



OCVLC NEWSLETTER



OCVLC Staff: Staff Attorney Dan Hesson, Executive Director Rosemary Brewer, Staff Attorney Vicky Radenkova, Staff Attorney Rachel Garrett, Victim Advocate/Administrative Specialist Mickey Karnas, Finance Manager Pam Madaus (Not pictured: Senior Staff Attorney Emily La Breque)

From the Executive Director

BY ROSEMARY BREWER

It's been a busy few months at OCVLC and we are happy to say we are back in the office! We are working in a hybrid model for now – some days in the office, some days at home – and it's been great to see our coworkers in person again. We have added an attorney, Dan Hesson, who is working in Central Oregon, and a new advocate, Mickey Karnas, who brings valuable experience working with domestic violence survivors. We're thrilled they've joined us! Staff attorney Vicky Radenkova has returned to working at the Gateway Center twice a week in person, and staff attorney Rachel Garrett has been working one day a week at the Washington County Family Justice Center. We are grateful to Gateway and the Family Justice Center for allowing us to serve survivors in these spaces!

In April we held our Fourth Annual Hardy Myers Dinner, our first in person event since 2019, and we are so thankful to those who attended. We were so pleased to have the Myers family with us that evening, and we are thankful for their ongoing support. Johanna Costa, the Oregon Department of Justice's Hate Crimes and Bias Incidents Response Coordinator, was our Hardy Myers Victim Advocate Award winner, and it was wonderful to hear Johanna talk about the work she done over her career. She's made an enormous impact on the lives on victims in Oregon. We are grateful to our sponsors, those who donated auction and raffle items, and all who attended the dinner. We met our fundraising goal, had a wonderful time, and honored victims' rights in Oregon – a successful evening!

Inside this quarter's newsletter you'll find more on our new staff members, photos from the Hardy Myers Dinner, information about the Oregon Bias Response Hotline, and an update on recent cases we've been working on.

This Year's 4th Annual Hardy Myers Dinner



Oregon Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum with Hardy Myers Advocacy Award winner Johanna Costa, Hate Crimes and Bias Incidents Response Coordinator, Oregon Department of Justice



From left to right: Chris Myers, Hardy Myers III, Jon Myers



Members of the OCVC Board of Directors with award winner Johanna Costa (center): Megan Johnson, President, Amity Girt, Vice-President, Josh Lamborn, Treasurer/Secretary, Mark Robben. (Not pictured: Marlene Yesquen, Sen. Richard Devlin, Faith Morse)

Fourth Annual Hardy Myers Dinner

Benefiting

Oregon Crime Victims Law Center

Thank you to Our Sponsors

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Robben**

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Resource Corner: Oregon Bias Crime Reporting Line

BY MICKEY KARNAS

This year the Oregon Department of Justice expanded the services offered by the statewide Bias Reporting Hotline for people who have experienced crimes and were targeted on the basis of their race, color, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or religion. Those individuals can reach out to the hotline Monday-Friday 9AM-5PM to make a report, receive support, learn about their legal options, and potentially access financial assistance via the Bias Response Emergency Fund. The hotline is available in 240+ interpreters/languages and staffed by advocates trained in trauma-informed support.

"SB 577 [The "Bias Crime Law"] created the Bias Response Hotline, so it was a crucial step toward centering survivors in the aftermath of hate and bias. Too often our systems have focused on perpetrators. We hear from survivors that the Bias Response Hotline has allowed them a place to be heard, taken seriously, process what has happened, make plans for safety, and learn about next step options. We now have a team of multilingual and multicultural advocates on the hotline," said Johanna Costa, the Bias Response Coordinator with the Oregon DOJ.

"In addition to the emergency fund, we provide victim and survivor advocacy services on the hotline and in communities. This can include accompaniment to make a law enforcement report or attend court, helping individuals petitioning for a civil protective order, navigating systems like if BOLI or HUD is conducting an investigation into bias in a housing setting, and making connections to culturally specific support services in the community."



Bias Response Hotline

1-844-924-BIAS (1-844-924-2427)

Monday - Friday 9am-5pm

Report online at

StandAgainstHate.Oregon.gov

We accept all Relay calls

Interpretation in 240+ languages

The emergency fund is a limited resource to assist victims of bias crimes or bias incidents in their recovery. Applications for up to \$1,000 in financial assistance must be submitted to the Bias Response Hotline within 90 days of occurrence of the bias incident/bias crime.

- ✓ Security Measures
- ✓ Property Repairs
- ✓ Relocation Assistance
- ✓ Utilities Assistance
- ✓ Pet Boarding
- ✓ Interpretation Costs

"The Crime Victims' Compensation Program now covers counseling costs for victims and survivors of bias incidents [non-criminal conduct like hate speech and discrimination] as well as hate crimes; no report to law enforcement is required, and the Bias Response Hotline can help individuals apply for this resource."

