

VICTIMS' RIGHTS BRIEF

For Arizona's Justice System Administrators, Practitioners and Advocates



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The **Victims' Rights Brief** is published by the Office of 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

If you have questions, suggestions or an idea for an article, contact **Colette Chapman** at (602) 542-8848 or email colette.chapman@azag.gov.

2018 National Crime Victims' Rights Week



**EXPAND THE CIRCLE
REACH ALL VICTIMS**

National Crime Victims' Rights Week | April 8-14 2018

This year's theme—"Expand the Circle: Reach All Victims" emphasizes the importance of every crime victim having access to services and support needed for healing and recovery; and that we, as victim services professionals, organizations, and communities work together in our efforts to serve. The AZ Attorney General's Office, through its various programs, is committed to ensuring the theme is recognized in Arizona daily. In doing so, as a state, we collectively support victims in their reclamation.

In celebration of the National Crime Victims' Rights Week, Arizona Attorney General Mark Brnovich presented the 2018 Attorney General's Distinguished Service Awards recognizing individuals and groups who serve victims of crime with passion and steadfast dedication.

ARIZONA ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD WINNERS 2018

Awards were presented to the four recipients at the 2018 National Crime Victims' Rights Week Recognition Event, which was held on April 9, 2018. 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 and the Arizona Department of Public Safety - 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.

2018 DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD WINNERS

ADVOCACY/DIRECT SERVICES: Arizona Responders: Las Vegas Mass Shooting

The Las Vegas mass shooting on October 1, 2017, was among the most devastating attacks of its kind in modern American history, and it left not just the community, but the entire country reeling. In the wake of the mass shooting, the Nevada Attorney General reached out to other states' Attorney General's Offices, seeking assistance in providing services to the extraordinary number of victims involved. Immediately, the Arizona Attorney General's Office, along with the Pima County Attorney's Office heeded the call and offered the assistance of staff and volunteers who were trained in crisis response. The two offices coordinated to form a combined team of 14 staff and volunteers who would travel to Las Vegas to render assistance to the hundreds of victims of the attack. The responders from both agencies came together to meet the needs of the visitors and residents of Las Vegas who were in crisis and suffering after-effects resulting from the mass shooting. As part of their response, Nevada officials set up a Family Assistance Center (FAC) at the Las Vegas Convention Center. The responders spent long hours each day and night at the FAC, triaging needs and providing assistance to victims and their families who were experiencing confusion, fear, and trauma. It was not uncommon for the Nevada officials to find the Arizona team still working with victims long after other volunteers had left for the day. The Spanish-speaking staff members were in high demand and were requested to stay in Las Vegas longer than anticipated. These Arizona Responders showed selflessness and immense caring as they worked countless hours and long days assisting in identifying the needs of victims and their families. The staff and volunteers from both offices went above and beyond during an extraordinary time in our history, with efforts and work that were appreciated by victims

Arizona Responders:

Attorney General's Office

Cari Garrison
Alex Rucker
M. Virginia Rodriguez
Albert Fimbres

Pima County Attorney's Office

Nicole Hansen
Tara Davoodi Roberts
John Faris
Rosanna Cortez
Shelly Gibbons
Katie Lawler
Gaby Berrios
Shelly McCullough-Cruz
Cindy Gamble
Francisco Padilla



Attorney General Mark Brnovich with members of the Arizona Attorney General's Office of Victim Services (Left) and the Pima County Attorney's Office (Right)

SERVICE COORDINATION: Winged Hope Family Advocacy Foundation

As a child abuse prevention advocate for 18 years, and a child abuse survivor herself, Jessica Nicely long felt frustrated about the number of child abuse cases going un-prosecuted. In 2013, after learning about the effectiveness of Child and Family Advocacy Centers, Jessica established Winged Hope Family Advocacy Foundation. Winged Hope's programs focus on child abuse and domestic violence awareness, prevention and treatment as well as providing assistance and support to existing Advocacy Centers. Winged Hope also helps to support the startup and sustainability of Family Advocacy Centers across the state of Arizona. These centers utilize the multi-disciplinary method of investigation in their aim to reduce trauma and empower victims of crime. Winged Hope is actively working on an East Valley Family Advocacy Center in Maricopa County and also participated in the beginning stages of the new San Tan Valley Family Advocacy Center in Pinal County. In collaboration with their partners, the work of Winged Hope has transformed and touched over 8,000 lives since its start in 2013. Under the outstanding leadership of Jessica and its all-volunteer based staff, Winged Hope provides direct services to victims and survivors.

