



OFFICE OF THE
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COUNTY OF SHASTA

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PRESS RELEASE

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

Redding, CA -- April 26 marks the beginning of 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. Shasta County Board of Supervisors declared April 26 – May 2, 2009, as **National Crime Victims Rights Week** in Shasta County with a proclamation approved on the April 21st calendar.

Historically, 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 national 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 after a crime. It also helps fund victim assistance programs—such as the local Crime Victims Assistance Center—that supports victims by providing physical and emotional care and guidance in navigating the criminal justice system. Since January 2008, CVAC staff assisted over 2,940 victims of crime in Shasta County.

"Thanks to VOCA, victims have a place to turn in the aftermath of crime," said Mary Lou Leary, executive director of the National Center for Victims of Crime. "Through this historic law, the nation stands behind victims as they rebuild their lives."

Communities across the United States will observe National Crime Victims' Rights Week with candlelight vigils, commemorative displays, education forums, and many other events to educate the public about victims' rights and services. To support this nationwide outreach effort, Shasta County District Attorney – Crime Victims Assistance Center will participate with Shasta Women's Refuge in the annual "Take Back the Night" public resource fair held at Redding City Hall on Wednesday, April 29, 2009 from 5:30 pm until 8:30 pm. For more information about National Crime Victims' Rights Week or if you need victim assistance, please call CVAC at (530) 225-5220.