

2021 NATIONAL CRIME VICTIMS' SERVICE AWARDS — TRANSCRIPT

ADVOCATE: *National Domestic Violence Hotline. Are you in a safe place to talk?*

KATIE RAY-JONES, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE: We're such a critical resource. We know from what we hear from the people who use our services that the hotline itself is a lifesaver.

CARLOS ALCARAZ, DEPUTY PROJECT DIRECTOR, JBS INTERNATIONAL: Building trust is incredibly important when working with children and young people impacted by the opioid crisis. There are a number of very complex needs related to this issue.

THERAPIST: *So, you use a toy when you feel angry?*

CHILD: *Yeah.*

CARLOS ALCARAZ: How do we as a multidisciplinary group of stakeholders in our community work to address those needs?

ADVOCATE: *We're open 24/7. Have you called the shelter in Detroit already?*

KATIE RAY-JONES: The hotline could not exist without the local shelter, without the counseling services, the legal advocacy.

ADVOCATE: *So how can I assist you?*

KATIE RAY-JONES: Together is how we create a journey that is a life that is free of violence for survivors.

JANELLE MELOHN, DIRECTOR, CRIME VICTIM ASSISTANCE DIVISION, OFFICE OF THE IOWA ATTORNEY GENERAL: Crime victim compensation can really be a game changer in someone's life.

WOMAN: I felt validated. I remember finding out that I got approved for it and just crying and telling my family that finally, somebody's believed me.

JANELLE MELOHN: The ability to access a trusted advocate in the community is huge.

KATHERINE DARKE SCHMITT, ACTING DIRECTOR, OFFICE FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME: Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to our 2021 National Crime Victims' Service Awards ceremony. I wish that we could meet in person, as we have in previous years, but there is a silver lining to our virtual gathering this year. The ceremony is completely open to the public, so whether you preregistered and received a link by email, or you are joining us from a link on our

website, or are watching us through Facebook Live, we are so glad that you are able to join us this afternoon.

We are honored to be joined by Maureen Henneberg, Acting Assistant Attorney General for the Office of Justice Programs, today. And I know a number of Department of Justice staff are viewing today's event, including Associate Deputy Attorney General Myesha Braden and Deputy Associate Attorney General Theron Pride, as are many of my colleagues at the Office of Justice Programs.

I'd like to also welcome the staff from the Office for Victims of Crime and our distinguished speakers. We have a truly outstanding line-up of federal leaders in victim service and public health professionals today, and I could not be more excited to introduce them to you.

Also a very warm welcome to the award recipients whom we honor today. Throughout this difficult past year they have demonstrated, again and again, their extraordinary commitment to helping victims in their greatest time of need.

In his proclamation, commemorating this 40th anniversary of National Crime Victims' Rights Week, President Biden stated, "We must work together to prevent crime and ensure that all victims have a place to turn, and the support they need to recover." Our honorees exemplify this proclamation.

Soon you will meet a beloved clinical social worker at the Utah Navajo Health System who, in addition to providing behavioral health services to rural tribal communities, took it upon herself to organize an aid effort during the pandemic that delivered essential items to elders and their families. You will meet a chief deputy who has spent almost two and a half decades specializing in domestic violence cases.

You will meet a trailblazing practitioner who founded one of the first clinics in the Nation devoted to human trafficking survivors' medical and mental health care.

And you will meet an extraordinary 10th grader who founded a club to foster a kinder school environment and community in response to bullying that she received as a child.

These are just a few of the passionate victim service providers, advocates, and allied professionals who are our award recipients today. Each of them has a deeply personal understanding of what it means to serve victims.

This year they have had to do so under challenging circumstances, often with strained resources and formidable barriers to victim outreach and care. But, they have continued to offer support, recovery, justice, and, perhaps more than ever, a sense of hope. Now, it is my pleasure to introduce our first speaker, Acting Assistant Attorney General for the Office of Justice Programs Maureen Henneberg.

Maureen began her OJP career as a Presidential Management Intern with the Bureau of Justice Statistics in 1990. She spent 18 years in BJS, and eventually became acting director of that agency. She then directed OJP's Office of Audit, Assessment, and Management for 5 years. For the last 6 years, Maureen has served as OJP's Deputy Assistant Attorney General for Operations and Management. She has been the Acting Assistant Attorney General since January.

As the head of the Office of Justice Programs, Maureen oversees billions of dollars in grants and other resources to support state, local, tribal, criminal, and juvenile justice system activities and victim services. We are very fortunate to have someone with Maureen's knowledge and experience leading OJP, and I am personally grateful for her support of our work at the Office for Victims of Crime.

Please join me in welcoming Acting Assistant Attorney General Maureen Henneberg.

MAUREEN HENNEBERG, ACTING ASSISTANCE ATTORNEY GENERAL, OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS: Thank you, Katherine. It's been a pleasure to welcome everyone to this year's National Crime Victims' Service Awards ceremony. I would like to congratulate all of our outstanding award recipients. It's such an honor to recognize each of you for your contributions to crime victims across the country. Let me also thank Katherine and the incredible staff of our Office for Victims of Crime for all the hard work that went into planning today's event and for all they do every day to support crime victims. And of course, thanks to everyone in our virtual audience for being part of today's ceremony. And thank you for the exceptional work that you do to serve crime victims each and every day.

Just over a year ago, an almost unprecedented public health crisis dealt a setback to victim services in America. Domestic violence shelters, counseling and treatment centers, even hospitals were forced to shut their doors or scale back services. Face-to-face interaction between victims and service providers had to be curtailed, and in many cases, people were confined to their homes with their abusers, many of whom were suddenly out of work and struggling to make ends meet. The situation was volatile and victims were increasingly vulnerable.

But advocates found creative and effective ways to intervene. Service professionals manned hotlines and expanded online options. They checked in on people they knew were at risk. They even established codes so they could communicate with victims whose every move was being monitored and controlled.

At a time when many people were throwing up their hands in frustration, these dedicated advocates found a way to keep doing what they always had done, help victims in need. It is that resourcefulness and determination in the face of adversity that we celebrate today. The amazing individuals and teams we are honoring continue a long tradition of excellence in the victims field. We are awed by their achievements, and we are just as awed by the powerful legacy of service and selflessness that they represent.

I am very proud that the Office of Justice Programs has played a role in securing that legacy. Our Office for Victims of Crime continues to support thousands of local victim assistance programs and victim compensation programs in every state. They're also working every day to build the capacity of victim service professionals to meet a host of challenges, from human trafficking to hate crimes to victimization in Indian Country.