Victims and survivors of bias crimes often face unique challenges when making reports or accessing victim assistance. The hotline and these resources come at a time when Oregonians and vulnerable people all over the country have seen an unprecedented increase in bias crimes, including a substantial increase in crimes targeting people based on sexuality and gender, and tragic and violent events such as the 2022 mass shooting in Buffalo, N.Y. The Bias Reporting Hotline is a good step forward for crime victims and survivors to receive the advocacy, legal support, and justice they deserve.

1. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oregon_Senate_Bill_577

2. <https://www.oregonlive.com/crime/2022/05/asian-oregonians-face-rising-level-of-race-based-hate-crimes-harassment-surveys-indicate.html>, <https://www.hrc.org/press-releases/marking-the-deadliest-year-on-record-human-rights-campaign-announces-release-of-annual-report-on-violence-against-transgender-and-gender-non-conforming-people>,

3. <https://www.cnn.com/2022/05/15/us/buffalo-supermarket-shooting-sunday/index.html>

Staff Spotlight: Welcoming New Team Members



Mickey Karnas, Victim Advocate and Administrative Specialist:

Mickey supports survivors and other crime victims in safety planning, advocating for their needs throughout the court process, and working to empower clients by creating meaningful access to relevant state and community resources. They are the link between client and attorney through our intake process, and also support administrative duties including social media management and community partner outreach. Mickey has extensive experience in trauma-informed survivor advocacy, and seeks to create a safer space, to listen with empathy, and meet the individual needs of each client.

Prior to their position with OCVLC, Mickey served as the LGBTQ Sexual Assault Advocate with Call To Safety in a case management role, and worked doing prevention education connecting with students and youth on the topics of domestic and sexual violence, and sex trafficking.



Dan Hesson, Staff Attorney:

Dan joined OCVLC in March after two decades as a prosecutor and several years of property rehab projects. In late 2021 Dan was contacted by his former office about an early release issue in a case he had successfully prosecuted. Dan and the District Attorney's Office contacted the victim in that case, who was able to be heard by the court regarding the early release. Despite those efforts, the offender was granted early release. Property rehab projects no longer seemed as important to Dan and, coincidentally, OCVLC had an opening. Dan is now proud to fight for crime victims with the OCVLC team, mainly handling cases in Central and Southern Oregon

Case Summaries

BY RACHEL GARRETT

OCVLC recently supported a client who was the victim of sexual assault. The offender targeted her and multiple other victims, including minors. He was convicted of six counts, including strangulation and sexual abuse. The District Attorney's Office contacted the victim more than eight years later, to inform her that the offender was requesting a Second Look hearing for early release. The prosecutor told the victim that she could write a letter to the governor that the DA's Office would submit. The client contacted OCVLC, unsure of what to include in the letter, and afraid that the offender would be released. OCVLC's Victim Advocate arranged a meeting with the prosecutor and our client to help her have a better understanding of the process and what she could include in a letter. The victim expressed after the meeting that she felt more confident moving forward and now knew what to expect. She stated that through our Victim Advocate's support, she felt more connected to the process and empowered to write her statement.

OCVLC attorneys have recently represented families of murder victims in hearings before the Oregon Board of Parole and Post-Prison Supervision. In one hearing, the family of a young woman murdered by her partner in Marion County was requesting that the Board defer the inmate's imminent release date based on a finding that the inmate continued to be a danger to the community. OCVLC filed a memo with the Board, coordinated the participation of the district attorney's office, ensured that the family members would be able to attend the hearing by video, and worked with the family to prepare their statements. At the hearing, the inmate decided to withdraw his request for release, and his release date was deferred for six years.

At another recent hearing, a family of a victim murdered in Josephine County by her boyfriend requested OCVLC's assistance with preparing for the parole hearing. An OCVLC attorney worked with the family to prepare their statements for the hearing, filed a memo on behalf of the family with the Board, and coordinated the district attorney's participation. At the hearing, an OCVLC gave a statement on behalf of the family requesting that the inmate's release date be deferred. After deliberation, the Board deferred the inmate's release for another two years.

An OCVLC attorney provided representation to a mother and her minor daughter in a case where a family member had been charged with sexual abuse. The client contacted OCVLC after the defense had requested that the case be continued repeatedly. An OCVLC attorney was able to assist the victims in asserting their right to a speedy trial, provided support to the victims during trial, and assisted in preparing a Victim Impact Statement that was read at the defendant's sentencing hearing.