

# Report to Pennsylvania

from the  
Office of Victim Advocate



**Jennifer R. Storm**  
Victim Advocate

Fiscal Year 2014/15



Registrations



Notifications



Programs



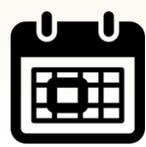
Dialogue and Testimony



ACP



Training



Events

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## MISSION

The Pennsylvania Office of Victim Advocate (OVA) is dedicated to representing, protecting and advancing the individual and collective rights and interests of crime victims.

## HISTORY

The Pennsylvania Office of Victim Advocate (OVA) was created by Act 8, of 1995 during Governor Tom Ridge's Special Session on Crime. The Victim Advocate is nominated by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate to serve a term of six years. The Victim Advocate has the authority and the duty to represent the rights and interests of all Commonwealth crime victims in general including victims of juvenile offenders, and all those that come before the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (DOC) and the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole (PBPP).

One of OVA's goals is to provide crime victims with a victim-centered continuum of service throughout the post-sentencing process. Our efforts are primarily directed toward ensuring that crime victims registered with OVA are afforded their post-sentencing rights to notification and input when offenders under the jurisdiction of the DOC or PBPP are being considered for release back into the community. Another one of OVA's goals is to advocate for the effective use of victim comments into the decision making process for release and for the inclusion of victim issues into the release plans of inmates.

OVA is also committed to improving and expanding the response of the criminal and juvenile justice system to the needs and concerns of crime victims so that the inclusion of crime victims moves from being an obligation to being viewed as an opportunity for justice and healing.

Working in collaboration with statewide victim service providers, state agencies and other stakeholders, the Victim Advocate participates in discussions regarding legislation, policy and practice via appointment to state-level committees and commissions such as the PA Commission on Crime and Delinquency and the Victim Services Advisory Committee (VSAC) of PCCD; PA State Council for the Interstate Compact for the Supervision of Adult Offenders; PA State Council for Interstate Juvenile Supervision; PA Commission on Sentencing (ex officio member); Criminal Justice Advisory Committee, Mental Health Advisory Committee among many others.

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Dear Colleagues:

The Office of Victim Advocate is pleased to announce the release of our Annual Report for 2014-2015. While it is not a legislative requirement for the Office of Victim Advocate to submit an annual fiscal report, in the spirit of transparency I feel strongly that the Commonwealth be informed of the outstanding work being done and the services provided to crime victims.

The Office of Victim Advocate is responsible for elevating the voices, needs and concerns of all crime victims within the post-sentencing process in Pennsylvania. As the Victim Advocate, it is my unique and honored role to ensure those voices are heard at all levels of government.

As you will see from our list of accomplishments, it has been a busy year for our office as we continue to increase registration and awareness of our agency's mission and services. Nineteen months into my six-year term of office, we have:

- Doubled our registration efforts providing for more crime victims to engage their legal rights
- Conducted trainings for victim service professionals, District Attorney's, Judges, Probation staff and other justice employees in nearly all of our Commonwealth's 67-counties.
- Expanded our services to ensure all crime victims receive timely notification of their rights and the services we provide by partnering with the Pennsylvania State Police on a new SORNA initiative.

This report reflects those accomplishments in detail, and I welcome your continued support of the work we do and of all crime victims in the Commonwealth.

Respectfully submitted by,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jennifer Storm", written over a light blue circular watermark or seal.

Jennifer Storm  
Victim Advocate

# Victim Registrations



**35,161** victims are registered with the OVA.

This is an increase of **4,609** victims.

OVA has been working tirelessly to ensure that every crime victim who is legally entitled to receive post-sentencing rights knows and understands how to receive them through our office. Our work has paid off by tripling our usual annual registration rate.

# Notifications



**1318**

Requests by victim for additional information (i.e. release date requests)

**1107**

Confirmation notifications of received victim input

**7034**

Notification of PBPP/DOC decision making

**9426**

Notification for victim's opportunity for input in post-sentencing decision making

**4168**

Additional Information Notifications

One of the most vital safety planning tools is knowledge, our office makes sure all victims who wish to receive notification of the various events occurring in their case are informed in a timely manner.

# A Partnership for Victim Safety

The Office of Victim Advocate and Pennsylvania State Police launched a new partnership that now ensures all victims receive timely notifications when a sexually violent predator is identified by the courts.

