



News for Immediate Release

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Corrections Hosts Crime Victim Speakers, Raising Staff Awareness

Harrisburg - In recognition of National Crime Victims' Rights Week, April 21- 27, state corrections employees who work at the Department of Corrections' Central Office will hear two victims discuss the impact of the crime and their journey of survival.

"While employees at the DOC's Central Office work to assist state prison employees with their daily duties of protecting the public and offering offenders ways to change their criminal ways of thinking, many do not work daily inside a facility," Corrections Secretary John Wetzel explained.

"This kind of event is always important to help our employees to remember why their jobs are so vital. Our goal is to reduce future crime which will result in less crime victims," Wetzel said.

On April 23, Craig Miller will share his experience as the uncle of a young homicide victim. Earlier this week, a victim of sexual violence talked to staffers about her experience and the impact of the crime on her life.

Both speakers are volunteers participating in the Impact of Crime Class, a collaboration of the Office of the Victim Advocate and the Department of Corrections. These classes are held inside state prisons where the inmates hear directly from the victims the impact of crime.

Crime touches many lives. According to the Pennsylvania State Police Annual Uniform Crime Report, there were 683 murder offenses reported to Pennsylvania police agencies in 2011, an average of two each day. That same year, there were 448 arrests for murder offenses and 993 arrests for forcible rape offenses.

In response to needs of crime victims, the Office of the Victim Advocate was created by the Victim Advocate Law in 1995. The OVA represents the rights and interests of crime victims before the Board of Probation and Parole and the Department of Corrections.

In addition, the OVA also provides notification to crime victims of the possibility of the inmate being released and their opportunity to provide testimony, notice of the inmate's movement in the correctional system, referrals for the victims to local programs, basic crisis intervention and support, general information on the

status/location of the inmate and basic sentencing information regarding the inmate.

As an additional way to keep victims informed, the Pennsylvania Statewide Automated Victim Information and Notification (PA SAVIN) was implemented.

A free, confidential and automated service, PA SAVIN keeps victims and others up to date on the status of an offender housed in county jail, state prison or under state parole supervision with Pennsylvania, including release, transfer or escape.

Individuals can access PA SAVIN at <https://www.vinelink.com>

Crime victims and family members of crime victims are urged to connect with the Office of Victim Advocate to learn about their rights and available programs.

Visit OVA's website at <http://www.ova.state.pa.us>

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