Grants from other parts of OJP are helping victims in other ways, by helping abused and exploited children, by finding missing persons, and by supporting research on a range of victims' issues. And of course, the National Crime Victimization Survey, which is carried out by our Bureau of Justice Statistics, remains the best source of data on crime victims in America. This important work will continue, and it has the unqualified support of our Attorney General.

I would be remiss if I did not remind everyone that National Crime Victims' Rights Week takes place during National Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Month and National Child Abuse Prevention Month. One of our honorees is a survivor of childhood sexual abuse. Others have devoted their careers to serving victims of sexual and domestic violence. They remind us of the unspeakable trauma that these crimes inflict on their victims. I encourage everyone watching today to reaffirm your commitment to supporting survivors of these crimes and to creating a world where everyone is free from sexual violence and child abuse. Again, it is an honor to recognize our award recipients. They have helped to make our world a more just, a more compassionate place, and they are an inspiration to us all.

It is now my privilege to share a message from our Attorney General. He is unable to join us live, but he has recorded a special video message in honor of our award recipients. Attorney General Garland has a long history of service right here in the Department of Justice. He began as an Assistant U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia and served as the Deputy Assistant Attorney General in the Department's Criminal Division. And finally, he served as Principle Associate Deputy Attorney General from 1994 until 1997. As the Principle Associate Deputy AG, he oversaw the prosecutions for the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing, the Unabomber, and the 1996 Atlanta Olympics bombing. He went on to be appointed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, where he served as Chief Judge. President Biden appointed him to the post of Attorney General earlier this year, and he was confirmed by the Senate last month. We're very glad that he took the time to share this message.

MERRICK GARLAND, ATTORNEY GENERAL: Good afternoon. On behalf of the 115,000 employees of the Department of Justice, I would like to congratulate the recipients of this year's National Crime Victims' Service Awards. I commend all of you for your service, for your courage, and for your inspiring example. Let me thank Maureen Henneberg and Katherine Darke Schmitt, and the staff of our Office of Justice Programs, in particular our Office for Victims of Crime, for serving as hosts today. The Department of Justice appreciates your leadership on behalf of crime victims.

Thank you to everyone tuning in today. You represent thousands of dedicated victim advocates and allied professionals across the country, all working tirelessly to pursue justice and healing

on behalf of survivors across America. The times call for selfless public servants like yourselves. Your role is an integral part of the criminal justice system. One of our responsibilities is to ensure that victims are informed, have a voice, and are supported in the healing process.

On Monday, I was in Oklahoma City to join in commemorating the victims of the tragic bombing there 26 years ago. On that sacred ground, I spoke with victims' families, their children, and now their grandchildren. And I was reminded of your essential part in helping to heal a community experiencing unspeakable and extraordinary loss. More frequently, those who help our individual survivors, struggling to cope after being victimized, facing hardship, and bewildered about how to navigate a confusing legal process. An enduring public health emergency has fueled an increase in the need for your work. Police departments are experiencing a surge in domestic violence calls. Hate crimes, fed by misinformation and prejudice, have become all too common.

Although the news may seem dire, there are rays of hope. The ranks of America's victim service professionals are growing daily. Victim assistance grants provided by OVC now support more than 7,000 local victim assistance programs all across the country. Every day we bear witness to stirring acts of heroism on the part of compassionate and courageous advocates and crime victims themselves. And earlier this month, I joined the President and the Vice President to announce more than \$1 billion in grants that could support community violence intervention.

DOJ is also making a concerted effort to embed victim services in the response to community violence. This year, OVC will fund a hospital-based trauma support initiative and a new center for culturally responsive victim services. We are also calling upon federally supported victim assistance programs to work routinely and closely with underserved communities and communities of color. We are working to meet this moment with collective action and the urgency it deserves. I am proud to be part of that effort, and I am proud to work alongside you again.

I know the toll it can take on you and your families. Exceptionally long days, the emergency calls in the middle of the night, the grief that overshadows it all. Thank you for your service to crime victims, for your commitment to the safety of your communities, and for working to make America a more just and compassionate place. Based on my experience in the immediate aftermath of that horrific day in Oklahoma City, I can assure you that the work of victim advocate professionals does not go unrecognized and is never forgotten. Thank you for your work.

KATHERINE DARKE SCHMITT: Thank you, Attorney General Garland and Acting Assistant Attorney General Maureen Henneberg, for your powerful words and for your support for today's proceedings. Now I would like to introduce a special guest, Janelle Malohn. Ms. Malohn is recognized as a victim services leader and the Director of the Crime Victim Assistance Division in the Office of the Iowa Attorney General. At the Crime Victim Assistance Division, Ms. Malohn oversees a staff of 29 individuals and 8 statewide programs aiding victims of crime. Ms. Malohn is the immediate past board president of the National Association of VOCA Assistance

Administrators and has also served as a board member or a trustee for the National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards, the National Council on Criminal Justice, the Iowa Governor's Criminal Justice Reform Committee, the Friends of Iowa Civil Rights Incorporated, and the Iowa Sex Offender Research Council. In 2019, Ms. Melohn received the Trailblazer Award from the Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault for her work to prioritize funding and services to open the doors for historically marginalized communities. Please welcome Janelle Melohn.

JANELLE MELOHN, DIRECTOR, CRIME VICTIM ASSISTANCE DIVISION, OFFICE OF THE IOWA ATTORNEY GENERAL: Thank you so much for the introduction, and thank you to OVC for having me here to speak today. For me, the National Crime Victims' Rights Week theme this year urges state funders and victim compensation program directors like me to work alongside direct service providers, state leaders, and others to challenge the ways that we create obstacles for the most vulnerable among us to receive the help that they need. We are the stewards of the money for victims throughout the country, and unfortunately, sometimes we're the barrier, too.

2020 was an unprecedented year of shared tragedies, pandemic, illness, and death, demands to cure racial inequities, an attack on our own capital, and I've honestly lost count of the number of mass violence and shootings. Collectively, we've also seen millions who have been without work and a consistent paycheck. In Iowa, we also managed to throw a derecho into the mix during the pandemic. And for those of you who don't know what a derecho is, don't worry, because neither did any of us Iowans until it happened. It's literally a hurricane that occurs on land. In August, the derecho cut a path through central Iowa, unleashing winds over 100 mile per hour, flattening millions of acres of corn and soybean crops, leveled over 1,000 homes, left a million—a half a million people without power, killed three Iowans, and caused more than \$11 billion in damages, making it one of the most costly thunderstorm events in modern-day history. And individuals were not spared from additional personal harms.

