



OCVLC NEWSLETTER



From the Executive Director

While summer in Oregon is always welcome, it has also proven to be one of OCVLC's busiest times of the year. Our attorneys have appeared in courts around the state recently on behalf of victims, helping them assert rights and working to keep protective orders in place. We've had attorneys representing victims with privacy and restitution issues in Central Oregon, with stalking orders and sentencing hearings in Yamhill, Marion, and Polk counties, and with protective order proceedings and with concerns about pretrial release in the Metro area. Our advocate has continued to be there for victims, providing support and resources as well as providing in-person support during hearings. We are fortunate to work with so many great organizations in the state, including Legal Aid Services of Oregon, the Domestic Violence Resource Center, Oregon Law Center, and Disability Rights Oregon. We all share common goals – access to justice and ensuring victims' voices are heard. We are also fortunate to work with many dedicated victim advocates in district attorneys' offices around the state, who provide valuable support to those navigating the criminal justice system. The last few years have been challenging for us all, but we remain optimistic about the future and committed to providing victims' the representation and support they need. Recently, a former client sent us a note to say thanks for the work an OCVLC attorney had done, and it reminded me that the work we do can make such a difference to someone. Our client wrote:

"OCVLC's staff were a wonderful resource and amazing support through a very difficult time. I was given guidance and representation that allowed me to feel secure and confident. Thank you."

Enjoy the rest of summer, and thank you for your support!

-- Rosemary Brewer

Advocacy in Washington County

By Rachel Garrett

For many victims, knowing where to find help for their variety of needs often can be the hardest step.

The Family Justice Center of Washington County provides a space where individuals can find many of the resources they need in one location.



Washington County's FJC is a non-profit offering wrap-around services to survivors of family violence and abuse. The center is a collaboration of agencies that work together to provide the services and support that victims need, enabling them to find assistance for a variety of issues in one building. Partners of the center include the Sexual Assault Resource Center, the Domestic Violence Resource Center, Community Action, the Sheriff of Washington County, Oregon Law Center, Disability Rights Oregon, Victim Rights Law Center, and the Oregon Crime Victims Law Center. The FJC opened in 2018, and since then has provided services to more than 11,550 survivors. Even through the coronavirus pandemic, the Center was able to offer services to more than 4,490 individuals.¹ Last year, 40% of individuals seeking help at the center identified as Hispanic or Lantinx, 6% identified as Black or African American, and 3% as Asian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander. The Center hopes to relocate to a larger location within the next few years to be able to accommodate more services for survivors.

At the Family Justice Center, victims have access to:

- Drop-in child care
- Counseling
- Restraining Orders
- Housing Assistance
- Legal Aid
- Crime Reporting
- Crisis and Safety Planning
- Transportation Assistance
- Food Pantry
- Showers and basic needs supplies
- Emergency overnight shelter
- And more!

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An OCVLC attorney is available for walk-in help at the Family Justice Center on Mondays from 9am-4pm. Victims looking for help from one of our attorneys can come to the Center for assistance preparing for contested restraining orders, questions about the criminal justice process, or complete an intake for legal representation. Individuals looking to get help at the Family Justice Center can visit Monday through Friday between 8:30am and 4pm at 735 SW 158th Ave, Suite 100, Beaverton, OR 97006.

For more information on the Family Justice Center of Washington County, or to help support its mission, visit fjwc.org

Advocacy and the Pandemic: What's next?

By Mickey Karnas



At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, victim advocates faced many unique challenges in our work supporting survivors. Building trust and relationships with victims is integral to our work, and proved to be more challenging without face-to-face time and in-person interactions. Phone and video support is very difficult. In general survivors may feel overlooked, unheard, and unseen. Part of our job as advocates is to listen and to insure that the victim knows we are fully present; that we believe them and we are here for them. Without physically being present for events such as restraining order hearings, criminal court proceedings, accompaniment to police reports, our attention and care was hard to convey.