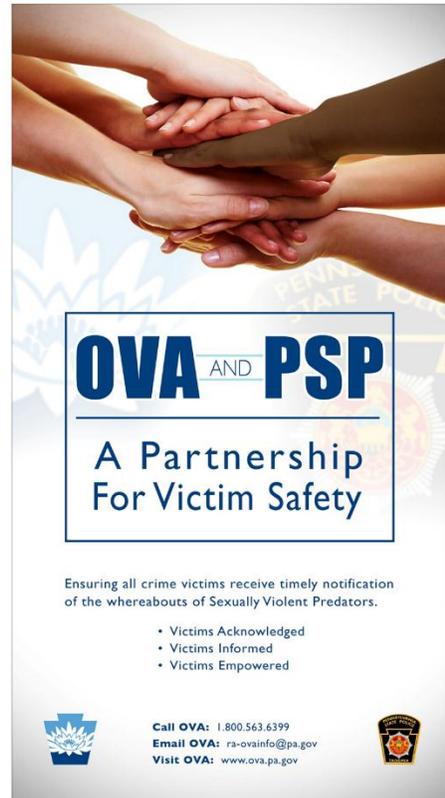
The Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act (SORNA) assigned responsibility to state police to notify victims when a sexually violent predator registers with the Megan's Law Unit and when the offender changes his or her address or place of employment.

***"This specific victim notification regarding sexually violent predators didn't fall under the responsibility of the Office of Victim Advocate as all other post-sentencing notifications do," said Jennifer Storm. "Our office helps crime victims every day by providing ongoing services after sentencing, therefore it makes sense that we assist in making these notifications."***

Through a Memorandum of Understanding the OVA now has access to the PA Sex Offender Registration Tool to identify victims and notify them throughout the criminal justice process in a timely and sensitive manner. In just two months since the process began, the OVA has been able to contact an additional **1,062** victims and offer them their services.

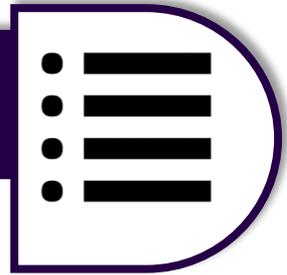
***"OVA is uniquely situated to perform this notification for the benefit of victims," said Captain Scott Price, PSP. "When they offered to assist with the notification process we were more than happy to cooperate."***

On December 20, 2011, Senate Bill 1183 also known as the "Adam Walsh Bill" was signed into law, bringing the Commonwealth into compliance with The Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act. This new law referred to as SORNA, the Sex Offender Registration Notification Act, requires the Pennsylvania State Police to make notifications to crime victims upon the courts determination that an offender is a Sexually Violent Predator.



SORNA Press Conference held on July 28, 2015

# Programs



## INMATE APOLOGY BANK

The Inmate Apology Bank was created for victims of crime who have an interest in receiving an apology letter from the offender in their case (if the offender is a state inmate or state parolee).

- 519** New Victims Registered to receive letters from inmates
- 12** Inmate letters delivered to registered victims
- 877** Total victims registered for Inmate Apology Bank letters
- 1420** Total letters on file with the Office of Victim Advocate

## IMPACT OF CRIME CLASS

The Impact of Crime Class (ICC) started in 1996. The OVA and the Department of Corrections (DOC) developed a curriculum which reflects what victims and victim advocates throughout Pennsylvania want inmates to know about the effects crime has on victims. Last year, eight institutions taught the class. After a request was made by OVA, DOC Secretary John Wetzel has made ICC a requirement for all 26 state correctional institutions in Pennsylvania for FY2015/16. The eight institutions were:

- SCI Cambridge Springs
- SCI Pittsburgh
- SCI Fayette
- SCI Somerset
- Quehanna Boot Camp
- SCI Huntingdon
- SCI Dallas
- SCI Laurel Highlands

## DAY OF RESPONSIBILITY

Redemption. Forgiveness. Responsibility. Restoration. These are the concepts that OVA explores during a daylong event held in many of the state correctional institutions (SCIs) each year. Of the 26 SCIs, eight have successfully held a Day of Responsibility in conjunction with the OVA. These institutions were:

- SCI Camp Hill
- SCI Smithfield
- SCI Somerset
- SCI Muncy
- SCI Graterford
- SCI Huntingdon
- SCI Fayette
- SCI Laurel Highlands

# Dialogue and Testimony



## VICTIM OFFENDER DIALOGUE

(From July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015)

Number of face-to-face meetings: **7**

Victim meetings: **15**

Inmate meetings: **18**

### Types of Cases

Murder, child sexual assault (victim now adult), aggravated assault

Current Active Volunteer Facilitators: **50** (as of July 7, 2014)

### Death Penalty Cases

The OVA and DOC are currently working on logistics to allow for execution cases to be eligible for dialogue.