Incidents of violent crimes soared across the country as we all locked down and closed ourselves off to protect ourselves and our loved ones from the virus, creating a perfect storm for abuse and violence to thrive within homes. Iowa's violent crime rate is relatively low in comparison to most states, but Iowa saw more domestic violence fatalities in 2020 than in any other year for the past decade. Sadly, we're already on pace in 2021 to exceed the number of people lost to intimate partner violence.

Des Moines University conducted a study about the rate of reports of sexual assault as well as the number of survivors who obtained sexual assault forensic examines during 2020 at one of Iowa's largest hospitals. They found that while reports of sexual assault were down significantly—a correlation not borne out by the number of survivors who were served by sexual assault programs, mind you—the rates of strangulation and/or use of a weapon during these assaults were up about 9 and 16 percent, respectively, from 2019.

Perhaps you're wondering why I'm talking about the more difficult side of violence and disaster in an event meant to recognize and honor survivors and providers. I bring them up because in each and every situation, as typically is the case, marginalized communities suffered victimization and harm at strikingly disproportionate rates. Black people make up about 4 percent of Iowa's population, but account for more than 30 percent of all of our homicide victims. COVID illnesses and deaths in communities of color have been drastically higher than in white communities, and the CDC says this is due to a combination of things, including overrepresentation of black and brown individuals among essential workers and industries; inequities in healthcare and discrimination faced when encountering systems such as education, housing, transportation, criminal justice, and finance—all of which are systems that are meant to lift up, advance, educate, protect, and help people. These factors contribute to higher stress, poor health outcomes, and an increased risk of exposure to COVID 19. And they definitely contribute to the higher death rates of black and brown people from the virus.

In the aftermath of the derecho here in Iowa, we found our refugee communities—victims literally by definition—especially in Cedar Rapids, were hit the hardest. They experienced higher levels of homelessness due to the damage, and some communities went more than 2 weeks without power. While utility companies worked around the clock to rebuild our devastated infrastructure, it may come as no surprise that neighborhoods of concentrated black and brown individuals were among the last to see their power restored.

For me, the National Crime Victims' Rights Week theme represents a blueprint for funders like me and service providers to acknowledge the ways that we create barriers which prevent or at least make it harder for the most vulnerable among us to receive the resources and services they deserve, and then work to level the playing field and expand our reach. The power of the purse strings is very real, and with that power comes great responsibility. Billions of dollars flow out of the Crime Victim Fund through State Administering Agencies like mine and on to programs serving victims of crime each year.

As administrators, we have the ability to engage communities; enlist feedback; listen to survivors, community leaders, and providers; and use that information to create more inclusive and fair grant-making administrative and compliance processes. We can build trust among these communities by listening and by taking action to find the best ways to ensure equitable access and funding for community agencies who have historically been denied access to state and federal funds. We owe it to all victims to commit to transparent processes, constant evaluation for potential improvement, and accountability to all of our communities.

In Iowa, I work alongside an amazing team of 29 other professionals. I ask a lot of my team. I ask them to refuse to become complacent and to always work even beyond their capacity at times to make sure we actively reduce barriers to funding, to receive services, to payment for expenses related to victimization, and to immediately help after a crime. We reevaluate, we challenge, and we change. We are constantly reassessing and adapting, and it's the least we can do. Through the Iowa Attorney General's Office, we fund and prioritize services by and for marginalized communities. We ensure the people making recommendations about which

organizations get funding reflect the communities we're trying to reach. And as a result, we funded 56 new programs around our state when VOCA funds increased, to provide services in almost every priority identified in a statewide needs assessment we conducted.

We restructured our service model to focus on housing first, to emphasize mobile advocacy and meeting survivors where they're at in their communities, and to provide meaningful sexual assault services. We also invested in and literally built Iowa's first trauma recovery center from the ground up. We did the same for Iowa's—to create Iowa's homicide and other violent crime coalition. Both programs are now thriving after only 4 years.

We've leveraged discretionary grants and administrative funds to build the capacity of our grantees in areas such as grant management, administrative duties, performance reporting, marketing and branding, strategic planning, and more. Our current efforts include undergoing a statewide effort to develop outcome measures, so in the future, we can be sure victims are better off for having engaged with the programs we fund versus being relegated to counting the heads of those who walk through doors.

My office also runs Iowa's victim compensation program, as you may have seen in the tribute video, and we reimburse victims and providers for bills directly related to victimization. We added new benefits to make sure victims can have access to housing assistance, can relocate in the event of an emergency, and have access to more support—more money to support mental health and other urgent expenses. We created a process for victim to access our program without having to report to law enforcement. Since doing so 5 years ago, an additional 350 to 400 victims each year are connected to our program and receive reimbursement for their expenses without the barrier of criminal justice involvement.

We've received every—we've reviewed, I'm sorry, every letter we send out to a victim as well as the program application to ensure that they're readable, compassionate, understandable, and humanizing, even if we're denying a claim or payment. My team goes above and beyond and always offers any victim an opportunity to connect with our victim advocate on staff or a victim advocate in the community to see if there are other resources available to them. There are countless ways we can all work to improve how we do business, but we cannot say we are supporting victims until we reduce the barriers we create. It can't become—supporting victims cannot become a reality until we commit to providing funding, services, reimbursement, and other help to the most vulnerable among us who are experiencing victimization.

This week is an ideal time for action as we stop and reflect on the lives that have been affected by crime and violence, and we recognize those who have gone above and beyond to provide exemplary services to those who have been affected by crime. When we're at our best, we make a difference in the lives of so many people going through some of their worst times, just by doing our jobs. I was reminded of this just this week when one of our compensation program staff received the following message from a victim she had been working with. This woman's daughter—both of her daughters had been sexually assaulted by a trusted loved one who had committed suicide when the abuse came to light. The victim wrote, "I'm not sure if

you hear this often, but having your help eases so much of the stress with everything. I realize this is your job, but your work is appreciated, and those of us affected by trauma are so grateful that the stress of financials is alleviated from our worries so that we can focus on healing. Thank you."

I am honored by our work and I am proud to be a part of a network of leaders and states at the Office for Victims of Crime and our advocate agencies throughout the country. Thank you again, OVC, for inviting me to speak today, and congratulations to all of the award recipients. Thank you so much.

KATHERINE DARKE SCHMITT: Janelle, thank you so much for those remarks. Your reflections are a call to action to all of us in the field. I would now like to welcome our next speaker, Dr. Thea James. Dr. James is the Vice President of Mission and Associate Chief Medical Officer at Boston Medical Center, and the Director of Boston Medical Center's Violence Intervention Advocacy Program, and an Associate Professor of Emergency Medicine at Boston University's School of Medicine.

