



Victims' Voice NEWSLETTER

Volume #2 | Issue #2 | Montana Department of Corrections Victim Services



ANNOUNCEMENT

As COVID-19 begins to wane and we find ourselves moving toward more normalized, familiar routines, our team would like to take time to acknowledge all of the training opportunities, information sharing and collaborations that have been established over the past year. We are honored to share a common goal with our co-workers, criminal justice stakeholders, community stakeholders, victim service providers and crime survivors. This issue highlights some of these incredible collaborations and services that make Montana unique in addressing victim issues.

We hope you enjoy this issue of the Victims' Voice newsletter.

We welcome any feedback, content suggestions, and ideas for future publications. Send those to CorVictimLiaison@mt.gov.

Now available on our website for download or publication, a Co-Homicide Booklet, for survivors and family members.

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Victim Services' Outstanding Employee Recognition: Patrick Kruse

Montana Department of Corrections Investigator Patrick Kruse is for investigating criminal activity at Montana Women's Prison and Pine Hills Correctional Facility. Patrick has a background in law enforcement and studied at the University of Eastern Oregon. He has been with the DOC for almost three years.

Patrick is being honored as this quarter's Victim Services Outstanding Employee. Patrick's work with victims has gone above and beyond with his empathy and support. Patrick helps victims feel safe and protected and is thorough with his investigations.

He words his questions so victims understand clearly what is needed but he is careful to not re-traumatize them. He shows victims he cares about them as a person and follows through with his promises to them.

Victim liaisons enjoy working with Patrick and appreciate his efforts with victims.

*Thank you,
Investigator Kruse!*



Victim Impact Facilitator Training- Billings

The Montana Department of Corrections (DOC) Victim Services team hosted Victim Impact Panel (VIP) training in Billings, MT June 22 – 24, 2021.

Fourteen students, three trainers, three victim liaisons and two victim speakers were in attendance. We were thankful we could safely meet in person following the recent COVID-19 restrictions.

Our VIP program follows a standardized, evidence-based curriculum used around the country. Research supports the efficacy of impact of crime classes and indicates a positive change in prosocial behaviors among offenders. Offenders gain knowledge of victims' rights, gain sensitivity to victim's plight and are encouraged to assume personal accountability in this class.

Victim speakers from the community attend the final class to explain to offenders how they were personally impacted by crime. Victims' voices and the "power of the personal story" reinforce the curriculum content. Our victim speakers report they gain healing from this experience and offenders report they gain a deeper understanding of how their choices can have a serious impact on others.

Many of our DOC facilities in Montana offer VIP for offenders to attend to encourage them to make lasting, positive changes in their lives.



Pictured left to right: Chelsey Duenow, Shelbi Wolff, Monica Huffman, Kim Doherty and Maria Dinkel

DOC Victim Services Offers the following restorative justice programming:

- Victim Offender Dialogue
- Accountability Letter Program
- Victim Impact Panels
- Family Group Team/Conferencing Meetings

For more information, please visit our website: <https://cor.mt.gov/Victims/>

Restorative Justice

Restorative justice seeks to repair the harms resulting from crime in ways that meet victims' needs, requires offender accountability, provides the opportunity to make amends, and helps both victim and offender fully function as members of the community. The process identifies the injustice that took place and the steps the offender needs to take to make things right (now and in the future). Full restoration may not be possible, but the emphasis is on making progress toward resolution.

The objectives of restorative justice programs have been stated in several different ways, but according to the United Nations handbook on Restorative Justice, it contains the following key elements:

- A. **Supports victims**, giving them a voice, encouraging them to express their needs, enabling them to participate in the resolution process and offering them assistance. We now know much more about the needs of victims of crime and the ways in which the criminal justice system may address these needs (e.g. the need for information, participation, expression, empathy, redress, restoration of a sense of control and security, etc.). Restorative approaches tend to focus primarily on the persons who have been harmed.
- B. **Repairs relationships damaged by the crime**, in part by arriving at a consensus on how best to respond to it. A key feature of restorative justice is that the response to criminal behavior focuses on more than just the offender and the offense. **Restorative justice can also be helpful for identifying underlying causes of crime and developing crime prevention strategies.**
- C. **Denouncing criminal behavior as unacceptable and reaffirming community values.** Denouncing certain behaviors is an objective of the restorative justice process just as it has been a fundamental objective of criminal law for centuries. It is designed to be a positive denunciation within a larger process, rather than being the sole focus of the intervention.

At DOC Victim Services, we believe that restorative justice is an important, contemporary expression of timeless standards of justice.

