



Spring 2014

Letter from the Director

"Creating a new pathway in the brain of offenders."

Mission Statement

To strengthen, improve and transform the lives of crime victims and survivors by offering programs that will open dialogue between victims and offenders, and provide offenders with insight into the aftermath of trauma their victims/survivors have experienced.

Board of Directors

LeeAnn Bullock,

Chair

Jordan Casey, Vice

Chair

Emily McCauley,

Treasurer

Onita Wells,

Secretary

Kerry McElwee

Vincent Weeks

Judy Lau

David Dunnington

On April the 9th, Meredith Gardner and I attended the Annual Victims' Tribute at Delaware State University. This national event, is held during National Victims' Crime week, and is presented each year by the Delaware Victims' Rights Task Force as a way of honoring victims and survivors of crime in our state. Meredith attended the event in 2010 when I was the guest speaker. She came up to me after I had spoken and told me she wanted to meet with the man who murdered her mother through Victims' Voices Heard severe violence dialogue program. I told her to call me when she was 18 years old and we would work towards that goal. Meredith met last year with the man who forever changed her life; she is the youngest person to ever participate in the dialogue program. This year, after the Victims' Tribute, Meredith told me she wants to be the speaker next year. Meredith's mother, Tammy Gardner was murdered when Meredith was 12 years old. She has traveled a long and difficult journey to become the confident young woman she is today. I feel humbled that Victims' Voices Heard was there to help her on that journey. Being a survivor of crime is one of the most difficult experiences a person can face in life. I know Tammy would be proud of how her daughter has used the tragedy of her murder to find ways not to let it define her, but use it to help other victims and survivors of crime.

One of the ways Meredith has found to empower herself and others is by being a speaker in the Victim Impact: Listen and Learn program at Baylor Women's Correctional Institution and other correctional facilities in New Castle County. Meredith speaks to the women in the group about how the murder of her mother has impacted her life. We will be doing some research this summer and giving thought to creating a support group for the women who complete the Victim Impact program. We hope to provide the women with the much needed tools for them to re-enter society and be less likely to re-offend after their incarceration.

We recently created a promotional dvd from interviews with participants in the Victim Impact: Listen and Learn program, as well as several survivors of crime who have met with their offender through the dialogue program. The dvd has been posted on our website. Please visit our site www.victimsvoicesheard.org to learn firsthand how our programs are helping to change the lives of victims and offenders in our state.

Our first fundraiser will be on June 14th; a 5K race/walk in Wilmington to honor David Lau, son of our board member, Judy Lau. David was murdered in Florida 12/30/12. He was 23 years old. Please consider coming out to walk or run to honor David's life and help us bring awareness to violence in our state. Funds raised from the 5K will be used to create an event for youth in Wilmington.

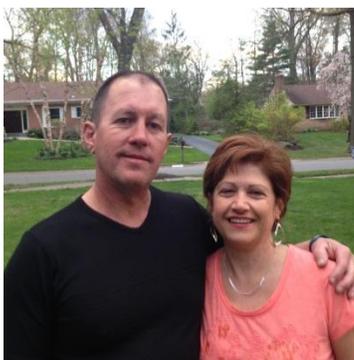
Thank you for your support. We have many plans for the future and know...we couldn't do this work without you.

Peace, Kim Book, Executive Director



To make a difference in someone's life, you don't have to be brilliant, rich, beautiful, or perfect. You just have to care enough and be there.

A Voice for David 5K



David & Judy Lau



On December 30 my husband and I were sitting together watching the Eagles football game when the call came that would ultimately change our lives forever. Our son David was shot three times and he had died; the day before his 24th birthday. Do we yell or scream, which direction do we go, how do we stand up or sit down, who do we call, how do we tell David's siblings, and what do we tell his grandparents? We had so many questions with no directions and clearly no answers. We were on a plane the next morning and landed in Fort Myers to bring our eldest son home. We visited his apartment where he was killed. Our birthday card that he received on December 30th was on his refrigerator. We came

home a week later with our son to begin making funeral arrangements for a young man that had so much life to live. A year has passed and we still have no closure. We continue to work with police to find the person who murdered our son. Several months ago I had to opportunity to talk to Kim Book who is the Executive Director for Victims' Voices Heard, Inc., a non-profit established in 2002 in an effort to help restore victims' lives and end repeated violence in Delaware. Victims Voices Heard provides services to victims / survivors of crime as well as teaching victim empathy to incarcerated offenders in six correctional facilities in the state in an effort to reduce recidivism. My family wants to honor