Dr. James is responsible for coordinating Boston Medical Center's relationships and strategic alliances with a range of local, state, and national organizations to foster innovative new models of care that help patients and communities achieve equity and health in the broadest sense.

As the Supervising Medical Officer on the Boston Disaster Medical Assistance Team under the Department of Health and Human Services, Dr. James has also been on the ground helping in the aftermath of some of the worst disasters in modern memory, including New York City after 9/11, New Orleans after Katrina, and Port-Au-Prince after the 2010 Haiti earthquake. For her public service, Dr. James has received a number of awards. In 2019, she was a Massachusetts Public Health Association Health Equity Champion, and in 2020, the American College of Emergency Medicine recognized her professional excellence with a Lifetime Achievement Award. In that same year, the American College of Emergency Physicians named their inaugural Social Emergency Medicine Award in her honor. Please welcome Dr. Thea James.

THEA JAMES, MD, VICE PRESIDENT OF MISSION, AND ASSOCIATE CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER, AT BOSTON MEDICAL CENTER: Good afternoon. Thank you for the honor to be here today, and I would also like to congratulate the awardees today. I am an emergency medicine physician, and I have been one for several years—more than two decades. And the one thing about emergency medicine is that it gives you a unique insight into human nature, the human condition, and actually all that constitutes life. And the one thing that I've learned over time, after looking beyond the injuries—the violent injuries that people present with, even the repeated unstable health conditions that people come in with over and over again, is that, given any opportunity, people will not choose suffering.

And as we are in this time of equity, in order for us to change what we see all the time, the predictability of who does worse in any type of challenge, we've seen data all over the place all

the time. In medicine, you see slides all the time that are measuring anything you want to title the slide with. But if you measure the outcomes by demographics, it's always the same. People of color always do worse. In the hospital where I am right now, the difference between life expectancy between here and a mile up the street is more than 30 years. And as we talk about equity, I think the most important thing today is for us to understand what inequity is. Because until we can recognize what inequity is, it's challenging to initiate equity.

An example of that is the—everyone knows where COVID vaccine had the greatest impact or the worst impact on people, and what populations all across our country. But when the vaccines became available all across our country, they were not deployed in those areas. Even from a public health perspective. Even by the most well-meaning people in our country. And I think it takes intentionality for us to understand what equity means, but to first understand what inequity means.

What I have learned over time, and particularly as an emergency medicine physician and having a violence intervention advocacy program here is, there are certain sorts of patterns that present all the time. Predictably violence, particularly penetrating trauma types of violence, happens in certain types of neighborhoods. If you look in Boston by various different T stops, the public transit system here, you can measure things like premature death rates for people who are older 25 years old without a college degree, or the—where the greatest, the highest rates of homicide take place. And they're all in the same locations—these T stops—as these world-renowned hospitals. And without intentionality and insight into what is driving those things, we accept them as the norm. We continue to do the same things we do, without intentionality to alter the outcome.

The thing I want to say about that is, if you can imagine walking along a stream and there are children floating down the stream with broken arms, we can stand at the bottom of the stream like most well-meaning people and pick them out all day. But until we go to the top of the stream, we will never be able to interrupt, mitigate, or eliminate that stream.

I also want to think about how this all started, or at least identify one point in time where it could begin, and the ramifications of it over decades. If we go back to the time of red lining in the 1930s, this is exactly when communities like this were created, when there were, like, two socioeconomic populations established, which remains fixed to this day. And there was an opportunity for people to build wealth and opportunities for others not to build wealth. And an inequity that might serve as a great example is, instead of being able to build wealth through homeownership, if you are given public housing and public housing also has—is associated with the inability to earn more money without losing the housing, you can see how a well-meaning initiative or a well-meaning intervention is actually an inequity.

Our catchment area here at Boston Medical Center is all the communities that were behind red lines. So, as one might imagine, during COVID, when COVID happened, our hospital was the first hospital to actually tilt during the height of COVID. And our hospital also, our patients at that time, we had almost 82 percent of our patients in the hospital had COVID. And it was almost

like a textbook in terms of the data. The majority of the patients in the hospital who has COVID had—the highest level they had was high school education. A majority of them came from disinvested neighborhoods that were traditionally red lines. Most of them had comorbidities, but these are not comorbidities for people who are in their 70s or in their 80s. These are people with comorbidities, severe comorbidities, who are in their 40s.

We have a violence intervention program here, and we are—we have had his violence intervention program since 2006. We had an increase in gunshot wounds, stab wounds, domestic violence, interpersonal violence during COVID. That's what happens, or a reflection of people who are already struggling, who are already not able to prioritize health using their limited resources for survival, for paying rent, keeping their lights going on, and feeding their families. And then when they're challenged and tilted by something like a pandemic, things get worse. But we did not stop the services that we continued to do.

What I would say is unique about the violence intervention program is that what I'm talking about in terms of root causes of poor outcomes going upstream, identifying how—what drives these things, is we understood that these things are not happening in a vacuum. We could—we saw that there was no reason why our patients who came in with gunshot wounds, stab wounds, and domestic violence, why these people could not achieve at their highest levels and greatest desires. And so we provided them with the opportunities to do that. That is our model of operation. And people actually changed socioeconomic lanes, people changed their quality of life-course trajectory through doing that.

So, during COVID, we continued what we were doing but we went remote. We had to get laptops for our advocates who reached out to people the way they do every single day. As the numbers climbed, we did as we usually do. We called people, connect with people as soon as they get in the hospital, because we receive that information through the computer. We were using phones, if people had them. Or if people had Androids, we could use Messenger through Facebook. But we continued that. And then we used telehealth, as well. We had to be as creative as possible to be able to establish and continue the relationships that people—that we had—that we start when we engage with people and continued on. So we never missed a beat with that at all.

But what we are doing going forward, as a hospital—and I might add that what this all caused us to do, it caused us to ask ourselves, about 3 years ago, “what is the role of a safety-net hospital? Is it charity, exclusively, in perpetuity, or is it equity? I mean, is it filling gaps that people have, where you're just propping them up and keeping them up so that they don't fall? Or is it equity, where you're eliminating the gaps, making it so that people can have financial stability, economic mobility, and even opportunities to build wealth? We decided, and I'm proud to say, we decided on equity because we wanted to see people get out of the line of need, we wanted to see people to be able to thrive and achieve at their highest levels.

