

## **SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE**

Once victim service providers have completed their plans to commemorate NCVRW, it is helpful to send a general press release to local print and broadcast media that highlights key activities they will sponsor. The sample press release, which includes a national perspective and a quotation from the Acting Director of the Office for Victims of Crime, can be easily personalized to state and local jurisdictions. The sample NCVRW letterhead included in the camera-ready artwork of the Resource Guide can be utilized for the press release. Usually, local libraries have a reference book listing print and broadcast media nationwide that can help create a current media mailing list.

## **SAMPLE PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS**

One of the best ways to promote victims' rights and services

is through the broadcasting of public service announcements (PSAs). The three sample PSAs can be utilized for either radio or television stations. Each PSA should be personalized to include contact information for local victim services, along with any relevant data that accurately reflect crime and victimization in the area in which the PSAs are broadcast. Victim advocates should contact local radio and television stations at least six weeks prior to NCVRW and ask to speak to the public service director. S/he can provide guidelines about whether the station accepts PSAs and the preferred format. While some stations simply accept PSA scripts that are read by on-air "personalities," others ask that the scripts be read by a representative from the organization that submits them. Be sure to understand and follow any guidelines that radio and television stations provide.

## **SAMPLE OPINION/EDITORIAL COLUMN**

The opinion/editorial page(s) are the most frequently read section of most newspapers. The sample opinion/editorial column should be personalized and expanded to reflect information pertinent to the community in which it will be published, such as current crime statistics, personal victims' vignettes, and information about local victim services. The column can also be submitted to local radio and/or television stations as an actuality, which is a 60-second statement of opinion that is usually read on air by the author. Victim service providers should consider submitting the opinion/editorial column or radio/television actuality from a local NCVRW Planning Committee or coalition.

Remember to use the sample NCVRW letterhead for printing the opinion/editorial column or broadcast actuality!

# Sample Press Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
[Date]

**CONTACT:** [Name/Title/Agency]  
[A/C-Telephone #]

***“Dare to Dream”***

## **America Commemorates the 20th Anniversary of National Crime Victims’ Rights Week**

[City/State] — During the week of April 9 to 15, 2000, crime victims, service providers, criminal and juvenile justice and allied professionals will join together across America to commemorate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of National Crime Victims’ Rights Week. This year’s theme, “Dare to Dream,” reflects on the tremendous strides that have been made toward victim justice that emerged from victims who dared to share their personal pain so that others might learn from their experiences; from victim service providers who dared to push for significant reforms that have resulted in more consistent and comprehensive assistance for crime victims; and from justice officials who dared to pursue a system of justice that balances the rights of accused and convicted offenders with the rights of crime victims.

When National Crime Victims’ Rights Week was first proclaimed in 1980, crime victims had few participatory rights in our nation’s criminal and juvenile justice systems. Assistance and services were limited, and countless victims endured their trauma and pain alone. Today, over 10,000 national, state and local organizations provide quality services and assistance to victims of crime, including over [#] in our [state/community]. Thirty thousand laws have been passed at the federal, state and local levels that articulate and protect victims’ rights, including constitutional amendments in 32 states [including yours, if applicable] that offer a range of participatory rights for victims.

According to [spokesperson], the true dream of “victim justice” relies on people who believe that crime victims deserve fair treatment and assistance to help them cope with the devastating trauma of crime and victimization.

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“We must continue to dare to dream of individuals and communities who embrace crime victims as friends and neighbors who need and deserve our assistance,” [spokesperson] said.

“It’s important to remember that every time we reach out to a victim, and every time we offer help to someone who has been hurt by crime, we’re doing our community *justice*.”

Here in [city/county/state], numerous activities have been planned to recognize victims of crime and those who serve them during the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemoration of National Crime Victims' Rights Week. Included are: [cite examples of special events].

Kathryn Turman, Director of the Office for Victims of Crime within the U.S. Department of Justice, encourages people across America to join the Justice Department in saluting the achievements of America’s crime victims, service providers, and justice professionals.

“Because of so many individuals who have dared to dream of a world where victims are informed, involved and treated with respect by our justice system and by society, we are beginning to see doors open, and attitudes change, and services provided to victims on a widespread basis,” Turman noted. “We will continue to rely on individuals’ and communities’ sense of true justice to guide the fair treatment of crime victims in the new millennium.”

Members of our community are encouraged to join together during 2000 National Crime Victims' Rights Week and honor those who bring honor to victims of crime. For additional information about National Crime Victims' Rights Week, please contact [name], [title], or [agency/organization] at [area code/telephone number], or visit [name of agency’s] Web site at [Web site address].

**END**

**Type your press release *double-spaced* on the *sample letterhead* included in this *Resource Guide*. If your press release is more than one page, type “ – more – ” in the bottom right corner of the front page, and *paper clip* the second page to the first page. Add the title and date of the press release, plus “Page Two”, in the top left corner of the second page.**

# Sample Public Service Announcements

**:60 Seconds:** During the week of April 9 to 15, people across our nation will be commemorating the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of National Crime Victims' Rights Week. The past two decades have resulted in tremendous progress for victims of crime. In 1980, most victims were not allowed to participate in justice processes; today, there are over 30,000 laws nationwide that define and protect victims' rights. In 1980, supportive services for victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, child abuse, elder abuse, homicide, drunk driving and hate crimes were very limited. Today, there are over 10,000 national, state, and local organizations that provide assistance to people who have been hurt by crime.