David's life by working to help end the violence that took his life. We can think of no better way to do that then to hold an event each year in his memory and donate the proceeds to Victims Voices Heard to create positive alternatives for youth in the city of Wilmington. On June 15, 2014 my family and Victims Voices Heard VVH will hold a 5K in memory of our son David; "A Voice for David" The David Lau Project, in the fight against gun violence and we are asking you to join us. I am very happy we connected and hope you find it in your heart to connect with our story and support the 5K in memory of our son David!"

Judy and David Lau.

Registration Information: A Voice for David 5K

Register by mail –A Voice for David 5k, c/o Races2Run, PO Box 24, Montchanin, DE 19710). Checks payable to Victims' Voices Heard, Inc..

Register at Delaware Running Company – cash only by the Thursday before the race at noon.

Register online link on our web site.
Entry fee- \$20 pre-registration (until the Thursday before the race at Noon) /\$25 after and day of event.

New program—Stand Down: Courage to Change

Stand Down: Courage to Change, led by Program Facilitator, Coley Harris, will build a working group of young men, ages 18-25, who will challenge and begin to dismantle the violent street culture in the city of Wilmington.

This group of 15 participants will meet weekly for 90 minutes over the course of a year, working with an ex-offender who has taken steps to turn his life in a positive direction. This program will also feature guest speakers, which will include victims of crime as well as ex-offenders who are living productive lives in their neighborhoods.

This youth working group will engage in a project by partnering with Duffy's Hope, an organization in Wilmington that advances the community by fostering the academic achievement and social enrichment of at-risk youth through advocacy, education, mentoring, and community outreach.

The ultimate goal of this program consists of creating a "working group" of young men who can head back to their own communities once the

program is completed in order to help end the violence in their own neighborhoods. Through this program, the interactive journaling method will be used, an evidence-based practice.

The working group will address:

- Social values
- Responsible thinking
- Self-control
- Peer relationships
- Family ties
- Substance abuse
- Victimization of others
- Conditions that create criminal behavior—how to change them
- Strategies for success

The working group for young adult men will create a space in which individuals with shared experiences can come together and strategize how to make changes within their lives and their own communities.

Once they complete the program, these men will be able to spread the messages of what they have learned to others, so as to create more of a

community in which individuals are advocating to uplift their community.

Through this group, outside community resources consisting of ex-offenders who are working to rebuild their communities will mentor the graduates of the Stand Down program on an ongoing basis.



Coley Harris—Program Facilitator

"Victims' Voices Heard, Inc. is excited to announce the launching of a NEW program at Howard R Young Correctional Institution in Wilmington that will work towards bringing young men together to end the violence in the city of Wilmington.."



New board member David Dunnington

Victims' Voices Heard is proud to have David Dunnington join our board of Directors. David is an Enrichment Coordinator for the Upward Bound Program at Delaware Technical and Community College. He has a Master's of Science in Management, a Bachelors degree of Science in

Criminal Justice. David is an Adjunct Faculty member at Delaware Technical Community College in the Criminal Justice Division and also a member of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc.

David is a former employee of the Department of Correction

and worked as a Correctional Officer at James T Vaughn Correctional Center.



"Judy Lau is also a new board member since our last newsletter. Her energy and dedication are contagious. We are blessed to have them both joining our work."

Our new office

We are excited to announce we now have an office in the Community Services Building in Wilmington.

We hope to hire our first administrative assistant in June who will assist Kim with day to day duties of running the various

programs we now have; Victim Impact: Listen and Learn in 5 correctional facilities, dialogue program, Apology Letter Bank and our support groups.