## IN-PERSON VICTIM TESTIMONY

**381** Victims requested to meet in-person with decision makers to provide testimony from July 2014 to June 2015.

**656** Victims who requested in-person testimony since the inception of the program September 2013.

OVA and the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole have seen a total of **1,233** victims, significant others and support people since the inception of the program.

# Address Confidentiality



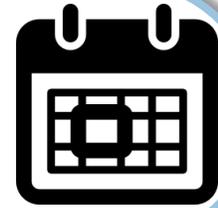
Since its inception, the Address Confidentiality Program (ACP) has assisted **446** individuals keep their address safe from their perpetrator.

In 2015, there were **41** new participants, including **49** new children registered with ACP.

Please visit the new ACP webpage: [www.paacp.pa.gov](http://www.paacp.pa.gov)



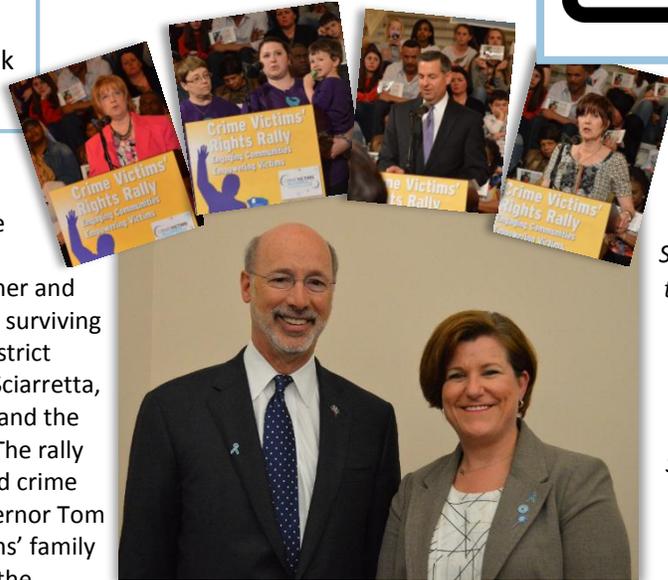
# Events



## KICK-OFF RALLY

National Crime Victims' Rights Week  
Monday, April 20, 2015

National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRW) theme was Engaging Communities. Empowering Victims. The event speakers were Victim Advocate Jennifer Storm; Natalie Parkinson, mother and advocate for victims' rights; Erica Clark, surviving victim of abuse; Cumberland County District Attorney David J. Freed; and Charlene Sciarretta, member of the York Heroin Task Force and the Pennsylvania Parent Advisory Council. The rally demonstrated support for strengthened crime victims' rights. Following the rally, Governor Tom Wolf talked with a number of the victims' family and friends who attended the event in the Rotunda.



*Speakers at the kick-off rally; Victim Advocate Jennifer Storm with Governor Wolf*

After the opportunity to meet with the governor, Storm moderated a panel discussion about the unique issues facing their respective communities and how the victim services community can engage underserved populations throughout the commonwealth to ensure all crime victims have access to services.

Panel participants included: Executive Director Jose Angel Molina of the Governor's Advisory Commission on Latino Affairs; Executive Director Devon Grant of the Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities; and Executive Director Ted Martin of Equality PA.

## A mother's loss that touched a nation

After the birth of her first daughter, Debbie Borza gave her the name "Deora" which is Gaelic for tears. Tears of joy. Tears of happiness.

On September 11, 2001, those tears of joy and happiness turned to tears of sadness and grief when her 20-year-old daughter died along with 39 other passengers and crew on Flight 93, which crashed in a field outside the town of Shanksville in rural southwestern Pennsylvania.

Deora was the youngest female passenger on board Flight 93, and was a junior at Santa Clara University in California. She was studying French and psychology, aspiring to become a child psychologist. She loved children and volunteered with many charity groups including the Special Olympics and the San Diego Zoo. On September 11, she was flying home after visiting friends in New Jersey.