So, some examples of what we have decided to do going forward. Number one, we looked internally first at ourselves to see where we might be complicit inadvertently in things that are

not deemed as equity practices. We looked at policies. We looked at outcomes. We looked at practices. And to no one's surprise, of course we found things, and that's exactly what we wanted to happen. We also screen all of our patients who come in the hospital for determinants of health. Patients have an opportunity to actually identify not only what they have gaps in but what they want help with. And let it be also known that I had to do a bit of advocacy to ask to put education on the screener and employment on the screener. And to no one's surprise, at least not to my surprise, people screen highest for wanting help with that at the same levels they have—that they want help with food insecurity.

We also belong to something called the Healthcare Anchor Network, which is based in Washington, DC. And the Healthcare Anchor Network focuses on building more inclusive, sustainable, local economies through hospitals being intentional about how they make everyday decisions in investment procurement. We've had hiring surges in the hospital. We have partnered with the mayor's Boston Hires program and hired 400 people or more a year in to the hospital.

We were able to invest in a private equity fund. A safety net hospital does not normally get to do that. But when you build onto your hospital, build a new facility or a new tower, the state says you have to give 5 percent of the total construction cost to the community. We asked the state if we could give our obligation to multiple different housing projects. So we invested in a housing development, but it's not any housing development. It's the kind of housing development that will only get funded if whatever they're building provides access to employment, green walking space, transit, healthy affordable food, which enabled us to invest in a development for—that has 323 units of new mixed-income housing. Some to rent, but some to own. So it gives people an opportunity to build wealth. Sixty percent of the laborers, the trades people, on the site came from the community. That was very optically evident during that time.

We invested in a grocery store that people wanted on the first floor of one of those buildings. And I might say that that grocery store is based in Washington, DC, and it's called Good Foods Markets. It also has a Montessori school and a 24-hour gym there as well.

We also changed our procurement models. In the beginning, in 1 years' time, at the beginning of the year, we were investing \$2 million in women-owned businesses, people with disabilities, and veterans. In 1 years' time, we increased that to \$24 million. And most recently, we got a JP Morgan Chase grant to create a systems-based grant that involves multi-sector partnerships, not just hospitals alone but also neighborhood organizations, the city government of Boston, and multiple different housing development—workforce development partners. And so it has two pillars: housing acquisition, housing preservation, as well as careers and economic mobility.

And the last thing I want to say is, one of the best examples, as I was speaking about earlier, about inequity and equity, again, our state was one of those states that was hit hardest in disinvested communities by COVID. When the vaccine came to Massachusetts, the vaccine sites were not deployed proximal to those communities. What our hospital did was engage with the

communities, ask them to help us to identify what was the best way to remove barriers, create a convenient access to the—to the vaccine. And we set up six community vaccination sites. We started in January planning. We—by March 1, we had vaccinated 13,000 people. I'm happy to say, as of yesterday, we've vaccinated 76,000 people.

So, I just wanted to highlight intentionality, inequity, and equity, and what I believe we can do as our call to action. And I am optimistic by nature, and it's not unfounded. And so I would ask us to just have more intentionality toward equity and always make that our North Star. Thank you for the opportunity to be here today.

KATHERINE DARKE SCHMITT: Dr. James, thank you so very much for your remarks, and for reminding us of the importance of intentionally using an upstream and downstream lens when we're looking at persistent issues in equity gaps.

We have now arrived at the main event, the award recipient announcements and video tributes. The first award is the National Crime Victim Service Award, which honors extraordinary individuals and programs that provide services to victims of crime. With this award, we recognize leaders in the field, programs and individuals whose work has been particularly noteworthy, and that exemplify the long-term commitment that characterizes many victim service providers, some of whom are also victims of crime. We have two award recipients in the National Crime Victim Service Award category this year—the Vegas Strong Resiliency Center in Las Vegas, Nevada, and Jennifer Dunn in Waukesha, Wisconsin. Please start the Vegas Strong Resiliency Center video.

BARBARA BUCKLEY, ESQ., EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, LEGAL AID CENTER OF SOUTHERN NEVADA: Vegas Strong Resiliency Center was created to provide services to all of those affected by the October 1 shooting.

TENNILLE PEREIRA, ESQ., DIRECTOR, VEGAS STRONG RESILIENCY CENTER: It was the largest mass shooting in U.S. history, where we lost 58 individuals.

JOHN STEINBECK, FIRE CHIEF, CLARK COUNTY, NEVADA: Our mission since the incident was to relieve suffering. And that continues to this day.

MEGAN FREEMAN, PHD, LICENSED PSYCHOLOGIST, NEVADA DIVISION OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES: It was difficult to know what the impact would be because all of our experience with mass shootings before this one were on such a smaller scale.

TENNILLE PEREIRA: I wanted to know how I could help. As an attorney, my thought was legal services.

BARBARA BUCKLEY: They're dealing with trauma. Having to deal with insurance companies and navigating bureaucracies on top of that, it's just too much. And that's where we step in.

MEGAN FREEMAN: The evolution of the Vegas Strong Resiliency Center really grew out of many, many partnerships.

JOHN STEINBECK: Whatever the service was that was available, we wanted a single navigator that was there and as a point of contact throughout that entire process.

TENNILLE PEREIRA: It's very important that the response to a mass shooting of this magnitude be responsive to the needs of those that were impacted. Their needs are going to change.

BARBARA BUCKLEY: We together have built this center, and attempt to give all of our services so that it's promoting resilience.

JOHN STEINBECK: We've built trust with the community by the things that we strive for every day, putting the survivor first, putting the survivor's family first.

BARBARA BUCKLEY: There are so many ways that we have engaged with the community.

MEGAN FREEMAN: Anytime someone comes to the healing garden to visit and to feel their grief, they can feel a part of the community wrapping themselves around them and holding a part of their loss. We eventually would like to be able to meet all of the needs of any victim or survivor of any violent event in our community.

BARBARA BUCKLEY: We are here for survivors.

KATHERINE DARKE SCHMITT: This center is really an incredible resource that uses a trauma-informed approach in the services they provide. Barbara Buckley, Tennille Pereira, Fire Chief John Steinbeck, and Megan Freeman, you are the embodiment of Vegas strong. Congratulations to you all.

Now let's watch Jennifer's video.

JENNIFER DUNN, DIRECTOR OF VICTIM SERVICES, WAUKESHA COUNTY DISCRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE, WAUKESHA, WISCONSIN: My job is an interesting mix of management with providing direct services to crime victims. We have a 24-hour crisis response team. We will go to the scene of the crime or really anywhere in the county, because research shows us that the sooner we get support and services to victims, the better they do in the long run.