Along with the challenges we faced, survivors were struggling more than ever. Safety planning options were limited when it was not safe or possible to access things like domestic violence shelters, public transportation, or even indoor public spaces. Stressors that come up such as technical difficulties are deeply compounded when one has recently experienced or is having to revisit trauma. And as crime rates steadily rise, victim needs are higher than ever. ²

Luckily, creative thinking and problem solving are some of the many strong skills of a victim advocate. Trauma-informed support is always led by individual needs, and because of that, advocates are very competent when it comes to facing new and unique challenges in our work. How did we get through this period of time and how did we adapt? We talked to each other. We connected with our community and system-based partners, and worked hard in shared spaces to come up with new solutions and options for our survivors. From input on how to compassionately trouble-shoot a video-based courtroom hearing, to exchanging ideas about safe and private outdoor meeting spots, victim advocates around the state collaborated and shared skills to get to where we are now. ³

As we move forward together through the changes in the pandemic, and some in-person services resume, advocates continue to serve victims guided by the needs they express. We will continue to be flexible and patient as we work with survivors by their side while they seek safety and justice.

Community Org Spotlight: New Day Program

OCLVC recently connected with Kat Salas, the Program Manager with New Day, a community organization based out of the Portland area. New Day provides services to support the needs of youth experiencing sex trafficking or exploitation, and is a collaboration with Call to Safety, Raphael House, Self Enhancement, Inc. (SEI), and VOA HomeFree.

How long has New Day been established and what is your mission?

Since its conception in June of 2018, New Day has strived to foster self-determination for youth towards safety and long-term stability. We believe that fostering self-esteem and self-efficacy through providing options and room for individual autonomy is key to addressing sex trafficking. Whether through active safety planning around leaving a trafficker or working towards goals like housing or employment, we operate with the understanding that every youth we work with deserves the opportunity to thrive. Our intention is to support youth at risk for sex trafficking or survivors currently in the sex trades by empowering them to meet their unique and self-identified goals through non-judgmental support, mentorship, and access to a comprehensive continuum of care. We are always keen to build partnerships with other organizations supporting survivors and expanding culturally responsive services so that there is “no wrong door” when youth seek support.

From your website, "New Day supports the safety, needs, and rights of people ages 12-25 who are experiencing sex trafficking or exploitation, trading sex, or are at risk." In terms of programs, where will your focus be this year?

Each year (including 2022), our goal is to continue to expand and innovate services for survivors. This year, we are launching a 18 month transitional shared housing program called “Butterfly House.”

TRADING SEX FOR MONEY,
HOUSING OR OTHER NEEDS?
IN NEED OF SUPPORT?
NEED HELP?
WANT A CHANGE?

NEW DAY
PROGRAM

AVAILABLE 24/7
1-800-235-5333
TEXT OR CHAT
MON-FRI 11AM-4PM
503-235-5333

Confidential
Non-Judgmental
SUPPORT

CALL TO SAFETY * NEW AVENUES FOR YOUTH * RAPHAEL HOUSE

Continues →

Community Org Spotlight: New Day Program (Continued)

Butterfly House will be designed specifically for survivors of exploitation, this housing model will support youth in building both community and life skills while working towards longer term independent housing options. Trauma-informed housing continues to be an ask from survivors and we always want to center input and insight from young people impacted, so this is a big source of excitement for us!

We've also re-configured some of our mentorship roles to be more responsive to youth impacted by systems involvement. In particular, one of the mentor roles will be a DHS Child Welfare specialist to enhance relationships to better support youth in custody.

When working with youth who have experienced exploitation, building trust and relationships is always a challenge. We recognize that many youth are protective of their stories for valid reasons, and approach with curiosity and consistency. This year we were able to bring back in-person New Day groups after a COVID-19 hiatus, and it's been really cool to see youth interested in coming together and talking about relationships with their peers. In one of our recent groups we did an activity called "red flag, green flag, yellow flag" about identifying potentially harmful or supportive behaviors in different relationship scenarios and the engagement was above and beyond what we ever saw online. There were a lot of great questions and youth-led discussions, and we look forward to seeing more of that this year.