## RESILIENT VOICES PROGRAM

*(part of National Crime Victims' Rights Week)*

Debbie Borza

Tuesday, April 21, 2015



Debbie is part of the Resilient Voices program. The goal of Resilient Voices is to provide a space for survivors to share their personal experience, strength and hope in a forum that best suits their individual goals.

Debbie shared with the group her personal story of 9-11, its aftermath, and its impact on her. She also talked about her involvement with the Resilient Voices program.

“Through this program, I have been speaking in prisons to the inmates. When I share my story with the inmates, they get my message of the impact of 9-11 and the affect it had on me, Debbie concluded.

“I suffered a personal loss with the death of my daughter and we were all impacted by the same crime as our nation was violated on that day. I then ask them, ‘How did you feel on 9-11? How did this crime impact you?’ And then I ask them, ‘now, how do you think your crime impacted your victim?’ And then they understand.”

## Devastating tragedy turns into advocacy

“I knew what it meant to have a broken heart,” said Lynn Shiner, a survivor of a mother’s worst nightmare.

Lynn's children, 10-year-old Jennifer and 8-year-old David, were brutally murdered by her ex-husband on Christmas Day 1994 after the children spent the night at his home in Lower Paxton Township, Dauphin County. After stabbing his children to death, he committed suicide.

Lynn began her presentation for everyone in the room by saying, “I am going to start with a reality check,” she said. “All of us will be touched by crime at some point in our lives.” And with that statement, she began the horrific journey that began approximately 30 years ago.

With a collage of adorable images behind her, Lynn fondly remembered her two children. “When Jen smiled my heart smiled,” she said. “When David smiled, he made me wonder what he was up to.” She shared stories of how her children were growing up and their individual personalities were starting to develop.

Lynn also shared the details of her tumultuous relationship with her ex-husband Tom. “He would wait for me. He would follow me. He would call me many times in one day,” Lynn recalled. “It wasn’t called stalking back then.

“In 1992, after he came close to killing me, I packed up the kids’ stuff and we left,” Lynn said. “I filed for a PFA (Protection from Abuse order). At the hearing, I had to provide all of the details about our relationship that I had kept hidden for so many years in open court. None of my family or friends knew what he had done to me. I asked the judge for supervised visitation.

“I will never forget what the judge said to me that day,” Lynn said. “Mother...just because he hurt you doesn’t mean he’ll hurt the kids.”

In the days and weeks after their tragic deaths, certain events would take place that would shape the role Lynn was going to play in the victim advocacy community.

At the time of their funeral, an uninvited reporter got in to see the casket and reported on the items Lynn had chosen to bury with her children. Lynn said the same reporter followed them to the cemetery and somehow overheard what her last words were to her children before they were buried and reported that as well. “I felt violated by the media,” Lynn said. “When I speak to the media now, I remind them that it takes just minutes to prepare a story but the effects of that story lasts a lifetime on the victim. I encourage them to ask for permission first.”

### RESILIENT VOICES PROGRAM

(part of National Crime Victims’ Rights Week)

Lynn Shiner

Monday, April 27, 2015



At the time the murders occurred, Lynn was complying with a custody order by allowing the children to visit their father. After their deaths, Lynn learned about pending stalking charges against her ex-husband that involved another woman in a different county. If she had known, Lynn could have petitioned the court to modify her ex-husband's visitation rights to protect her children from potential violence.

Using her personal tragedy as the catalyst, legislation was introduced in March 1996 to create a new reporting system. The bill unanimously passed the General Assembly. "Jen & Dave's Law" (Act 119 of 1996) was officially signed into law by Governor Tom Ridge on October 7, 1996. After an initial roll-out of the program, the Jen & Dave Program was available statewide on October 22, 1997, to all individuals involved in child custody cases.

Lynn is the Director of the Office of Victims' Services with the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD). Lynn has turned VCAP (Victims Compensation Assistance Program) into a national model through streamlining processes, legislative changes and technology enhancements that ensure that the program is victim-centered and eases the financial burden on victims and their families.

## Additional Crime Victims' Rights Week activities

### ***THE HUNTING GROUND***

Commonwealth Victim Advocate Jennifer Storm attended the viewing of *The Hunting Ground* at the State Theater in State College. "The Hunting Ground" chronicles the efforts of campus rape survivors Andrea Pino and Annie Clark, who can be seen in the feature film literally connecting the dots to reveal the breadth and depth of campus rape culture, reframing it as a violation of female students' rights under Title IX.