Victim witness assistance programs like ours here in Waukesha, we exist to provide rights and services to victims of crimes as mandated by our state constitution and statutes. We explain the criminal justice system, we make sure that crime victims know when their case is proceeding through the court system, how they can participate, help them with financial reimbursement programs like crime victim compensation and restitution, and try to restore them financially to some stability.

I found that I had a talent for grant writing and utilized that to create these additional programs so that we could continue to meet the needs of victims in an environment of limited resources.

Alright, come on. Let's go say hi.

We just added a facility dog to our program in December. And Pepper the Wonder Dog has been fantastic. *So if you have to testify, if you see me in the courtroom, you know Pepper is there waiting for you.* I have the gift of gab. [laughs]

When calls go out, "Hey, there's legislation that really helps crime victims and we should support," I tend to be one of the people who will drive to Madison and show up and testify at the hearing. I am a huge cheerleader for victim services. I think it's the best job you can do. The more we help crime victims, the better our communities are.

KATHERINE DARKE SCHMITT: Thank you, Jennifer, for assisting thousands of victims, for shepherding constitutional amendments through your county, developing curriculum, providing technical assistance, and for 26 years of service to crime victims.

Our next award category is new this year. The Award for First Responders recognizes an individual or individuals from law enforcement, emergency services, firefighters, and rescue professions for extraordinary acts of valor towards crime victims or contributions to the crime victims field beyond the call of duty.

John Guard, Chief Deputy at the Pitt County Sheriff's Office in North Carolina, and Robin Taylor, a deputy sheriff at the Geauga County Sheriff's Department in Ohio, are both receiving this year's Award for First Responders.

JOHN GUARD, IV, CHIEF DEPUTY, PITT COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE, GREENVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA: Domestic violence is not just one case, one call, one time. As law enforcement, our responsibility is to address this and protect victims of domestic violence as best we can. While I was in my field training in 1996, we got a call. You just knew the terror she was facing within her home. He made the bond and essentially held her hostage for 28 days. There was a gaping hole within the law enforcement community surrounding victim services as it impacts victims of intimate partner violence. That case was my impetus for change. *That's what I wanted to ask, 'cause I know...*

We had a policy early on with the Pitt County Sheriff's Office where our judiciary, when they would issue an order of protection that said the defendant was not to possess or purchase a firearm, they hand-wrote on that order that the deputy serving this order shall immediately take possession of the firearms from the defendant. I was invited to Raleigh to speak to members of the legislature supporting how it would help significantly increase victim safety and offender accountability. House Bill 1354 is really an all-encompassing legislation, but the highlights for me personally were providing training for law enforcement and getting powers of arrest on pre-trial release conditions.

For a couple decades, I was at every one of the trainings for domestic violence that occurred here locally. Historically, we're trained extensively on interrogations, but really up until just recently have we focused on victim interviews and understanding the impact of trauma. So you're able to understand why we need to change, not only for the organization, but for victims of crime.

Law enforcement are merely an extension of the community they serve. I'm just one of many men and women that have embraced this topic and made the strides to improve how we serve victims who are impacted by domestic violence or intimate partner violence.

KATHERINE DARKE SCHMITT: Thank you, John, not only for your exemplary investigative skills, but for the training and instruction you provide to law enforcement officers, allied professionals, and the community regarding the dynamics of domestic violence from a law enforcement and a social justice perspective.

Now let's play Robin Taylor's video.

ROBIN TAYLOR, DEPUTY SHERIFF, GEAUGA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE, CHARDON, OHIO: I work in the detective bureau, and I primarily respond to domestic violence, stalking, protection order violations, and sexual assault investigations. In 2019, I assisted with, and responded to, at least 367 calls for service. I engage with the victims throughout their case, and I let them know that I'm with them through this whole process.

Last year, a man assaulted his wife. He started hitting her, and then he threw her into walls. He cut her clothing off. He attempted to strangle her. She thought she was going to die, and she made that very clear. We made sure she was aware that she was a survivor and that we were going to work with her to make sure she was going to be okay at the other end of this. My victim advocate and I were able to keep her engaged and active in the prosecution of this case. She needed a lot of services. We assisted her with obtaining a residence to live in, and she still maintains contact with us.

A lot of the women that I work with, there's a war going on in their homes. *She needs some services and she needs housing.* If I have a victim and they want to leave, WomenSafe will come pick them up and take them to the shelter for aftercare and for housing. And I don't know what I would do without them.

Over the years, I developed a relationship with the Amish community. A lot of Amish youth, they have cellphones. I talk to them about being safe online. We do have sexual assault cases that involve parties, and some of the victims in these cases, they're either not believed, they're blamed. They are not encouraged to speak to law enforcement.

We are the first person a victim of a crime encounters. It's important for us to develop that rapport with the victims. You start by believing them and letting them know that you take their crime seriously and that you are going to see it through to the end.

KATHERINE DARKE SCHMITT: I'm still in awe that Robin responded to or followed up on over 367 cases of domestic violence in just 1 year. That shows such dedication and strength. Thank you, Robin.

Up next is the Allied Professional Award, which recognizes an individual or individuals from a specific discipline outside the victim assistance field for their service to victims and/or contribution to the crime victims field. This year, we are honoring Pfawnn Eskee with the Utah Navajo Health System in Montezuma Creek, Utah with the Allied Professional Award.

PFAWNN ESKEE, UTAH NAVAJO HEALTH SYSTEM, MONTEZUMA CREEK, UTAH: I work in the community of Montezuma Creek. It's very small, very rural. We are on the Utah portion of Navajo Nation, high poverty levels, high levels of drug abuse, and things like that. But that makes coming here and working worthwhile, because mental health is very needed around here and all across Navajo Nation.

Growing up, I didn't have a therapist around that looked like me, that could understand, you know, my background and the struggles that we go through, you know, not just me, but my communities. We always talk about intergenerational trauma within our Native American communities. A lot of people I've seen, especially in treatment, have just never told anybody their trauma experience. And so just having me as a therapist believe them and talk about how we can overcome those things does make them better.

A lot of my work has been based around sexual violence. When I first started, I saw about five victims within a month who had been raped or sexually abused. So I started asking why we didn't have sexual assault nurse examinations here at our clinic. And then I, along with some of our nurses, decided to, you know, get together as a group and start that for our clinic. So now we have multiple SANE nurses, we have a SART team. So if we're able to heal one person, it doesn't become an ongoing cycle.

When I came back to the reservation, I thought, you know, it's hard to find information here. So part of my time is also running the website WeAreNavajo.org. We include things like Navajo traditional cultural stories, traditional recipes. It's just become a hub of tons of information.