- D. **Encourages responsibility.** The restorative process is meant to make it easier for offenders to make amends and accept responsibility for behaviors that have a damaging effect on the victim, their family members, and the community. The process focuses on forward looking outcomes, **prevents recidivism** by encouraging change in individual offenders, and facilitates their reintegration into the community. Active acknowledgment and acceptance of personal responsibility for the crime and its consequences, rather than a mere passive one imposed by others, is what is being encouraged.
- E. **Restores community order** and peace and repairs damaged relationships
- F. **A restorative justice process does not necessarily rule out all forms of punishment** (e.g. fine, incarceration, probation), but its focus remains firmly on restorative, forward-looking outcomes. The restorative outcome that is being pursued is the repair, as far as possible, of the harm caused by the crime by providing the offender with an opportunity to make meaningful reparation.
- G. **Reducing recidivism** by encouraging change in individual offenders and facilitating their reintegration into the community. The past behavior of individuals and its consequences are clearly a central preoccupation of the restorative process, but so is the offender's future behavior. Transforming or "reforming" the offender through the restorative process is a legitimate objective of the process and so is the prevention of recidivism.
- H. **Identifying factors** that lead to crime and informing authorities responsible for crime reduction strategy. The restorative process is an open one that encourages frank discussion of the background of the offense in a spirit of explanation rather than making excuses.

According to a compilation of research by the U.S. Courts, restorative justice dialogue programs, Victim Offender Dialogue, Circles, Family Group Team/Conferencing, etc., contributed to a **26 percent reduction in recidivism**. There were 15 studies with positive effect sizes, five studies with no treatment effect, and three studies with negative effect sizes. From a victim services perspective, we see significant healing and resilience by victim participation in restorative justice process, including Victim Impact Panels.

The Family Tree Center

Family Nurturing Center of Montana



Located in: Walla Walla University–
Social Work Campus

Address: 2520 5th Ave S. Billings, MT
59101

Phone: (406) 252-9799

Website: [https://
familytreecenterbillings.org/](https://familytreecenterbillings.org/)

Email: info@familytreecenter.org

The Family Tree Center

The Billings Exchange Clubs' Child Abuse Prevention Center

In an effort to support parents and caregivers, The Family Tree Center offers quality, nurturing childcare, at NO COST to parents/caregivers, regardless of income. Their childcare serves the entire Billings, MT community by providing parents time for themselves.

During "Parent's Time!" they provide a scheduled three-hour break once a week, during the day, to parents and caregivers. During this time, two trained staff members provide individualized care for each child. Two times per month, The Family Tree Center also provides "Parents Evening Out", a two - hour break between 5:30-7:30 to allow parents an evening alone!

Nurturing parenting classes at The Family Tree Center offer parents and caregivers the

opportunity to empower themselves through self-awareness, education, and support.

The Family Tree Center utilizes the Nurturing Parent Program®, recognized internationally as an evidence-based curriculum for over 30 years. The classes have stood the test of time. The Family Tree Center continues to adjust to the changing dynamics of the family while advocating for the most basic need of all family members... to connect and grow.

The Parent Aide Home Visiting Model provides families with a staff or volunteer mentor who works weekly with them in their homes on a variety of goals designed to insure that children are safe and parents have the tools they need to best nurture their children.

"To support, strengthen and educate children and families in ways that enhance their growth and well-being: to stop the hurt before it happens."



Address: 421 5th ST. N. Great
Falls, MT 59401

Phone: (406) 770-3191

Hours: M-F 8am-Midnight

Email: director@tobysousemt.org

Website: [https://
tobysousemt.org/](https://tobysousemt.org/)

Toby's House is accepting donations of goods, services, and monetary contributions. Join us in our mission to prevent child abuse and neglect!

Toby's House Crisis Nursery

Toby's House Crisis Nursery is committed to the prevention of child abuse and neglect by providing crisis, respite and transitional care for children.

The crisis nursery provides urgent or emergency care for children ages 0-6. Toby's House provides a safe, nurturing environment for a few hours or all day, if needed, at no cost to families.

The non-profit crisis nursery is accessible to the public and has no income requirements for services. They offer referrals that link parents and caregivers to community resources to build resilience and strengthen families.

Toby's House believes all children deserve safe, loving, and immediate shelter during a family's crisis. Infants and toddlers are most vulnerable to child abuse and neglect, often resulting in death.

What do families use the Crisis Nursery for?