### **Family Services Inc.**

Ms. Storm (seated right) is pictured with the full staff of the Family Services Inc. of Altoona. She was invited to attend a day-long training session on bystander intervention, sexual assault impact and community response. The training was held at the Altoona Campus of Penn State University.



### **PCVA Annual Luncheon**

Ms. Storm was the keynote speaker for the annual Philadelphia Coalition for Victim Advocacy (PCVA) luncheon. The event was held in the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office. PCVA honors those who have gone above and beyond to assist crime victims.

## Missing Persons in PA

On May 13, 2015, OVA joined Senator Lisa Baker and Representative Sandra J. Major at a press conference focused on Missing Persons in PA. Also in attendance at the press conference were Joanne Decker and Shirley Masters, sisters to Shelva Rafte, missing since 2006 and Wendy Stouffer, whose daughter Kortne Stouffer has been missing for three years. Other key officials in attendance were: Trooper Adam



Reed, Public Information Office of the Pennsylvania State Police and Richard M. Scanlon, D.M.D. with the National Missing & Unidentified Persons System (NamUs). The press conference was held at the state capital to raise awareness of the 958 missing adults in Pennsylvania. Collectively, this group's goal is to continue to bring families together to identify unmet needs and create resources for those who have family members go missing.



## Eastern State Penitentiary

On Tuesday, July 7, Jennifer Storm was a presenter at the Eastern State Penitentiary (ESP) in Philadelphia as part of the Searchlight Series. The ESP Historic Site partners with nationally recognized penologists and educators to present an ongoing discussion series about crime, justice, and the American prison system. Storm gave the presentation on Protecting Victims' Rights and spoke about how the rights of crime victims are sometimes overlooked in our criminal justice system, what the OVA role is and how their role has been changing, and what challenges face these families who, after all, have been pulled into the legal system by the violent or unlawful actions of others.

## Community Giving

During the holiday season, OVA staff collected food, toys and other items to distribute to two families in a Lancaster County community. OVA staff share a common goal of giving back to the communities that they serve.



## Media Interviews

Throughout the year, numerous media outlets reached out to Jennifer Storm to obtain comments about her office's responsibilities, specific events that took place



within their areas or sought comment on criminal justice issues and how they affect the victim advocate community. Pictured at right, Ms. Storm appeared on WITF SmartTalkRadio in Harrisburg with Jeff Blystone from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency.

## National Crime Victims Law Institute

Jennifer Storm is a member of the National Crime Victims Law Institute (NCVLI). NCVLI is a non-profit legal education and advocacy organization whose mission is to actively promote balance and fairness in the justice system through crime victim centered legal advocacy, education, and resource sharing. This year, as part of the organization, Ms. Storm gave a presentation on the work of her office to conference attendees (below right). Below left, she led attendees in karaoke to help raise money for NCVLI.



## OVA Planning Session

At the start of the fiscal year, all OVA staff met to establish goals for the office. Increased trainings were planned; improved processes for victim registrations and in-person testimony were put into place; and, a thorough review of existing educational materials were reviewed and new materials were developed to improve the office's mission.



## VICTIM RIGHTS EVENTS

Throughout the year several events were held to ensure crime victim's voices were heard and their rights were protected. Pictured here are two events with Representative Mike Vereb, House Majority Leader Mike Turzai, Representative Caligiurone, Representative Marsico, Representative Delozier, Representative Corbin, Representative Stephens, Representative Regan, Representative Adolf, Representative Barbin, Representative Culver, Representative Stevenson, Representative Farry, Representative Taylor, Representative Hackett, Representative Masser, Representative Murt, Representative Topel, Senator Rafferty, District Attorney's Edward Marsico, Risa Ferman, Seth Williams and David Freed along with Rich Long and Greg Rowe from the PDAA, Diane Moyer from PCAR, Secretary John Wetzel, Troopers from PSP, Capital Area Police Officers, FOP Lodge 5 and officers and cadets from Philadelphia, Patty Tedesco survivor, advocates from several surrounding counties and staff of the OVA.



