



**CANADIAN**  
RESOURCE CENTRE FOR  
VICTIMS OF CRIME

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ANNUAL REPORT  
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Mother of a murder victim

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## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD

*Marjean Fichtenberg*



It has been a pleasure to continue serve as Chair of the CRCVC. For a small agency, we do incredible work to support victims and give them a voice. It is frustrating that such a critical service for victims is in constant jeopardy of closing due to lack of sustaining fund-

ing. Our staff has worked incredibly hard to find project funding that allows us to remain open and serving clients.

As I have said in the past, the Canadian criminal justice system's focus is on the offender: holding them accountable; offering services to rehabilitate them and return them to the community as law abiding citizens. Victims, who need similar supports to help normalize their lives and recover from trauma are left largely on their own. Victims often need help to rebuild their lives, yet their needs are rarely addressed, resulting in victims feeling re-victimized and alienated.

It is exciting to observe advancements in other countries, yet I wonder why Canada lags behind. The European Parliament is soon expected to vote in favour of a Directive that provides rights for victims of crime in all 27 countries in Europe ensuring equal treatment for victims across the European Union. Victims will be guaranteed a minimum level of rights, support, and protection that include:

- right to be treated in a respectful, sensitive and professional manner;
- right to information;
- right to understand and to be understood;
- right to interpretation and translation;
- right to access victim support services;

- right to have their complaint acknowledged;
- right to be heard;
- right to review decisions not to prosecute;
- right to safeguards in mediation;
- right to legal aid;
- right to reimbursement of expenses;
- right to return of property;
- right to offender compensation;
- rights of victims in another Member State;
- identification of vulnerable victims;
- right to protection; and
- training of practitioners.

Guaranteed rights for victims to support, information, financial assistance and protection is much needed in Canada as well. The Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime will continue to lead the call for victims' rights in Canada.


## **MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

*Heidi Illingworth*



The need for the Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime continues to be great as evidenced by the hundreds of phone calls and inquiries we receive each year from Canadians harmed by violence. As Executive Director, I am fortunate to have a job where I am inspired on a daily basis by clients who forge forward despite suffering devastating trauma.

Financially, the CRCVC continues to struggle to meet the challenges surrounding funding. We remain without significant sustained federal funding while agencies who serve offenders in Canada get hundreds of thousands in federal funding. We rely on project grants from the Department of Justice Victims Fund and



Public Safety Canada, to remain open and offering vital services and support to survivors.

Sadly, most Canadians don't think about victimization until it happens to them or a family member. Depending on where you live in Canada, limited community resources exist to help you recover from your victimization. To make matters worse, being victimized can be very isolating. Survivors also have long-term needs that change over time. The CRCVC remains one of the few agencies in Canada who can offer long-term support to survivors as they process the trauma they have endured.

Looking ahead, the CRCVC will continue to support victims in achieving safety, healing, justice and restitution/financial assistance. Our ultimate goal is to help victims prevail over the trauma of victimization. We will continue our important work in voicing the needs and concerns of victims to all levels of government in order to enhance rights and services for victims and survivors of crime across Canada.

## TESTIMONIALS

*“My brother died by homicide in 2009. As with most families who have a lost a loved one to violence, we were at a loss of who may help us with victim’s issues in the days, weeks, months and years ahead. Thankfully, I had a colleague that made me aware of the CRCVC and its services and website. This was especially helpful as my family resides in an area where police-based victim services are non-existent. This organization has listened to my concerns, advocated on my and my family’s behalf, and has always responded in a timely manner. The professionalism and compassion that has been exhibited in simple email exchanges, one cannot put a value on. The valuable information on their website has helped, when one does not know where to start looking for assistance. The regular, monthly newsletters always provide important information of news, events, and learning opportunities. For those, like my family and me, living in a world which can seem so very isolating and unsafe at times, the CRCVC is a great reminder that there are people who truly care and help to make the world feel a little safer again.”*

- Morgan from Saskatchewan

*“An amazing organization that really helps people get through things they never thought they could do...”*

- Carolyn from Ontario

*“The CRC for Victims of Crime is a great way for all members of society to stay informed...”*

- Sylvie from Ontario

*“CRCVC is working hard to support me both written and emotional support during my Ontario Criminal Injuries Compensation Board case.”*

- Shelyn from England

## **WHO WE ARE**

Since 1993, the Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime (CRCVC) has provided a voice for victims in the criminal justice system. We are a recognized, national, bilingual, non-profit advocacy organization. The CRCVC did not arise out of a personal incident and it is not a single-issue organization. We address a multitude of issues to promote public safety and to reduce re-victimization. All services are free of charge and confidential.

