



BROWARD VICTIM'S RIGHTS COALITION

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE INFORMED, PRESENT & HEARD

Minutes from the General Meeting held on September 25, 2024 at 11:00 AM

Plantation Police Department

451 N.W. 70th Terrace

Plantation, FL 33317

- I. Call to Order: Sandra Vazquez
 - Meeting called to order at 11:12a.m.
- II. Introductions: All Members Present
- III. Read and Approve Minutes from August Meeting: All Present
 - Judy Nesbitt motioned to approve the minutes. Juliana Chereji Dunn seconded. Motion passed.
- IV. Treasurer's Report: Debbie Geller
 - General Account
 - i. Starting Balance: \$32,960.94
 - ii. \$60 received in BVRC membership dues
 - iii. \$206.58 received in bowling registrations
 - iv. \$2000 donated from Mirimar Police Department (Thank you!)
 - v. \$250 donated from BSO FOP Lodge 32 (Thank you!)
 - vi. Ending Balance: \$35,477.52
 - Leadership Broward Account
 - i. Starting Balance: \$2,079.94
 - ii. -\$45.34 deducted for GoDaddy fees
 - iii. Ending Balance: \$2,034.60
 - C. RLK Account
 - i. Starting Balance: \$1,767.57
 - ii. Earned \$0.01 interest
 - iii. Ending Balance: \$1,767.58
 - Jill Fogel motioned to approve the treasurer's report. Victoria Sexton seconded. Motion passed.
- V. Speaker: Aaron Savitski, Public Information Officer and Paula McMahon, Director of Communications and Media Relations
State Attorney's Office
 - The office works particularly closely with the victim advocate unit.
 - We try to be very victim focused. Letting people tell their stories is part of the job.
 - The office is involved in public records, looking out for the rights of victims and protecting their identities. Public records laws are very liberal in Florida.

- There are rules – the media is not allowed to chase people in the courthouse. They're not allowed to follow people for extended periods. Victim advocates are good about stepping in, if necessary.
- We try to manage expectations for victims and be upfront. We cannot control what people will do.
- We can let the media know a family doesn't want to be bothered, but they still might. We can teach techniques. Tell victims not to answer the phone or stay somewhere else temporarily, keep their heads down and not to engage.
- We tell victims they have the right to not answer questions and remain silent if they choose. Some victims want to speak later. On their terms.
- Possible talking points for victims speaking with the media – Discuss who the person was, what kind of life they lived, what they wanted to be, their hopes and dreams. Encourage victims to stick to just a few talking points and rehearse what they want to say.
- Victims can also give a statement to media relations for them to give on the family's behalf.
- The media relations office was involved recently with the victims on the Parkland trial. Some families wanted to speak with the media and some did not.
- Another recent case that went to trial was from an incident in the 1980's. A babysitter injured a child. As a result, the young man was very limited throughout his life and he eventually died. The SAO charged the offender with murder. The victim's parents wanted his story to be told but they didn't want to deal individually with reporters. They knew it would get national and international attention. Media relations were able to speak with the parents before charges were filed, asked if they were comfortable being interviewed and sharing photos. Media relations facilitated some interviews and got photos out in the manner the family wanted.
- Jenifer, Elena, and Ta'Veca can be points of contact if needed to get in touch with the media relations team.

VI. New Business:

A. Election year – Sandra Vazquez

- a. This year is an election year. Start thinking about if you're interested in running for anything or nominating someone else.
- b. Nominations will take place next month. Voting will take place in November.

VII. Old Business

A. Bowling event- Ashley Conon

1. Donations
2. Raffle
3. The bowling event will be held on October 20th. The deadline to register is October 11th. We have received several item donations to be raffled off. If anyone has any other suggestions for raffle items, please reach out.
4. Raffle tickets will be sold at the event only. We are unable to sell in advance as it will be too difficult to track funds coming from various sources.

B. RLK Victim Assistance Fund – Elena Munoz

1. RLK is a fund used to assist victims in the aftermath of a crime. The fund can be used to pay vendors directly or to purchase gift cards for the victims. A BVRC membership is needed to apply. You must state why the funds are needed and what other resources have been applied for.
 2. Last month RLK was used for a \$500 Walmart for necessities for a homicide survivor.
- C. Social Media Committee – Courtney May cmay@browardsao.com
1. No updates. Please e-mail Courtney if you would like to share anything on social media.
- D. Speaker's Bureau/Community Outreach – Ashley Conon
1. Please e-mail Ashley if you mention BVRC at any speaking engagements aconon@margatefl.com. BVRC mentions are tracked for grant purposes.
- E. Membership – Sandra Vazquez
1. Membership dues are due in February – paid members have voting privileges and are able to apply for RLK funds.
 2. Please contact Tara if you have questions regarding your membership status Tarena@coconutcreek.net.

VIII. Announcements

- Women in Distress will be offering a Zoom training on October 17th "Protecting Yourself or Others Against Abuse Through Florida's Court System". [Register](#).
- The Broward Domestic Violence Council is offering a Zoom training on October 25th "Start by Believing - Understanding the Reality of Sexual Violence in Intimate Partner Violence Dynamics", [Register](#).
- There will also be a panel on November 1st. More information and flyers will be forwarded to the membership.
- October 10th is the Domestic Violence Train the Trainer. Sign up as soon as possible as we are getting close to capacity. RSVP with Jill jill.fogel@cohb.org.
- The Victim Compensation update training will be held on October 22nd. Please RSVP to Debbie DGeller@psd.plantation.org if you would like to attend.
- Mental Health America's, Phil Bulone, will hold an opening ceremony for an art exhibit showing the developmental stages of suicide loss in honor of suicide awareness month on October 4th. Flyer will be forwarded to the membership.
- The Florida Council Against Sexual Violence, offers civil legal assistance for victims of sexual assault and trainings for rural treatment centers. The Kushner Firm offers trainings for LE, as well. www.thekushnerfirm.com.
- The SART Symposium was well attended – a point was brought up regarding a recent federal supreme court case ruling in which the individuals who processed DNA evidence were expected to testify to their findings themselves, due to the human element to DNA testing. An alternate subject matter expert was not able to testify to the results.

IX. Adjournment

- Jill Fogel motions to adjourn. Mike Calderin seconded. Meeting adjourned at 12:05pm.

Next meeting October 16, 2024
Plantation Police Dept.
451 NW 70th Terr.
Plantation, FL 33317
www.browardvictimsrights.org
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