



Connecting families & communities through safety & hope

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**The Family Crisis Center of East Texas Celebrates
National Crime Victims' Rights Week, April 19-25**

Every April, the Office of Victims of Crime (OVC) helps lead communities throughout the country in their annual observances of National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRW) by promoting victims' rights and honoring crime victims and those who advocate on their behalf. This year's NCVRW will be held April 19-25 and the theme, *Engaging Communities, Empowering Victims*, presents the opportunity to highlight the diversity of our communities, expand partnerships to serve victims of crime, enhance efforts to meet victims where they are, and empower crime victims as they pursue justice and recovery.

The U.S. Department of Justice will kick off the week with OVC's annual National Crime Victims' Service Awards Ceremony in Washington, DC to honor outstanding individuals and programs that serve victims of crime. The Family Crisis Center of East Texas will observe National Crime Victims' Rights Week in partnership with Sexual Assault Awareness Month with special events and programs throughout the month of April.

NCVRW honors and celebrates the achievements of the past thirty years in securing rights, protections, and services for victims. The bipartisan Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), passed by Congress in 1984, created a national fund to ease victims' suffering. Financed by fines and penalties paid by offenders, the Crime Victims Fund supports victim assistance and services, such as sexual assault and domestic violence programs and victim compensation programs that pay victims' out-of-pocket expenses such as counseling, funeral expenses, and lost wages.

Services provided by the Family Crisis Center of East Texas include 24-hour emergency hotline and emergency shelter, transportation, crisis intervention, case management, legal advocacy, child advocacy, sexual assault advocacy, advocacy for employment and housing, peer support groups, individual and family counseling, therapy groups, emergency financial assistance, and transitional housing. VOCA has also pioneered support efforts for victims of once-hidden crimes such as domestic and sexual violence. Outreach is increasingly focused on previously underserved victim populations, including victims of color, religious and ethnic minorities, LGBTQ victims, and immigrant populations to name a few. Efforts are being made to ensure that all victims, regardless of their background or the crime committed against them, receive the support they deserve.

"Victim empowerment is a central tenant of our work," said Joye E. Frost, Director, Office for Victims of Crime (OVC), U.S. Department of Justice. "By engaging the entire community, we are able to maximize and leverage existing resources to better serve *all* victims of crime and provide the necessary support through their journey to healing. This year's NCVRW theme emphasizes that we all have a role to play."

OVC encourages widespread participation in the week's events and in other victim-related observances throughout the year. For additional information about the 2015 National Crime Victims' Rights Week and how to assist victims in your community, please contact the Family Crisis Center of East Texas at 936-639-1681 or fccet.com. For additional ideas on how to support victims of crime, visit the Office for Victims of Crime website, www.ovc.gov.

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