- There is not a safe place for a child to stay while resolving personal issues
- Someone is not capable of taking care of their child as they would like
- An important appointment but no one safe to leave a child with
- When stress and life's problems are becoming too much to tolerate and could result in taking it out on a child or when someone feels they are losing control
- Medical emergencies where a caregiver needs immediate assistance with temporary childcare
- Mental health, substance abuse/sobriety support
- Foster care parent respite
- Emergency custody/custody issues
- Will lose their job if they miss more work
- Being waitlisted for daycares or daycare is closed
- Grandparents caring for grandchildren

The Restitution Resource Center helps states improve their ability to effectively order, collect, disburse, and fulfill restitution sentences.

- * Victims frequently sustain financial losses as a result of the crimes committed against them. Repayment of those financial losses, or restitution, by the person who was convicted of the crime can be a crucial resource for victims. However, even when courts order people to pay restitution, there is no guarantee the amount ordered will be collected.
- * The U.S. Department of Justice’s Office for Victims of Crime has awarded The Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center and the National Crime Victim Law Institute (NCVLI) funding to create a new resource center designed to help states improve their ability to effectively order, collect, disburse, and fulfill restitution sentences.

For more information visit: <https://csgjusticecenter.org/projects/restitution/>

DOC Restitution Department

Restitution is the offender’s debt to you, the victim, for losses resulting from the crime. Montana law (46-18-241, MCA) entitles you to request full restitution for the following expenses:

- Medical and dental bills
- Mental health counseling
- Stolen or damaged property
- Lost wages
- Travel and relocation costs
- Future expenses related to the crime
- Funeral costs for homicide victims

Prior to sentencing, provide copies of these records to the county attorney or a county victim advocate, who may ask you to fill out related forms. Complete and return as soon as possible, and make copies for yourself.

If a judge ordered restitution in your case, submit a W-9 Form and a Direct Deposit Signup Form to the DOC Collections Unit. Not sure? Call your county attorney.

Offenders establish payment schedules with their probation and parole officers. Payments go to the DOC Collections Unit, which sends money to victims either quarterly or when there is at least \$25 to send.

For more information on an offender’s obligation to pay restitution and supervision fees, please visit Montana Probation and Parole Services: <https://cor.mt.gov/ProbationandParole/RestitutionandSupervisionFees>
Contact the DOC Collections Unit at (800) 801-3478 to check on the status of restitution. Notify the Collections Unit if your address changes.



LENDING LIBRARY

DOC Victim Services now has a lending library available for public use. The list of available books with links for more information is available on our website: <https://cor.mt.gov/Victims/>

To request a book/DVD check out, please email: CorVictimLiaison@mt.gov

This project was supported by Grant # 18-V01-92737 awarded by the Montana Board of Crime Control (MBCC) through the Office of Justice Programs, US Department of Justice. Points of view in library content do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the US Department of Justice.

“We don't heal in isolation, but in community.”

— S. Kelley Harrell

UPCOMING EVENTS

Statewide Weekly Education Hour

Every Tuesday 9:30-10:30a.m.

July

July 6: Greg Kolwicz: Men and Sexual Abuse

July 13: Clint Arneson: Juvenile Probation

July 20: Abuse in Late Life

July 27: Engaging Men and Boys in the Fight Against Violence

Subject to change

Schedule:

For a schedule of the weekly speakers, or if you would like to speak, please email CORVictimLiaison@mt.gov or visit www.cor.mt.gov/victims

How to Access:

[Join Microsoft Teams Meeting](#)
+1 406-318-5487 United States, Billings (Toll)
Conference ID: 108 988 550#

Contact Information Survey:

Please fill out this SurveyMonkey link to provide your contact information to be available to the statewide education hour attendees: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/6RMM2F8>

DATES TO REMEMBER

July 19-25: Pretrial, Probation and Supervision Week

July 30th: World Day Against Trafficking in Persons

HOW TO CONTACT US

The Victim Services program office hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (MT) Monday through Friday except state and federal holidays.

It is our practice to return calls within 48 hours. Please leave a voicemail including your name, number, and any pertinent information you can provide.

Address:

5 S. Last Chance Gulch
Helena, MT 59601
P.O. Box 201301



Helpline: (406) 444-0447 or Toll Free (888) 223-6332

Fax: (406) 444-4920

Website: <https://cor.mt.gov/victims>

Email: CORVictimLiaison@mt.gov

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/MTDeptCorrections/>

YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLGfBIY9Dcf-3hfWqfqu4wi274Tcpxeyw>

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE UPDATES

- We are resuming in-person Victim Impact Panels at our facilities.
- We are resuming Victim Offender Dialogue activities.
- New brochures are available on our website to promote understanding of restorative justice programs.
- Offender specific brochures are available to help offenders develop understanding for the importance of participation.
- We will be sending out brochures to statewide stakeholders within the month.