## KEYNOTE SPEAKER AT BTA



On Friday, June 26, Basic Training Academy (BTA) Class 122 graduated 22 new parole agents who are now assigned to the Board of Probation and Parole's offices across the state. Jennifer Storm was the guest speaker and asked the new agents to "be a role model...a leader...and an agent of change. You have the potential to significantly impact the lives of so many who have been taken off course by a variety of factors."

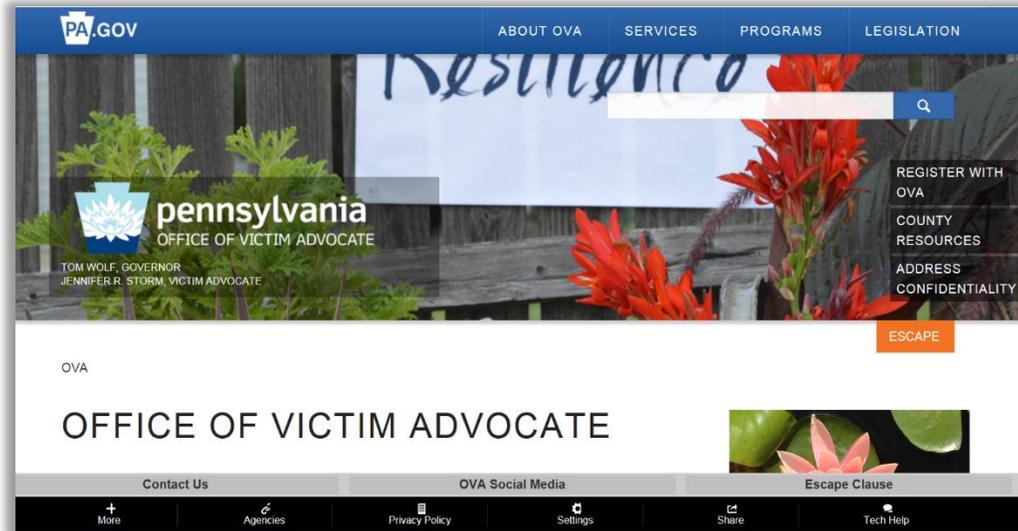
## TED<sup>x</sup>

Department of Corrections (DOC) held the first ever [Ted<sup>x</sup>](#) inside a female state correctional institution. The Victim Advocate was asked to share her own personal story of healing. TED<sup>x</sup> talks are an online platform for ideas worth sharing.

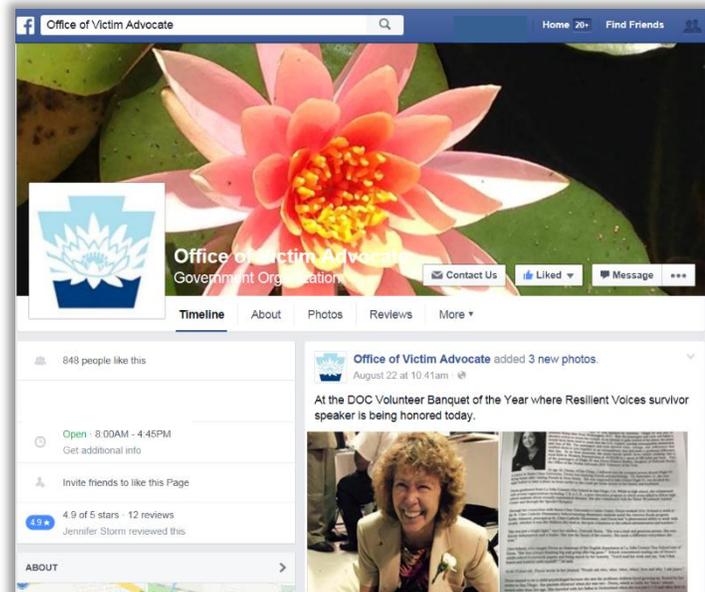


## Improved/Increased Social Media Presence

Recognizing the importance of social media and websites as an effective means of communication with the general public, the Office of Victim Advocate launched an improved website in November 2014. In early 2015, OVA launched its Facebook page and a Twitter account in June for increased awareness of the work of the Office of Victim Advocate.



Website: [www.ova.pa.gov](http://www.ova.pa.gov)



Facebook: [www.Facebook.com/thePAOfficeoftheVictimAdvocate](http://www.Facebook.com/thePAOfficeoftheVictimAdvocate)

Twitter: [www.twitter.com/PAVictimsOffice](http://www.twitter.com/PAVictimsOffice)

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