



Department of Justice



Office of Justice Programs

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Office of Justice Programs
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**ATTORNEY GENERAL ERIC HOLDER HONORS NEW YORK
ORGANIZATION FOR SERVICE TO VICTIMS OF COMMERCIAL SEXUAL
EXPLOITATION AND DOMESTIC TRAFFICKING**

WASHINGTON—Attorney General Eric Holder recognized the Girls Educational & Mentoring Services (GEMS) with the National Crime Victim Service Award today at the 2012 annual victims' service awards ceremony, a prelude to the nation's observance of National Crime Victims' Rights Week, April 22-28, 2012.

"This year's 12 awardees have touched, improved and even saved lives. Perhaps most impressively, many of today's award recipients have achieved these results by transforming their own experiences into a positive force for sweeping change," said Attorney General Holder. "Every one of them deserves the commendation that is being bestowed today – not only for their remarkable contributions in responding to protecting and defending crime victims and their loved ones but also for the examples they have set for others to follow."

GEMS, a New York state-based organization, was honored for aiding girls and young women who suffered commercial sexual exploitation and domestic trafficking. Founded in 1998 by Rachel Lloyd, a sexually exploited teenager, GEMS helped hundreds of young women and girls leave the commercial sex industry. Through tailored programs and long-term involvement with GEMS, more than 320 victims of commercial sexual exploitation and domestic trafficking each year can obtain housing, counseling and legal aid, while advancing their education and employment opportunities. GEMS also provides long-term, comprehensive services, including prevention, outreach and direct intervention. Through the success of GEMS' members and their mentoring roles, families break cycles of abuse, and educated youth are empowered with the tools necessary to overcome poverty and violence. GEMS received the National Crime Victim Service Award, which honors individuals and programs for their extraordinary efforts in direct service to crime victims. The award was accepted on behalf of GEMS by Rachel Lloyd and Janice Holzman.

In addition to GEMS, Attorney General Holder recognized the efforts of eleven other recipients for their extraordinary efforts in the aftermath of a crime, as well as their professional efforts to better serve the needs of victims with disabilities; for assisting U.S. citizens victimized outside the United States; and for ensuring victims receive compensation and other services at the state and local level.

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The Office of Justice Programs, headed by Acting Assistant Attorney General Mary Lou Leary, provides federal leadership in developing the nation's capacity to prevent and control crime, administer justice, and assist victims. OJP has six components: the Bureau of Justice Assistance; the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the National Institute of Justice; the Office of

Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; the Office for Victims of Crime; and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking (SMART).
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