

**Harvey J. Reed, Director**  
**Ohio Department of Youth Services**

## Responsible Public Policy

The Department of Youth Services (DYS) touches the lives of thousands of youth in Ohio. Beyond youth in DHS facilities and those on parole, DHS funds and supports over 610 direct service programs throughout the state offering nearly 110,000 youth (based on annual program admissions) opportunities and services to effect positive change.



## Working Together to Advance Crime Victims' Rights

April 21, 2013 begins National Crime Victims' Rights Week, a time to recognize and honor crime victims and to acknowledge appreciation to those individuals who work to assist crime victims. This year's theme, *New Challenges, New Solutions*, calls us to work together to advance crime victims' rights.

The youth in our care have all harmed someone, be it a family member, friend or someone from their community. National Crime Victims' Rights Week gives us an annual opportunity to engage our youth and one another in the importance of assisting those who have been impacted by crime.

DYS has an Office of Victim Services (OVS) that is responsible for ensuring that the rights of crime victims of DHS youth are recognized and honored. OVS currently has a caseload of 239 crime victims who have signed up to receive services including written notification of potential or actual status changes of youth, information and support, victim-offender dialogue opportunities, victim advocacy through linking victims with the Release Authority and referrals. The office provides support to DHS staff in cases when staff have been victimized by youth. OVS also provides a support hotline that victims can call for free 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at (800) 872-3132.

OVS designed the Victim Awareness Curriculum to help youth understand the impact of their criminal behavior upon their victims and community. It is intended to provide a consistent tool through which youth can address their victimizing behavior. During a total of 12 sessions provided by trained facility program staff, the curriculum examines a variety of topics including remorse, empathy, hate, bias, punishment and justice. The curriculum looks at the dynamics of each crime and the effect crime has on its victims. The program, administered by the Division of Facility Programs and Operations, uses written exercises and victim impact panels to bring the youth face to face with victims, community members and other stakeholders affected by their crime.

### **Victim Services in 2012**

- OVS provided 2,594 written notices of potential or actual status changes of youth
- OVS managed 1,174 victim-related phone calls
- 26 staff were trained to facilitate the Victim Awareness Curriculum
- 42 youth successfully completed the Victim Awareness Curriculum

In recognition of National Crime Victims' Rights Week, Bruce Adams, Administrator for OVS, will be presenting a 45-minute brownbag luncheon presentation entitled, "The Historical Development of the Concept of Victim Rights." The presentation will be provided on Monday, April 22nd from 11:30 am —12:15 pm in the 2nd floor lunch area in the William Green Building, 30 West Spring Street, Columbus. All are welcome to reserve a seat by emailing OVS at [Victim.Services@dys.ohio.gov](mailto:Victim.Services@dys.ohio.gov).

Thank you to all of our staff and volunteers for their efforts in helping our youth become more aware of the impact of crime on victims, take responsibility for their actions and begin to make amends. For additional information about our OVS, please contact Bruce Adams, Administrator, or Kate Foulke, Victim Services Coordinator, at (800) 872-3132.