Whatever the situation that they're in, we're always here to help. In our Navajo culture, we're all based around our family and our community. If one person or one family thrives, then we're all thriving. It's not just about me. It's about all of us. We want everybody to get better and be better as a whole. We want our nation to thrive and be successful.

KATHERINE DARKE SCHMITT: Thank you, Pfaunn, for the many roles that you play in your community: clinical social worker, website developer, SART member. It's clear that you are a trusted compass to healing for those in your community who are navigating that path.

The Volunteer for Victims Award honors individuals for their extraordinary and selfless efforts resulting in positive and lasting changes in the lives of crime victims. Many of these dedicated men and women serve crime victims without compensation. The deserving recipient of this year's Volunteer for Victims Award is Tricia Everest, who currently chairs Palomar: Oklahoma City's Family Justice Center and was recently appointed to be the Secretary of Public Safety in Oklahoma.

TRICIA EVEREST, CHAIR, PALOMAR: OKLAHOMA CITY'S FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER, NICHOLS HILLS, OKLAHOMA: I was an Assistant Attorney General for the State of Oklahoma, and I saw how hard people work in the government that no one really knows about, you know, the unsung heroes.

Ten years ago, I left to volunteer more and start a program for diverting mothers from prison. The then chief of police calls me, and he goes, "There's this woman I want you to meet. I think she's found the answers to break cycles of abuse." And I was like, "I'm in!"

KIM GARRETT, CEO, PALOMAR: OKLAHOMA CITY'S FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER: *No, I think the point is the urgency...* I'm a social worker. Clients would come in with injury and trauma, and we would have this wide array of pretty brochures. And we would say, "Go here for medical, and go here for therapy, and go here for shelter," and they would give up.

TRICIA EVEREST: *Welcome to Palomar! Thank you.* [applause]

KIM GARRETT: Palomar alleviates all of that by bringing the agencies together.

TRICIA EVEREST: Detectives now working with advocates value each other. If you can have someone come and in real time receive coordinated services, then we're already breaking cycles.

WILLIAM CITY, OKLAHOMA CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT: Palomar would not have happened without Trish at the helm. Would not have happened. She put the nonprofit together, and she had to have the right people involved.

KIM GARRETT: She is every CEO's dream for a board chair. One of the barriers early on was clients were bringing animals in because they were too scared to leave them at home, that they were going to get hurt. And she said, "Let's bring in animal welfare." And now we've got this amazing, internationally recognized animal advocacy program.

TRICIA EVEREST: From the very beginning, we wanted the city to be a partner. And they were like, "What do you want?" And I just took a deep breath, "I want you to build us a building."

And they didn't say no! *We have some really exciting plans that some of the architects have been putting together...*

Our city has invested \$38 million in building what this can look like tomorrow. The priority that I have had in my volunteer world is, what does it look like for the next generation?

Hi, Brittany. I just get to be a volunteer cheerleader for you all and for these programs. Together, we will create pathways that will lower incarceration rates, lower trauma. My role is to open up the dreams.

KATHERINE DARKE SCHMITT: Thank you, Tricia, for your dedication and tireless work serving the men and women of Oklahoma City. Your long history of philanthropy and public service is laudable.

Next, we have the Federal Service Award, which recognizes the extraordinary efforts of federal agency personnel who lead initiatives or reforms and make extraordinary contributions that impact victims of federal, tribal, and military crimes, or more broadly promote victims' rights and services for victims nationally and internationally. This year's Federal Service Award goes to Acquanette Lindsay from the U.S. Attorney's Office of the Southern District of Ohio.

ACQUANETTE LINDSAY, VICTIM WITNESS SPECIALIST, U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE, SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF OHIO, DAYTON, OHIO: If there's anything that can interrupt your life, it's being a victim of a crime. I was 7 years old and watched a horrific crime happen to my mom while they held a gun to my baby sister's head. My mother is taken to the hospital, and she is not the same. We end up put up for adoption. I didn't understand this. As I grew up, I made it my personal mission to go and find my brothers and sisters, find my mother and father, and learn about law.

I found this position, and I thought it was ideal for me. I could help people understand their rights; exercise their rights, if they chose to; and then support them, not just through the criminal process, but helping them become whole again. Right now, I have 94 active cases and somewhere around 2,600 victims.

We had a gang-related case. They've attempted to stop this gang a couple times before, and people were murdered. So people were terrified when they get a subpoena. Two weeks to get 15 families relocated for their safety. We did it.

Thank you guys so much for making yourselves available...

As a victim witness specialist, there's no possible way to meet the DOJ mission, specifically the mission of the Victim Witness Program, without relying on community partners. We need the victim to be secure and as stable as possible. That's the best thing for the case, it's the best thing for the individual, it's the best thing for the community.

If victims call back and let me know that they're doing well, I love that. I love it when they call and say, "Miss Lindsay, I just wanted to say I'm grateful, and thank you." So that's the real award.

KATHERINE DARKE SCHMITT: Acquanette, thank you for the comfort and the support that you provide to victims and the witnesses that are served out of your office. Your passion for ensuring that they are both informed and heard is evident.

The Award for Professional Innovation in Victim Services recognizes a program, organization, or individual who has helped to expand the reach of victims' rights and services. I am pleased to present this year's Award for Professional Innovation in Victim Services to Dr. JoNell Potter in Miami, Florida.

JONELL EFANTIS POTTER, PHD, APRN, FAAN, CLINICAL PROFESSOR, UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI MILLER SCHOOL OF MEDICINE; FOUNDER, THRIVE: Internationally and in the United States, human trafficking is a huge problem. Victims have some very significant healthcare issues. Years and years of not receiving primary healthcare, and then all of the trauma and brutality that comes with being trafficked. You need to have identification. You need to have insurance to just make an outpatient appointment. So it was a fatal fail.

I am a nurse. My career started when the HIV epidemic hit Miami in the early 1980s, and it was from that experience that we built a lot of multidisciplinary models of care. And so we said, "Okay, we have to figure this out." THRIVE is a comprehensive medical and mental health model that provides healthcare services for survivors of human trafficking. But it's really the team. It's like a family. It's like the patient's family.

I knew from the beginning that I wanted to design this model at the Tertiary Care Center because of all the multidisciplinary teams and the trauma teams that are here. And we needed support staff, people that understood trauma and could basically be available for the patients 24 hours a day. *I think it's going to be smoother. We're going to try it.* We really wanted an outpatient clinic. The hospital system gave us one room where you could walk down an exterior private hallway, skip the waiting room, enter from the back. And the provider, they're going to come to that same room. It just really worked. It was, like, magical.