100 W. 10th ST.
Wilmington, DE 19801

Visit their web site for directions and other information about the Community Services Building and other services there,

<http://www.csbcorp.org/>

Giving Our Grief a Voice



*(left) Volunteer: LeeAnn Bullock
(right) Facilitator: Adrienne Johnson, MASD*

A mother's concern for the lack of grief support in Wilmington was expressed in the summer of 2013 and from this a community support group was launched.

HOPE (A Powerful Healing) - No one likes to grieve yet it's the very act of grieving that leads you back to life. You can hope that when you integrate this loss into your life that you will still feel connected to the person you lost, while still being apart. You can hope that others

will be there for you when you need them. Giving Our Grief a Voice community support group wants you to know that we are here for you. We provide a safe haven where mothers and family members who have lost their loved one to violent crimes can gain support and build strength. We offer friendship and mutual support in a confidential group setting.

We invite you to come join us! For more information, please call 302-697-7005 or go to www.victimsvocesheard.org
*Meetings: Every 2nd & 4th Monday (6:00p.m.)
Where: Neighborhood Planning Council Building
394 Concord Avenue
Wilmington, DE.*

Helping Each Other Grow by Ariana Langford

March 19, 2014: I am driving a bit harder than I would like in the pouring rain. Stress from the driving conditions and a few wrong turns mixes with the excitement and jitters I feel about the upcoming evening. Closer to my destination, I turn off the radio for a little quiet time with God. I ask that He put the words in my mouth that will serve my audience. I pray that my audience have open hearts to hear me - and that I may hear them. I breathe deeply to calm my nerves. I am not afraid because I am going into a correctional facility. The story I will share is so deeply personal it is still hard to tell.



I arrive on time to meet Norwood Coleman, the facilitator for the Victim Impact Listen and Learn program at the Plummer Work Release Center. I am the guest speaker tonight. I have had the honor of participating in these programs four times before, twice in this facility. The purpose of the program is to help offenders understand the greater impact of crime on victims and society, help them get beyond their personal experience of crime and punishment. By building awareness, hopefully offenders will make different choices when they get out into society.

My part in this is very small. I share with the group what it was like for me being a victim of a crime – in my case stranger rape.

The group files in and takes their places around the circle. I count 15 men tonight. The sessions usually start out with discussion of crimes that participants have heard about in the past week. This conversation gives me a chance to observe the group and get a sense for their engagement in the process. Then after some introductions, it's my turn to speak.

I begin and end my story at the same place, in my present life, which is blessed in countless ways. But if you are going to understand my story as a rape victim, it is best told in the context of the life that I lived before then. I tell the group how I spent five years being bounced around in foster care, before I was adopted by two people who never should have been allowed to have children. I talk about many years of severe physical abuse and sexual molestation. I explain that prior to being put out of the house at seventeen, I would sneak out at nights to walk, because the streets were safer than my own home.

Then I tell the group about the rape which occurred in the early morning hours of August 24, 1982, during a late night walk. While I try not to be unnecessarily graphic, I provide enough specific detail to allow them to understand the horror of events that night.

I was attacked a long time ago, before there was much thought given to a victim or her rights in such a situation. The act of reporting the crime only added to the trauma. The man who raped me was never caught. Most groups I talk to are surprised at how victims fare with the police and legal system.

From there, I tell the group about the years I spent stuck in a blur of depression, drug and alcohol abuse. I talk about how I finally got the help I needed and started building a 'normal' life. I explain that healing is an ongoing process. Even though I have been happily married for more than twenty years, I continue to take steps to grow and heal.

When I finish my story, I ask the group for questions. This is my favorite part of the evening if we can get a good dialogue going. Tonight's group has a lot of good questions. They are all very respectful. I attribute this in part to the work the facilitators do to prepare them for guests. The man next to me struggles to ask his question tactfully, and I know where it is going, so I help him out. "Are you asking about my ability to be intimate with a man?" He nods, relieved, either not to have to get it out, or by the fact that I am not bothered by the question. In fact, I am happy when they ask me the hard questions. I don't always answer quite as well as I would like. Sometimes the facilitator will help me out. But I am working to get better! A few times I've had someone ask, "I know a woman who has been sexually assaulted, how can I support her?" Always, someone asks the intimacy question. How fortunate am I to get a chance to have these conversations, to perhaps help these men to be more supportive of women they know?

