



Department of
Youth Services

Message from DYS Director Harvey Reed
National Crime Victims' Week: Engaging Communities, Empowering Victims
April 20, 2015

Mike Pistorino's life is great. He has a wife, three young daughters, runs marathons and is a successful executive at a company in Cleveland.

Life, however, wasn't always all roses.

As a child, Mike was a victim of sexual abuse at the hand of a neighbor while living in Bronx, New York.

Angry, hurt, lost and alone, Mike turned to drugs and alcohol, which led to homelessness, crime, and prison.

It wasn't easy, but Mike turned his life around, first seeking counseling for the sexual abuse he suffered as a child.

When he's not running a marathon or tending to his children, Mike is working tirelessly spreading his message, *Using My Voice to Change the World*, and inspiring many other victims to seek help.

During the month of April, Mike will be speaking to youth at each facility, sharing his story and creating awareness about the victims of crime.

April 19-25 is National Crime Victims' Week. This year's theme, *Engaging Communities, Empowering Victims*, emphasizes the role of the entire community, individually and collectively, as we support victims of crime and empower them to direct their own recovery.



You can learn more about Mike, Survivor to Thriver, in a video available [here](#).

In addition to Mike's speaking engagements, other activities are taking place in our facilities in observance of National Crime Victims' Week.

Shannon Komisarek, Unit Management Administrator, said every unit at all three facilities are adopting victim assistance organizations.

At Cuyahoga Hills Juvenile Correctional facility, youth are dedicating a wall to victims of crime, with each unit making a contribution. One unit created a patch quilt to hang on the wall. Another unit designed a poster, while other units are writing letters of apology to victims.

In the center of the wall at Cuyahoga Hills, the winning entry of an essay/poetry contest will be on display. The Youth Council will select the winner.

At Indian River JCF, youth are participating in a walkathon at the facility to honor and remember victims of crime and their families. Money raised from the event will be donated to various organizations in the community.

Youth at Circleville JCF are collecting blankets for a women's shelter.

Every year, millions of people's lives are forever changed by crime. They are our families, neighbors, friends, and colleagues.

Crime victims often struggle to work, pay bills, or support their loved ones. Many have life-changing injuries and need long-term care and support. It's a time we can all reach out to crime victims, listen to what they need, and help them rebuild their lives. We all play a role. Find out how you can help. Visit: www.VictimsofCrime.org