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These services include: providing assistance to domestic violence victims with their life needs, keeping victims safe, helping provide funds for victims, and helping with victims' necessary living expenses. Winged Hope also helps with obtaining protective orders, support during legal and court matters, assisting with citizenship applications, and providing counseling. Winged Hope has accomplished significant and meaningful feats in the field of victim services, and provides important accommodations for victims. Their impact is felt by each and every person and organization they have helped. Appreciation for an organization like Winged Hope has been expressed by many, and has been a positive and inspiring influence on others.

**Attorney General Mark Brnovich and Jessica Nicely,
Founder/CEO of Winged Hope**



Photo Credit: Epic Light Media

INNOVATIVE PRACTICES: Clerk of the Court in Maricopa County Victim Locate Program

Recognizing the need to better address disbursement of court-ordered restitution payments to crime victims, the Clerk of the Superior Court (COSC) in Maricopa County launched a program called "Victim Locate" (VL), with the goal of finding victims of crime who were not receiving their court-ordered restitution. The COSC teamed up with the Maricopa County Attorney's Office, the Attorney General's Office, the Adult Probation Department, and the Superior Court to help identify different and better ways to obtain victims' addresses, which lead to the identification and development of the multiple sources and contacts the VL staff uses to locate victims. Many times, a victim's information is either missing or outdated, simply due to an unreported change of address. In the first few months of the program, the Clerk's Office was able to distribute over \$384,000 in restitution to previously unknown victims. They continued conducting research to establish the correct addresses of their victims, and created processes that yielded even more positive results. By 2010, the COSC had accumulated approximately \$3 million in court ordered restitution checks that were never cashed due to incorrect or missing victim addresses. This sparked a motivation to continue locating the rightful recipients of the unclaimed monies. Annually, the COSC disburses \$10 million to victims of crime who have been granted court ordered restitution; and the Office has issued a total of 6,619 checks to victims who were located, resulting in the disbursement of nearly \$1.7 million since its inception. This past year, one victim that was owed \$6,500 from a 1992 case and another victim that was owed \$11,000 from a 1994 case were both located and received their full restitution amount due to this program. Their ability to enhance the system and help resolve the ongoing court ordered restitution issues is undoubtedly impressive and should be used as a model around the state. This project demonstrates the remarkable ability for multi-agency coordination and a true commitment to bettering and further developing victim services.



Photo Credit: Epic Light Media

**Attorney General Mark Brnovich with (L-R): N. Oni Boston,
Doris Anthony and Chris Kelly**

LEADERSHIP: Detective Michael Russo, Chandler Police Department (Not pictured by request)

Detective Michael Russo has had a long, reputable career with the Chandler Police Department since 1997, serving many different victims of crime. Currently he is assigned to the Chandler Police Department's Vice/Human Trafficking unit, which focuses on the fight against human trafficking; and he is also a current member of the FBI's Greater Phoenix Area Human Trafficking Task Force. Det. Russo routinely leads undercover operations targeting pimps and predators and has investigated hundreds of cases involving human trafficking and child exploitation. He didn't start his career targeting pimps and predators and by his own admission he was not tech-savvy; but over time he has turned himself into an expert on the disturbing subject matter of exploitation, abuse and trafficking. Det. Russo's important work - which includes portraying himself as a young girl online to catch predators - isn't how most people would expect to spend their work days. Besides taking on an entirely different persona online, he also hunts down Internet ads, reads over hundreds of buying sites and chat rooms, and searches the city streets like a real-life superhero looking for potential at-risk youth and victims to save. He also dedicates his time to educating others on how to avoid predators and trafficking situations. Det. Michael Russo has demonstrated tremendous bravery, dedication, and passion in a unit that, by following his lead, will only continue to grow and excel in the years to come. He is the embodiment of genuine integrity and motivates others to assist in seeking justice for victims of crime.