

# VICTIMS' RIGHTS BRIEF

For Arizona's Justice System Administrators, Practitioners and Advocates



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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 an idea for an article, contact **Colette Chapman** at (602) 542-8848.

*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."*

Margaret Mead (1901-1978)

## 2013 Attorney General's Distinguished Service Award Recipients

April 21-27, 2013 was National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRW) sponsored by the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC). The theme for this year's event was "New Challenges, New Solutions." At the multi-agency Victims' Rights Week event on April 23, Attorney General Tom Horne presented the Attorney General's Distinguished Service Awards, which honor individuals who have displayed an extraordinary dedication in assisting and serving victims of crime.



The 2013 recipients were chosen in the following five categories: **Ms. Donnalee Sarda**, Advocacy/Direct Services; **Ms. Sonja Gonzalez**, Service Coordination; **Lieutenant Robert Bates**, Innovative Practices; **Ms. Terry DenDulk** and **Mr. Robert Quan**, Public Policy; and **Ms. Iva Rody**, Leadership. The awardees' accomplishments exemplify service to victims as highlighted in their accomplishments below.

### 2013 Distinguished Service Award Recipients

#### ADVOCACY/DIRECT SERVICES:

##### ***Ms. DONNALEE SARDA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DEFENDERS OF CHILDREN***

With over 20 years of promoting and ensuring children's rights and safety through direct service provision and advocacy, Donnalee Sarda has demonstrated professionalism and passion for victims of child abuse and neglect. As the Executive Director for Defenders of Children, Donnalee has helped ensure that more than 24,000 vulnerable individuals receive the support and services they need to overcome the tragic abuse and neglect they have encountered. During the recent economic downturn, Donnalee voluntarily worked without pay and spent countless hours submitting grant applications and looking for alternate funding sources; ensuring the agency would be able to continue in its commitment to serving and advocating for victims. Her focus on collaboration with law enforcement agencies, Child Protective Services and court clerks has been instrumental in helping victims receive appropriate and necessary services. Donnalee's work with victims fleeing the polygamous FLDS communities has provided women and children valuable legal assistance and crucial resources needed to heal from their oppression and abuse. Donnalee continues to positively impact Arizona crime victims through her tireless commitment and dedication to them and their safety and well-being.



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## 2013 Distinguished Service Award Recipients (Continued)

### **SERVICE COORDINATION**

#### ***Ms. SONJA GONZALEZ, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NORTHLAND FAMILY HELP CENTER***

Networking, communicating, and a focus on meeting the needs of crime victims has been central in Sonja Gonzalez's success at Northland Family Help Center, particularly during the recent financial decline. Creating a diversified funding pool during her nearly 8 year tenure helped ensure that victims and survivors could continue to receive services in rural northern Arizona by keeping the agency afloat while exploring new and improved practices. Helping develop and support a team committed to serving victims despite the economic costs, Sonja kept staff informed, focused on the agency's strategic plan, and engaged in feedback and input through transparency and problem solving. Sonja's commitment to service provision was also recently demonstrated by leading her agency in a partnership with the Northern Arizona Center Against Sexual Assault to create and provide a 24 hour crisis line for sexual assault victims. Sonja's hard work, compassion and commitment to leading her team in strategic partnerships are all benefits to her team and the victims and survivors they serve.



### **INNOVATIVE PRACTICES**

#### ***LIEUTENANT ROBERT BATES, FAMILY INVESTIGATIONS BUREAU, PHOENIX POLICE DEPARTMENT***

Domestic violence is the single most prevalent call responded to by Phoenix Police Officers. Officers didn't always have the proper tools to help determine which domestic violence calls were most serious and those that had a perpetrator with a high likelihood of reoffending, often placing the victim in a dangerous situation. Lt. Robert Bates, on his own initiative, began to research the indicators of reoccurring violence or death. Over a period of many months, he interviewed focus group participants, studied hundreds of Phoenix DV cases, reviewed literature, and collaborated with various field and domestic violence experts to determine what factors were the best predictors of future violence. Using this information he developed four simple questions which could be asked by the officers responding to the each domestic violence call. This information was used to gather information to better assess DV incidents based on severity of danger and potential for future violence. Because of Lt. Bates' initiative, every Phoenix Police Officer responding to a DV call now carries a card with the four questions to ask; and has been replicated in several other Arizona jurisdictions and is gaining national attention as a model practice. As a result, victims are better served, perpetrators have been held accountable and scarce police resources have been allocated to best use.



### **PUBLIC POLICY**

#### ***Ms. TERRY DENDULK AND MR. ROBERT QUAN***

On December 23, 2006, Terry DenDulk and Robert Quan's daughter, Heather Quan was murdered and her friend severely injured in a home invasion robbery committed by a father and son duo - Larry and Richie Carver. Following the murder, Larry confessed what he had done to his wife. Several weeks later, Larry's wife reported this information to police including his confession; however, she later invoked her marital privilege allowing her to refuse to testify against her husband at his trial. Because the confession was crucial to the case against Larry Carver, the case was dismissed. Terry and Robert could not accept the fact they would not see justice for the person responsible for the murder of their daughter and vowed to find a way to change the law. In June 2009, with the assistance of Arizona Voice for Crime Victims, SB 1254 was introduced which amended the anti-marital fact privileged exception under A.R.S. § 13-4062. Terry's heartfelt testimony to the legislative committee helped them understand the pain and frustration of seeing Larry walk out of court a free man knowing he had literally gotten away with murder. Terry and Robert's battle for justice resulted in the creation and passage of "Heather's Law" and the eventual conviction of Larry Carver in November 2011, and helping unknown other victims and their families in similar situations ensure that justice is served.



### **LEADERSHIP**

#### ***Ms. IVA RODY, VICTIM ADVOCATE, EL MIRAGE POLICE DEPARTMENT***

Iva Rody has had a long, reputable career in serving victims of crime in a variety of agencies. Using that knowledge and drive, Iva successfully developed and implemented the first ever Victim Assistance Unit for the El Mirage Police Department. She began her work in El Mirage as a victim advocate volunteer in 2011 and began developing a victim advocacy program, devoting over 400 hours to program development and grant writing. Iva worked closely with law enforcement, city and county prosecutors, service providers, and crime victims to identify and provide support and crisis intervention services. With her guidance, the El Mirage Police Department was awarded start-up funding to begin serving victims of Domestic Violence. Iva has since been hired to lead the Victim Assistance Unit and interacts with all line-level officers and supervisors, making herself available to answer questions and share information to help victims of domestic violence. She goes beyond the call of duty by being available to respond from home and make direct and immediate contact with victims. So far, the Victim Assistance Unit has served more than 88 domestic violence victims, providing over 500 services. She has also provided information as part of Domestic Violence Awareness efforts for the City of El Mirage, reaching over 230 community members. Iva's leadership, initiative and dedication have helped bring enhanced services and supports to victims of crime by creating a first-of-its-kind program for the City of El Mirage.

