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Expanding the Circle to Reach All Victims

Delaware County Council and the District Attorney recognize victim rights advocates

In Delaware County, our District Attorney's Office has always made it a priority to raise awareness about the plight of victims of crime and to ensure the safety of witnesses who testify on behalf of such victims. Through various advocacy organizations, the county has been in the forefront when it comes to providing programs and services to aid victims of crime.

To further raise awareness, the District Attorney joined County Council to declare Crime Victims' Rights Week as April 8-14 and presented a resolution to victim rights advocates.

"Today Council declared Victims' Rights Week as April 8-14 and recognized individuals who has provided outstanding services to victims. This year's theme, *Expand the Circle: Reach all Victims*, emphasizes the importance of inclusion in victim services and addresses how we can better ensure that every crime victim has access to services and support," said Councilman Brian P. Zidek, who presented the resolution at the April 11 council meeting.

Throughout the year, service to victims is provided through the Victim Witness Assistance Unit of the Delaware County District Attorney's Office, which works in partnership with Senior Victim Services, our Children & Youth Services, the Office of Court Services and the Victim Services Unit of Juvenile Court and through organizations such as the Domestic Abuse Project, Family Support Line and our Child Advocacy Center, Mothers Against Drunk Drivers, Parents of Murdered Children, and Delaware County Women Against Rape.

These organizations and District Attorney Katayoun Copeland once again held programs to draw attention to the plight of victims and the services and assistance available to them. Following the council meeting, three advocates and organizations that provide outstanding services to victims were recognized at an awards ceremony, hosted by the District Attorney's Office and Victims Services Committee.

Joyce Clemons was recognized for her efforts as a foster parent for nearly two decades through the Children and Youth Services of Delaware County. Since she started as a foster parent, Joyce has provided care for 46 children and young adults, offering a safe place for children who have been victims of abuse and neglect. **Kim Hildebrand** was recognized for her efforts as a volunteer for the Delaware County Domestic Abuse Project. For over ten years, Kim has shown tremendous compassion by assisting clients through the Protection from Abuse process and offering them emotional support along the way. **Debbie Hadden**, a member of the First Presbyterian Church of Glenolden, was recognized for her efforts through the Thanksgiving Meal Ministry. Over the last 24 years, Debbie has assisted in delivering thousands of meals to individuals throughout Delaware County, including senior who were recovering from victimization, who were unable to leave their homes or our seniors who would not have a meal or companionship during the holiday.

Council also announced that a vigil for all crime victims, organized by Parents of Murdered Children (POMC), will take place 7 p.m. April 11 in Courtroom One, the Honorable John V. Diggins Ceremonial Courtroom, at the Courthouse.