## **Our Values**

Victims of crime should be treated with courtesy, compassion and with respect for their dignity and privacy. We offer assistance and advocacy regardless of whether the perpetrator of the crime has been identified, apprehended, prosecuted or convicted. The CRCVC believes victims must be empowered to regain control of their lives.

## **WHAT WE DO**

We assist victims and survivors by helping them:

- Obtain needed services and resources in their local community;
- Deal with post-trial agencies such as Correctional Service of Canada and the Parole Board of Canada and/or financial benefits/compensation programs; and by
- Offer long-term emotional support.

Other services include:

- Advocating for victims' rights by presenting the interests and perspectives of victims of crime to Government, at all levels; and
- Providing FREE resource materials to crime victims and service providers in Canada, including a monthly newsletter.

## **SUPPORTING VICTIMS IN THEIR HEALING JOURNEY**

The CRCVC assists hundreds of victims each year from coast to coast access services they might need, provides them with general information about the criminal justice system and their rights, as well as helps them access specific information about the offender who harmed them. We offer a toll free line to ensure that victims across Canada can easily contact the office – 1 (877) 232-2610.

## **EDUCATION AND AWARENESS**

The CRCVC works diligently to promote victims' concerns by addressing current events and issues in the media and conducting workshops/presentations at colleges, universities, community events, and conferences. As well, we act as an information centre for victims by providing resources explaining the Canadian criminal justice system, and disseminate current happenings through our monthly e-newsletter and website.

## **SUPPORTING MEMBERS**



Since 1994, the CRCVC has prepared a monthly newsletter called the National Justice Network (NJN). Membership in the network is free and provides victims of crime, victim services workers, other criminal justice professionals and interested parties a monthly update about current victim issues, policies, criminal justice legislation, conferences, and events. There are currently more than 1,030 members (individuals and agencies) belonging to the Network. The NJN e-Update is a free electronic bulletin – Sign up at [www.crcvc.ca/en/newsletter/](http://www.crcvc.ca/en/newsletter/).

CRCVC members benefit from exceptional resources including a large library of free resource materials for victims/survivors and service providers on our web site – [www.crcvc.ca/en/resources/](http://www.crcvc.ca/en/resources/). There are a number of informative papers, which can be accessed to learn more about issues that affect victims such as advocacy, elder abuse, child abuse, peace bonds,



cyberstalking, sexual assault, homicide, spousal abuse, the impact of victimization, recovering from trauma, etc. We also post all of the project research we conduct, consultation papers we write and briefs to various government committees for viewing on the website.

## SHAPING POLICY & ADVOCATING FOR CHANGE

The CRCVC is actively involved in public policy reform to effectively reduce criminal victimization in Canada, better balance the interests and needs of victims and survivors with those of the offender and to ensure public safety. In 2012, we held events, attended conferences, conducted research for various projects and advocated for increased recognition of, and consideration for, those persons harmed by violent crime.

## 2012 ACTIVITIES

### CRCVC launches new website

The CRCVC launched a new website in January of 2012 – [www.crcvc.ca](http://www.crcvc.ca). Our website is widely regarded as one of the top Canadian information resources for victims and their families; as well as providing a lot of information to victim service providers across Canada. We constantly receive positive feedback and many unique visits per month.



### “Navigating the Canadian criminal justice system: A guide for victims” – available in French



“Navigating the Canadian criminal justice system: A guide for victims” is now available in French - <http://crcvc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/12GuideVictimes.pdf>. As part of National Victims of Crime Awareness Week 2012, the CRCVC worked with AFPAD in Quebec to have the document translated. This guide is directly informed and updated by victims and survivors to help demystify the criminal justice

process for other Canadian victims of crime. All of the questions within this document were brought to our attention by individuals who were navigating the “system”. This guide is also meant to be a helpful tool for professionals and volunteers providing services to victims and survivors.