If you are a victim of crime, there is assistance available to help you. We can provide assistance with counseling and advocacy throughout the criminal and juvenile justice systems. Victim compensation is available to help violent crime victims recover some of the financial losses resulting from crime. We're here to help . . .

If you are concerned about crime and violence in our community, *now* is your chance to get involved. Join us during National Crime Victims' Rights Week to salute the countless individuals and agencies who have made our communities safer, and who have lent a helping hand to victims in need. Join us in daring to dream of an America where "justice for all" includes victims of crime. For additional information about 2000 National Crime Victims' Rights Week and victim services in our community, please call [agency] at [area code/telephone number].

**:30 Seconds:** Victims of crime do not have to suffer alone. Here in [name of community], there are many programs that provide support and assistance to people who have been hurt by crime. April 9 to 15 is National Crime Victims' Rights Week—a time to honor crime victims and all they endure, as well as the countless individuals who serve them. If you are a victim of crime, please call us for assistance. And if you are a community member concerned about safety in our homes and neighborhoods, join us in our efforts to do our community *justice* by helping victims of crime. For additional information about victim services in our community or about 2000 National Crime Victims' Rights Week, please call [agency] at [area code/telephone number].

**:15 Seconds:** April 9 to 15 marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of National Crime Victims' Rights Week, a time to commemorate the many accomplishments made by crime victims and those who serve them to make our community safer, and to make our justice system more responsive to victims in need of help. Please join us in our efforts to do our community *justice* by helping victims of crime. To get help or give help, call [agency] at [area code/telephone number].

**If your agency has a web site or e-mail address,**

**incorporate it into the text of your public service announcements.**

# Sample Opinion/Editorial Column

Imagine a world where you are hurt by crime, your life falls apart, and nobody is there to help you put it back together. Imagine that nobody tells you anything about the criminal case that arises out of your victimization, or about the status of the offender. You are barred from the courtroom; you have no opportunity to tell the judge about the devastating impact that the crime has had on you and your family. Imagine feeling totally terrified, with no significant protections offered to increase your feelings of security. Financial restitution? — not a chance!

Such an imaginary scenario was the painful reality that crime victims in America endured a mere twenty years ago. This week marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of National Crime Victims' Rights Week, and yet it marks so much more. Today in America, victims of crime are afforded both rights and respect that they so richly deserve. They are, for the most part, informed about and involved in criminal and juvenile justice processes that determine not only the fate of their offender, but their very future as people who have been hurt by crime.

This year's National Crime Victims' Rights Week theme, "Dare to Dream," reflects on the tremendous strides that have been made toward *victim justice* that emerged from victims who dared to share their personal pain so that others might learn from their experiences; from victim service providers who dared to push for significant reforms that have resulted in more consistent and comprehensive assistance for crime victims; and from justice officials who dared to pursue a system of justice that balances the rights of accused and convicted offenders with the rights of crime victims.

If, as Henry David Thoreau said, "Dreams are the touchstones of our character," the dreams that crime victims and those who serve them have of a nation that is *truly just* and a justice system that is *truly fair* are indicative of our strength of character. The many significant accomplishments of America's victims' rights discipline have been built upon pain and perseverance, fear and frustration, hope and help. So many victims have made the commitment to help other victims, and to help prevent crime from ravaging our communities and homes, knowing that it will not change the harm they have suffered but will, indeed, prevent the same sort of pain and indignities from happening to somebody else.

During National Crime Victims' Rights Week, we take a break from the hubbub of our hectic lives to say "thank you." To the police officer who spoke to that rape victim with kindness and concern, we say "thank you." To the prosecutor who insisted upon a restitution order from the "indigent defendant" who could "not afford to pay," because s/he knew the victim who suffered

financial losses could not afford to pay either, our gratitude is yours. To the probation officer who ensured that the victim was able to define the harm caused by the crime and tell the court about the devastating impact the offense had on his/her family, we appreciate your diligence. And to anybody, anywhere in our community who has taken the time to help a victim who needed support—both at the time of the crime and in the weeks, months, and years after—we salute you. We thank you all for sharing our dream of a world where “justice” includes crime victims, and where every time we help a victim of crime, we know we are doing our community *justice*.

This new century of ours offers an opportunity for reflection about our shared past, and the hopes and visions we share together for our future. As Eleanor Roosevelt said, “The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of our dreams.” The beauty of our dream for *victim justice* is one that requires a renewed commitment to a sense of justice that refuses to ignore any child, woman or man who is hurt by crime. Their pain and suffering are our incentives to continue efforts to prevent crime, and to help those who are harmed by violence. Their tremendous losses are our collective gain in understanding that when *one person* in our community is hurt by crime, we *all* feel the pain.

This is our pledge. This is our hope. This is our dream that we dare to share not only during National Crime Victims’ Rights Week, but throughout the year.

**Provide a two-to-three sentence description of the author’s title, agency, and relevant role at the end of this opinion/editorial column.**