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# JUSTICE COALITION'S VICTIMS' ADVOCATE

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## Help When You Need it Most



**Ask the Mayor**  
 by Mayor John Peyton

Since 1986, the City of Jacksonville's Victim Services Division has helped crime victims reclaim their lives. Now the Victim Services Center, this group is made up of advocates who help victims of aggravated battery, robbery, homicide, sexual assault and domestic violence recover and rebuild. They utilize their skills, training, knowledge and sensitivity to assist victims in overcoming emotional, physical and financial trauma. Many victims say they could not have made it without these caring advocates whose motto is to provide "Help When You Need it Most."

Victim Services has an array of facilities and programs available to provide crisis intervention, stabilization and recovery. A free-standing Sexual Assault Response Center, located on the campus of Shands Jacksonville, provides specialized services including post-assault examinations, HIV/AIDS testing, individual and group therapy, advocacy and support, prevention and education programs, a 24-hour hotline for rape victims and a 24-hour Sexual Assault Response Team. These services are available for all adult and adolescent victims and the people closest to them.

The Intimate Violence Enhanced Services Team (InVEST), another part of Victim Services, is in place to identify and intervene in the most dangerous of domestic violence cases. The team is supported by a collaboration of various agencies and groups, such as the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office, Hubbard House and Jacksonville Area Legal Aid, that work with the team to ensure service to victims and accountability for perpetrators.

Victim Services also works with my Victim Assistance Advisory Council, the official agency of city government created by executive order to coordinate, study, recommend and promote cooperation concerning victim assistance activities within Jacksonville. The council members I appoint are charged with enhancing and expanding victim rights through community collaboration and awareness.

Additional information on victim rights, financial compensation, elderly and disabled victim outreach, the after-hours program, volunteers and support groups is available at the Victim Services Center, located on West 10th Street, and on the City's Web site, www.coj.net.

Victim Services provides our community's most vulnerable citizens with free, confidential care. Crime victims need and deserve this excellent and necessary service, and I am proud of the dedicated team at the Victim Services Center.

To reach a Victim Services representative via telephone, please call (904) 630-6300.

## Dreams Rediscovered After the Pain



By Laine Reinecke-Clayton  
 Hubbard House Community Education Manager

Donna stands in line with the others, nervously waiting for the signal. It's a good kind of nervous, though, a moment she never thought would happen. Beaming with pride and self-confidence in her cap and gown, she is about to walk across the stage to receive her college diploma.

Her children are anxious and excited, as well. They remember all the terror they lived through at home and the day they finally fled the violence. The past several years have seemed to fly quickly by, and so much has changed in all of their lives. There is no more violence or yelling or nights spent under the covers hoping their father won't kill their mom; there is just peace.

When Donna's name is announced, her children clap wildly as their mom raises her diploma in the air with a huge smile on her face. They all know what it took to get to this point and without support they may never have made it.

Donna was raised in a home with two parents, in a very traditional setting where her father made all the decisions regarding the family finances, was the sole breadwinner of the family, as well as the disciplinarian. Her mother stayed at home to raise the children and was responsible for making certain the



household functioned smoothly. She was not allowed to pursue interests outside the home unless her husband approved.

Donna's father was verbally and emotionally abusive to her mother, constantly putting her down in front of the children. She never saw him physically attack her mom, but she knew her mother feared him and noticed that she constantly apologized for things even when she was not at fault.

In her senior year, Donna began dating Dan, a star scholar and student body president. The relationship became serious, and Dan proposed marriage after graduation. Donna talked with Dan about her ideas for the future and explained that she wanted a more equal relationship than her parents had. She wanted to wait to get married until after she finished college. Dan placated her by saying he would support her dreams, but he wanted to get married and start a family while he was young. He

convinced her that she could do both, and they married that summer.

After the wedding Dan's demeanor changed, and he became very controlling, wanting to know where his young wife was at every moment, whom she was with, and what she was doing. Though she kept trying to talk about going back to school, Dan would dismiss the idea and say that she had plenty of time for that after they got their household in order. Soon Donna became pregnant with their first child. Initially, Dan was elated and lavished attention on her.

Donna's pregnancy was a difficult one; she was often ill and unable to keep up with the household chores. One evening while on the phone with the doctor's office, she burned their dinner. When Dan became irate and Donna began to cry, he told her to stop whining and began slapping her repeatedly. She

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## Crime Free Multi-Housing A Great Program for Jacksonville

By Officer John T. Provost

The Crime Free Program is a partnership between the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office and the owners, managers and residents of apartment communities. "Our goal is to reduce the crime in our apartment communities here in Jacksonville. In our city 16 percent of our residents live in apartment communities. In these areas, approximately 42 percent of violent crimes occur there. The sheriff's office implemented this program with the goal of reducing violent crime in these high density areas," said program leader Captain Mark Bowen.

The program was successfully developed by the Mesa Arizona Police Department in 1992. The International Crime Free Multi-Housing Program has spread to nearly 2,000 cities in 44 states, 5 Canadian Provinces, and other countries.

The JSO began its involvement in the Crime Free Program in May 2007, at which time several officers were trained on the program. Once they received their training, they began to form the structure for the implementation of Crime Free in Jacksonville. In March 2008, Sheriff Rutherford certified the first three apartment communities in our city

who had signed up and completed all three phases of their required compliance.

Training is now underway at 136 apartment communities throughout Jacksonville; all are working toward becoming fully certified. Although the process is time consuming, JSO hopes that all apartment communities see the benefits of working closely with law enforcement to fight crime in the city. "The team approach, with the police and the owners, managers and tenants all working together to keep the criminal element and their activity out, is a proven formula for

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