

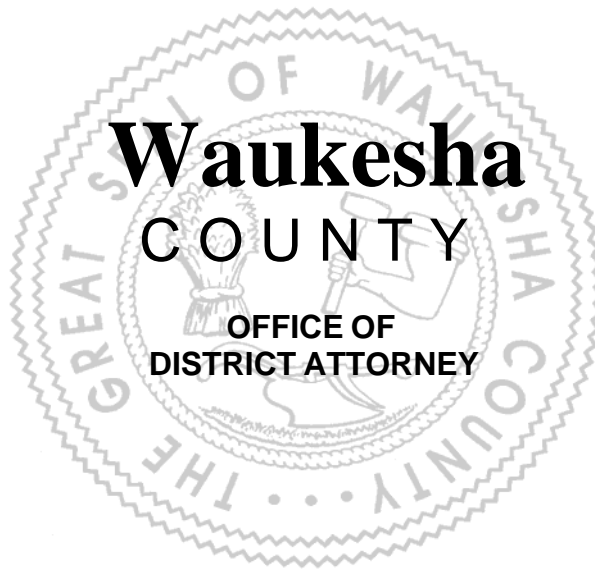
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**Waukesha Celebrates 25th Anniversary of Victims of Crime Act
*National Crime Victims' Rights Week to Honor Landmark Legislation***

April 26 – May 2, 2009 is National Crime Victims' Rights Week, a time to focus on victims of crime and celebrate our nation's progress in serving them. This year's theme, "25 Years of Rebuilding Lives: Celebrating the Victims of Crime Act." honors a landmark national commitment to victims of crime.

Before 1984, victims of crime received little public support. The President's Task Force on Victims of Crime, formed by President Reagan in 1982, found widespread poor treatment of victims by a criminal justice system indifferent to their needs. Although most states had some form of victim compensation, most programs were poorly funded. Despite the few victim assistance programs available in some states and the federal effort to fund victim/witness programs throughout the nation, most communities relied on a few grassroots organizations—funded by sporadic private donations and bake sales—to help victims of crime.

In 1984, moved by the President's Task Force report findings and the work of victim advocates, Congress passed the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), which created the Crime Victims Fund, financed not by taxpayers but by fines and penalties paid by offenders. In 25 years, the Fund has grown from \$68 million to more than \$2 billion and is disbursed throughout the nation in amounts determined by Congress every year.

The Fund supports victim compensation programs, which reimburse victims for many out-of-pocket expenses—such as medical care, counseling, funerals, and lost wages—that victims face in the aftermath of crime. It also helps fund victim assistance programs—such as rape crisis and domestic violence

programs—that support victims by providing physical and emotional care and guidance in navigating the criminal justice system. In 2006, VOCA funds supported more than 4,400 public and nonprofit agencies serving almost 4 million victims, and paid more than \$440 million in victim compensation.

In Waukesha County, VOCA funds have assisted thousands of victims. Jennifer Dunn, Director of Victim Services for the Waukesha County District Attorney’s Office, noted that both the Mobile Victim Assistance and the Families and Friends of Homicide Victims programs are completely funded by VOCA. “A crime may last only a few seconds,” Dunn said, “But the impact of that crime can last a lifetime. VOCA funds allow us to offer services to support these victims. VOCA represents hope, renewal, and a nation that stands behind victims of crime.”

If you or anyone you know has been harmed by crime, contact the Waukesha County Victim Assistance Program at 262-548-7071 for information about services in your community. Thanks to the Victims of Crime Act, help is available.

For more information about National Crime Victims’ Rights Week, visit the Web site of the Office for Victims of Crime, a component of the Office of Justice Programs within the U.S. Department of Justice, at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/ncvrw.