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News Release



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Durham Police Department Commemorates National Crime Victims' Rights Week, April 2-8

Victim Services Unit to highlight partnerships and new liaison positions

The Durham Police Department (DPD), in commemoration of National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCRW), April 2-8, 2017, is hosting special events and programs, to raise awareness about crime victims' issues and rights and introduce the community to the important resources and services available. Last year, over 5 million individuals across America were a victim of a crime, and there were nearly 15 million property victimizations (according to the 2015 National Crime Victimization Survey conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics).

DPD's Victim Services Unit will commemorate the advancement of victims' rights and highlight issues surrounding victimization by holding and participating in a variety of events. The following events are open to the public:

Saturday, April 1, staff will kick-off the observance at the department's annual **Community Safety Workshop** at the **Carolina Theatre**, 309 W. Morgan Street, from **8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.** A workshop session will feature a Crime Victims' Rights Week video from the national sponsors highlighting the 2017 theme – "Strength. Resilience. Justice." The theme emphasizes the importance of multidisciplinary responses and building the capacity of individuals, service providers, and communities to respond to crime and support the ongoing healing of victims and survivors. In addition, DPD's new liaison officers, Ofc. Charles Strickland (LGBTQ Liaison) and Ofc. Obed Ortiz (Hispanic Liaison), will provide participants an overview of their positions. Victim Advocate Jennifer Hinchey will provide insights of unit operations, services and local resources.

Wednesday, April 5, DPD's **Victims' Rights Week Community Vigil** will feature inspiring call-to-action messages from a variety of speakers, dinner and commemoration of the lives of silent victims of violence occurring over the past year. Additional highlights will include observance t-shirts, other give-aways and literature on victims' rights and community resources. The vigil will be held at police headquarters, 505 W. Chapel Hill Street, beginning at 6 p.m.

Thursday, April 6, LGBTQ Liaison Ofc. Charles Strickland will host **Victim Stories of Strength, Resilience and Justice** - an LGBTQ empowerment event to engage community members who have been victims of crime. Highlights will include artistic performances by local artist Tony Jackson; a question and answer session with Attorney Meredith Nicholson; a dinner meal, give-a-ways and resource literature. The event will be held at the LGBTQ Center of Durham, 114 Hunt Street, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

For additional information about DPD's 2017 National Crime Victims' Rights Week observance and how to assist victims contact DPD's Victim Services Unit at (919) 560-4951. You may also call the DPD Public Affairs Unit at (919) 560-4322.

About DPD's Victim Services Unit

Over the past 20 years the Durham Police Department has made significant strides in providing comprehensive services to crime victims. The origins of a Victim Services Unit in 1997 was a milestone in positioning the agency to better implement, and advocate for, services that reinforce victims' rights. The unit has evolved to currently include a staff of five: a sergeant, corporal and three full-time victim advocates who provide a range of services including round the clock referrals; assistance in filing compensation documents; and language translation for Spanish-speaking victims and witnesses.

Through DPD's Blue Benevolence Fund, financial donations can be received from the public to support the programming and outreach efforts of the Victim Services Unit. Make check(s) payable to "City of Durham." On the "For" line be sure to denote Victim Assistance. Send to Grants Manager, Durham Police Department, 505 W. Chapel Hill Street, Durham, NC 27701.

About The National Sponsors of Victims' Rights Week

The Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) of the U.S. Department of Justice leads communities throughout the country in their annual observances of National Crime Victims' Rights Week, April 2-8, by promoting victims' rights and honoring crime victims and those who advocate on their behalf. The U.S. Department of Justice will host OVC's annual National Crime Victims' Service Awards Ceremony in Washington, DC, to honor outstanding individuals and programs that serve victims of crime.