952-0063 with any questions.



Notecards, Greeting Cards, & Holiday Cards – These cards feature Stephanie Roper's original artwork or other local artists who have donated their work to our cause. The notecards are \$5 plus shipping and handling.



AmazonSmile— Go to www.smile.Amazon.com then type in "Maryland Crime Victims Resource Center," which results in 5% of your order price being donated to MCVRC.

Please designate MCVRC for:



United Way of Central Maryland 5442 – Provides funding to organizations who are dedicated to helping individuals and families who are vulnerable and at risk meet their emergency needs, stabilize their lives and ultimately achieve a better quality of life.



United Way of the National Capital Area 9325 – Provides funding to organizations who Focus on the critical areas of Education, Income and Health

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 a 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.

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.

Contact Us!

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20774-7427

Baltimore Offices:

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Suite 401
Baltimore, MD 21202

Governor's Office of Crime
Control & Prevention
University of Baltimore,
College of Public Affairs
10 Preston Street
Baltimore, MD 21201-5779

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

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 Marl-
boro, MD 20774"



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

