

# VICTIMS' RIGHTS BRIEF

April 2019

For Arizona's Justice System Administrators, Practitioners and Advocates



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## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Page 2 -4

2019 Attorney General's  
Distinguished Service  
Award Recipients

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](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).

## National Crime Victims' Rights Week

National Crime Victims' Rights Week

APRIL 7-13 • 2019

Honoring Our Past.  
Creating Hope  
for the Future.

This year's theme "Honoring Our Past. Creating Hope for the Future." encourages us to reflect on inspired leaders, agencies and organizations and their collective accomplishments in the progression of victims' rights in Arizona. Victim service providers in Arizona continue to move forward in the victims' rights movement by persistently seeking to improve education, expanding victims' rights awareness and pursuing resourceful avenues in which to serve victims. In doing so, it is our hope that all victims will be served inclusively and their voices heard.

### ARIZONA ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD WINNERS 2019

Awards were presented to the four recipients at the 2019 National Crime Victim's Rights Week Recognition Event, which was held on April 10, 2019. This event is presented jointly by the Arizona Governor's Office, the Arizona Attorney General's Office, the Maricopa County Attorney's Office, the Arizona Department of Corrections, the Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections, the Arizona Department of Public Safety, and the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission - and serves as a time to remember victims of crime and honor those who work directly with victims, as well as those who work tirelessly to protect victims' rights.

# 2019 DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD WINNERS

## ADVOCACY /DIRECT SERVICES: **Victim Witness Services of Coconino County**

Victim Witness Services (VWS) of Coconino County was founded 35 years ago and has grown as a non-profit agency with over 20 staff members and over 20 volunteers. VWS is very unique, in that the geographic area that they serve is massive and rural, often proving to be a challenge. VWS has compensated for this unique challenge by hiring advocates to serve the Page and Grand Canyon areas, as well as rural mobile Domestic Violence Advocates who travel to meet clients throughout the county. As a stand-alone agency, VWS has been able to formulate a design that serves as many individuals as possible.

In addition to contracting with the Coconino County Attorney's Office to provide non-mandated services to victims in cases being prosecuted, the VWS team provides crisis response services and is on call 24 hours a day for crisis calls throughout the county. Victims receive services to address their trauma and become more involved in



the court process. Additionally, the VWS team includes a K-9 victim advocate named Fanta. Her primary job is working with children who have experienced trauma.

VWS envisions a just, equitable world in which all people are safe and free to be their fully realized selves in communities rooted in love, dignity, and joy. The team is privileged to be part of their clients' journeys from darkness to light.

## SERVICE COORDINATION: **Laura Thomas and Clint Hill**

Laura Thomas and Clint Hill have worked as a team for the Maricopa County Adult Probation Department's Domestic Violence (DV) Unit for more than 12 years, serving as the unit's lead probation and surveillance officers. Their partnership began in 2007 after years of experience working intensive probation caseloads and was an immediate success as a result of their shared passion for victims and community safety. Their caseload consists of defendants who have been placed on supervised probation after being convicted of a DV crime.

As a team, Laura and Clint evaluate the potential danger that victims in their cases may be in and coordinate with the Chrysalis Mobile Advocacy team so that the victim's safety concerns are addressed. When Laura and Clint encounter a new probationer, they ensure that there is no unapproved contact by monitoring the case closely. Throughout the probation term, Laura and Clint encourage victims to provide input and are available to speak with the victim directly to discuss their wishes and concerns.

In addition to coordinating efforts with the Chrysalis Mobile Advocacy team, they also interact with the Superior and



Scottsdale City Courts for review and probation violation hearings, always ensuring that victims are included. Laura and Clint also participate in community DV related panels and committees continuing their education and building their connections throughout their community. Together, they are steadfast in their passion for keeping victims safe and holding abusers accountable.

### **INNOVATIVE PRACTICES: Lieutenant Aaron Spicer**

Lieutenant (Lt.) Aaron Spicer works for the Mesa Police Department (Mesa PD) and has over 21 years of experience in police work in Virginia and in Arizona. With his many years of experience in the field, Lt. Spicer recognized the need to foster relationships in the community and connect with families experiencing tragic events. After working directly with families of loved ones who were lost to violent crime or tragedy, Lt. Spicer became the driving force to create, implement, and manage the Sympathy Card Program. This is a program Lt. Spicer brought to life as he saw the importance of expressing compassion and empathy towards families of a decedent affected by tragedy. With his initiative and innovation, Lt. Spicer has improved Mesa PD's community outreach efforts by creating a program that cultivates and fosters relationships with the local community.

Lt. Spicer recognizes that compassion is one of the key tenants of police work and compassion should always be at the forefront of our conscience. Since the implementation of the Sympathy Card Program, several hundred sympathy cards have been mailed to families impacted by the loss of a loved one. Community response has been very positive and appreciative. Law Enforcement agencies aren't typically seen as a place of compassion, however, with the implementation of the Sympathy Card Program, Lt. Spicer has produced the opportunity to show that an idea seemingly so simple and small can have such a tremendous impact on victims.





## **LEADERSHIP: Theresa Warren**

In 2008, Theresa Warren became the Executive Director of Alice's Place and encouraged the Board to take a leap of faith with limited funds and trust that something wonderful could be built in their community. Through Theresa's vision and guidance, Alice's Place has grown from two employees to an Executive Director, Program Manager, Case Manager, four Victim Advocates, two Crisis Hotline Advocates, and a Thrift Store Manager. Alice's Place was also able to acquire a property that houses a thrift store and community-based offices. Alice's Attic Thrift Store helps support victims of domestic violence by providing items such as clothing, household items, appliances, furniture, electronics, books, music, and exercise and sporting equipment. In 2016, under Theresa's leadership, Alice's Place opened two shelters; one in Winslow, and the other in the Southern part of the Navajo Reservation. Additionally, Alice's Place has expanded their services to include a mobile advocacy program that covers a 40,000 square mile area, reaching all of Navajo County and the Navajo and Hopi Reservations.

Theresa's creativity continues to drive her passion for victim services. She remains a leader by providing her full



attention, genuine concern, and guidance to her employees while serving survivors in her community. Her leadership abilities and passion for assisting domestic violence victims has taken Alice's Place in a different direction as she envisioned when she first took on this role.

**Congratulations to the 2019 Distinguished Service Award Winners!**

**Your achievements inspire, encourage, and truly make a difference in the lives of crime victims.**