### **Urban Safety**

In March, the CRCVC appeared before the Senate Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science & Technology on the subject of Urban Safety. We expressed our concerns about violence and victimization in Canada, low reporting rates by victims, the impacts of violence, and the costs of crime. We looked at levels of violence in urban settings and expressed particular concern around youth gangs and partner assault/violence against women. Our brief called on increased federal funding for crime prevention initiatives and also made several recommendations about how to increase social cohesion and inclusion in Canada.

### **“Road to Resiliency” conference**

Staff was pleased to attend the Saskatchewan Association of Police-Affiliated Victim Services 2012 conference in Saskatoon in March. The keynote speakers were excellent and shared their wealth of knowledge. Participants returned to their communities with a renewed commitment and an enhanced ability to provide services.

### **“Victim Safety Handout”**

In consultation with victims and service providers across Canada, as well as corrections and parole experts, the CRCVC developed a one-page “Victim Safety Handout” for Public Safety Canada in March. We hope that it will be shared with Correctional Services Canada and Parole Board of Canada staff to provide to victims who have personal safety concerns regarding an offender returning to their community following incarceration.

### **CRCVC welcomes new Board member**

We are pleased to welcome a new member to our Board of Directors – Dr. Scott Kenney, of St. John’s, Newfoundland. Scott lost his cousin to a homicide in 1983 and has since been actively involved in victim issues. Dr. Kenney is an

Associate Professor of Sociology at Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador. His interests include law and criminal justice, deviance, victimology, the sociology of health, social theory, social psychology and emotions. He brings much expertise to the Board.

### **Algonquin College Victimology program hands out 2nd annual CRCVC advocacy award**

This one-year Ontario College Graduate Certificate program provides professionals with specialized knowledge and skills in victimology and in the provision of victim services. On June 11th, the 2011-12 CRCVC advocacy award was presented to Vanessa Gallant, who embodies a solid work ethic, integrity, cooperation, knowledge, excellence and determination in his/her student life, academic achievements, and involvement in the community. Congratulations Vanessa!

### **SPECIAL PROJECTS**

#### **If the media calls: A guide for crime victim and survivors**

In March 2012, the CRCVC completed a Media Guide for victims funded by the Department of Justice Canada Victims' Fund. We shipped out 8,000 copies to police and community-based victim services across Canada. The Guide entitled, "IF THE MEDIA CALLS: A GUIDE FOR CRIME VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS," has received enormous positive feedback and remains in high demand. The guide is available in English <http://crcvc.ca/publications/if-the-media-calls/> and in French <http://crcvc.ca/fr/publications/if-the-media-calls/>.



## Canadian Centre for Information on Missing Adults



In partnership with Ontario's Missing Adults, we are developing a website called the Canadian Centre for Information on Missing Adults (CCIMA). There is currently no national information resource that is

easily accessible to family members and friends struggling with the issue of a missing adult. The website is designed to provide helpful information to families about reporting, dealing with police and victim services, conducting searches/public appeals, etc. This project is funded by the Department of Justice Victims' Fund. The website will launch in October 2012.

## SPECIAL EVENTS

### Canadian Police and Peace Officers' Memorial Service



The last Sunday of September each year marks National Police and Peace Officers' Day. A memorial service is held in Ottawa on Parliament Hill to honour and remember the sacrifices made by police and peace officers killed in the line of duty. In 2012, we remembered VINCENT ROY, of Bromont, Quebec.

The CRCVC proudly coordinates events for family members of fallen officers who come to Ottawa each year to attend the Service and honour their loved one's memory.

On the eve of each Memorial Service, we hold a Welcoming Reception and Candlelight Vigil for immediate family members of fallen officers. The vigil is a beautiful candlelight ceremony with singing and prayers that takes place in the Pavilion behind Centre Block on Parliament Hill (pictured above).



## LOOKING AHEAD

The Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime will continue to intervene on behalf of crime victims to attempt to solve problems they may encounter in their dealings with the criminal justice system. We will also advocate for:

1. Earned parole instead of statutory release.
2. Enshrined victims' rights.
3. Expansion of available information to victims from agencies with whom they interact.
4. An effective mechanism to deal with high-risk offenders.
5. Creating standards to assist victims of a terrorist attack.
6. Reducing victimization through crime prevention.
7. Creation of a national program for financial assistance for victims of violent crime.
8. Financial support for non-government organizations who serve crime victims.
9. Standing and representation for victims in criminal trials in order to fully participate.



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