Lastly, this year, we developed a partnership with VOA HomeFree that will provide economic empowerment services and advocacy for survivors growing out of the youth continuum.

We understand that New Day also engages youth in sex trafficking preventative education. What are some of the challenges and/or successes you've seen with this program so far?

Raphael House provides prevention curriculum, activities, and awareness services in local schools, within more generalized vulnerable services and across other systems. This prevention is focused on intersections of equitable relationships and labor. Curriculum was challenging to implement during the start of the COVID-19 pandemic due to virtual learning, but has adjusted and re-invigorated with in-person learning at local schools. We are seeing exponential increases in requests to partner for the sex trafficking and exploitation series.

OCLVC supports crime victims of all ages, connecting them with and helping to assert their rights. New Day is one of many much-needed community service providers who help to provide cross-system services and support for victims and survivors.

Recent Case Summaries

An attorney with OCVLC represented a victim of a sexual assault when the defense attorney filed a subpoena for the victim's confidential medical records. The prosecutor and victim advocate referred the victim to OCVLC when the victim expressed concern about the records being released to the defense. The defense requested records spanning a five-year time period and were not related to the incident that led to the indictment. The OCVLC attorney filed a motion to quash the subpoena and the prosecutor supported OCVLC's motion to quash. A hearing was held on the matter and the court ruled that the subpoena would not be issued and that the victim's records would not be released to the defense. The victim was very relieved to know that their medical records would remain confidential.

An OCVLC attorney recently represented a victim in a contested restraining order hearing. The victim was a survivor of domestic violence who filed for a restraining order after a violent assault by her partner. The victim was very fearful of the abuser, who had a history of violence and had made threats against the victim. The OCVLC attorney was able to work with the victim to prepare for the hearing, including obtaining police reports and speaking with witnesses. After a hearing in which the respondent was represented by an attorney, the court granted the victim the restraining order.

An OCVLC attorney recently represented a parent whose minor child was the victim of an assault. The victim was not aware that they were able to seek restitution for the medical costs incurred as a result of the assault. The OCVLC attorney assisted the victim with requesting restitution and submitting the required documentation to the district attorney's office, and then worked to have a hearing scheduled at a time that took the victim's schedule into consideration. The victim was awarded the restitution that was requested.

OCVLC's Victim Advocate accompanied the family survivors of a murder victim at a hearing with the Oregon Board of Parole for the offender. Two family members intended to read their victim impact statements. One family member had technical difficulties and was unable to read her statement. The family asked our Victim Advocate to interject at the close of the hearing, requesting that the family member be allowed to read her statement on speaker phone. Our advocate did so, and the victim's family was able to successfully read her full statement. The family expressed gratitude that their request had been honored, and that all of their voices were heard.

A victim of stalking reached out to learn the best approach to filing charges against her stalker, who has repeatedly violated their Stalking Protective Order. After getting advice from one of our attorneys, she was referred to our Victim Advocate to discuss her safety plan moving forward. Our advocate was able to provide strategies for the victim if and when the stalker violated again, such as leaving the area safely, notifying police, and some preventative measures like making use of the victim's security cameras. The victim expressed feeling supported and organized with her plan, and felt comfortable with and supported by our advocate, opening the doors to future support and safety planning as needed.

OCVLC was recently contacted by a victim about assistance with a contested restraining order. The victim was unsure about how to prepare for the hearing and what to expect the day of the hearing. An OCVLC attorney was able to guide the victim through the format of the hearing and gave advice on the best way to prepare. The victim had questions about what kind of evidence would be needed and how to present the evidence at the hearing. After talking through the process with the attorney, the victim felt much more prepared and confident about what to expect.