

FOR RELEASE
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CONTACT: Gregg Marx
740-652-7560
gmarx@co.fairfield.oh.us

**Fairfield County, Ohio Victim Advocates
"Extending the Vision: Reaching Every Victim"
2012 National Crime Victims' Rights Week**

Fairfield County, Ohio – April 22, 2012, begins National Crime Victims' Rights Week, a time to honor crime victims and our nation's progress in advancing their rights. This year's theme—Extending the Vision: Reaching Every Victim—celebrates the vision behind that progress and the ideal of serving all victims of crime.

The vision that launched the victims' rights movement emerged more than 30 years ago. Then—as now—crime victims endured physical and emotional wounds, costly financial burdens, an often hostile criminal justice system, and an alarming public tendency to blame them for the crimes against them. Victims were often excluded from courtrooms, disrespected by officials, and afforded few rights. They began organizing to confront these challenges and to promote fair, compassionate, and respectful responses to victims of crime.

Since the 1980s, the nation has made dramatic progress in securing rights, protections, and services for victims of crime. Every state has enacted victims' rights laws, and 32 states including Ohio, have constitutional victims' rights amendments. All states have victim compensation funds, and more than 10,000 victim service agencies have been established throughout the country. The Office for Victims of Crime, U.S. Department of Justice, supports a range of programs for crime victims, and seeks to extend those services to those who are underserved.

Yet there is still so much to do. Victims' rights are not universal and are often not enforced. Only a fraction of victims receive crime victim compensation, which is usually limited to victims of violent crime. More than 50 percent of crimes are not reported, and fewer than 20 percent of victims receive needed services. The victim services system is fragmented and uncoordinated, and agencies are struggling to keep their doors open in the face of budget cuts.

Yet victim advocates have not lost their resolve. "Our commitment to 'extend the vision' and 'reach every victim' will overcome every challenge that confronts us now," said Joye E.

Frost, Acting Director, Office for Victims of Crime, U.S. Department of Justice. "The vision, determination, and passion for justice that inspired our history will help us transform the future for every victim of crime."

National Crime Victims' Rights Week will begin in Washington, DC, at the Department of Justice's annual Attorney General's National Crime Victims' Service Awards Ceremony, April 20, 2012, to honor outstanding individuals and programs that serve victims of crime. National Crime Victims' Rights week will also be observed in Fairfield County, Ohio.

The Fairfield County Prosecuting Attorney's Office, Victim Assistance Division will be setting up Awareness Displays that include information for victims during April 22-April 28. These displays will include information on VINE-Victim Information & Notification Everyday, RIGHTS of Crime Victims, information on different types of crimes, as well as contact information for county, state and government agencies for victims. These displays will be located in the Government Service Center building (JFS building) located at 239 W. Main St., in Lancaster and at the Liberty Center building (near the Title & License Agencies and Driver Exam Station) located at 980 Liberty Dr., in Lancaster.

Each community can encourage its members to participate in the week's events and find ways to help victims of crime. For additional information about National Crime Victims' Rights Week and how to help victims in your community, please contact the Fairfield County Prosecuting Attorney, Gregg Marx's Office-Victim Assistance Division at 740-652-7560, or vicwit@co.fairfield.oh.us . For more ideas on how to volunteer, visit the Office for Victims of Crime Web site, www.crimevictims.gov .