STATE ATTORNEY: *I don't know where our victims would be had it not been for the safety net of services that you all have built...*

JONELL EFANTIS POTTER: Trauma is not easily undone, but the majority of patients are getting better. *Our model has already been replicated in Houston, and they are trying to establish a THRIVE model in the Atlanta area.*

As a Nation, we have to establish sustainable evidence-based models of care for this vulnerable and very unique population.

KATHERINE DARKE SCHMITT: Thank you, Dr. Potter, for recognizing the need for a multidisciplinary approach for serving human trafficking victims and for establishing the THRIVE clinic. I know it's been replicated across the country, and it's clear why.

The Ronald Wilson Reagan Public Policy Award honors those whose leadership, vision, and innovation have led to significant changes in public policy and practice that benefit crime victims. This year's Ronald Wilson Reagan Public Policy Award goes to Jeannette Adkins in Bellbrook, Ohio.

JEANNETTE ADKINS, RETIRED DIRECTOR, ADMINISTRATOR, MICHAEL'S HOUSE CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER, GREENE COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE, BELLBROOK, OHIO: Many crime victims that I worked with over my 32-year career found justice in this courtroom. They found the words on the stained glass window here to be true. Policy impacts the pursuit of justice significantly. I created a victim witness program in the prosecutor's office here in Greene County in 1982 because there were no general victim services available.

TERI LAJEUNESSE, DIRECTOR, VICTIM/WITNESS DIVISION, GREENE COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE: She was eager to share policy, procedure, program materials, so essentially other programs would not have to completely reinvent the wheel.

JEANNETTE ADKINS: We didn't have a domestic violence law then. We didn't have a specific law for crime victims. We worked to actually implement many of those laws that changed everything for crime victims. I went through the Police Academy and actually became a special deputy with our Sheriff's Department. In 1996, we created the Ohio Crisis Response Team to fill a void that many of us in the victim advocacy field were recognizing.

DAVID HAYES, GREENE COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE: When you have best practices in place, because of those standards and procedures, then you can rest assured that the victim is getting the best services that they can.

JEANNETTE ADKINS: When I became the executive director of the National Organization for Victim Assistance, we developed the National Advocate Credentialing Program, which today has credentialed nearly 10,000 advocates across the country. The Department of Defense decided to develop a program to almost mirror the National Advocate Credentialing Program. The DoD Sexual Assault Advocacy Program was born, and that program has credentialed nearly 100,000 advocates in the military around the world. Advocates serving crime victims and building trust with them comes from their own professionalization, their own education, and their own pursuit of justice for those that they're serving.

KATHERINE DARKE SCHMITT: It is wonderful to see Jeannette's long career of service to others being recognized. She has certainly made an impact on the local, state, and national level during her almost 40 years in the field. Thank you, Jeannette.

The Tomorrow's Leader Award seeks to honor and highlight youth up to age 24 who have dedicated their efforts to supporting victims of crime. These youth have shown courage and leadership in raising awareness of a problem, highlighting a need for a change in policies, and providing direct victim services. Sachiri Henderson, a 10th grader who has led anti-bullying efforts in her community in Shreveport, Louisiana, has earned this year's Tomorrow's Leader Award.

SACHIRI HENDERSON, FOUNDER OF BEAST CREW, INC., SHREVEPORT, LOUISIANA: The importance of teens supporting teens is that your friends can become their friends, and it can just become a ripple effect of inclusivity. And that's just amazing to see.

BEAST stands for Bullying Ends Against Students Today. And I created it because when I was in 3rd grade, I was bullied myself. I wanted to help kids out that were going through the same thing that didn't know what to do. We had, like, over 50-plus kids join the group. We did community service and showing how you can be kind and be inclusive.

JESSICA MILAN MILLER, MA, CEO, GINGERBREAD HOUSE, BOSSIER/CADDO CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER: She has worked hands-on on the ground, has worked directly with us at the Children's Advocacy Center.

SACHIRI HENDERSON: When a kid comes to you and says that they are being bullied, I feel like it's very important that there should be some action taken. You never know what's going to happen the next couple of days. So there's a survey that we facilitated when I was in middle school. It gave us the opportunity to see how we could help and to also educate our kids.

LT. DIANA COLEMAN, SHREVEPORT POLICE DEPARTMENT, SHREVEPORT, LOUISIANA: Bullying leads to criminal behavior. She's bringing it to the forefront, that bullying goes so far beyond the playground. Because once it hits social media, it never goes away.

SACHIRI HENDERSON: And some kids do feel like there's nothing that has been done. *Hello, everyone. It's Sachiri Henderson here, Miss Port City's Outstanding Teen 2020. I just wanted to hop on here right quick and let you know that we have one more day before Unity Day.*

Unity Day is a day where we wear orange and we stand for bullying prevention. In 3rd grade, I teamed up to have our first Unity Day ever, and I've been a part of Unity Day for 8 years. BEAST is my platform for my title, Miss Port City's Outstanding Teen. And so, with that comes the responsibility of talking to kids and talking to the community.

JESSICA MILAN MILLER: Being a hands-on advocate is so important, and representation is huge. Not only is she addressing the victim, not only is she addressing the bully, but she's also addressing the bystanders to empower children to speak out.

SACHIRI HENDERSON: My vision for the future is to stop bullying completely, making our community and making our school and our jobs and our churches more unified. Because you never know what someone is going through.

KATHERINE DARKE SCHMITT: It is extraordinary to see someone so young be such a force for good in her community. Sachiri, your leadership in the community, recognized by attorney's offices, civic and faith-based organizations, schools, and others, has given a voice to other victims, and for that, we thank you.

The Victim Rights Legend Award recognizes an individual whose work over an extended period of time has resulted in positive and substantial change in the field of victim advocacy and/or victims' rights. It is my pleasure to present Victor Vieth at the Zero Abuse Project in St. Paul, Minnesota, with this award.

VICTOR VIETH, CHIEF PROGRAM OFFICER, ZERO ABUSE PROJECT, LEWISTON, MINNESOTA: Virtually every social ill we wish to address is connected to the earliest years of childhood. Like a footprint in wet cement, they are not lost, they are often lifelong conditions. I didn't plan on being a child abuse prosecutor, but there is nothing more important than addressing child maltreatment.

In 1991, I tried a case of child sexual abuse, and I lost. And in losing, we realized that our child protection system was substandard. So we broke apart the system.

We decided we would get the entire community engaged. We would develop strong ties with them so they felt comfortable making a report of child maltreatment. And within 3 years of implementing those reforms, we had convicted twice as many sex offenders as had occurred in the previous 12 years. Then that opened some eyes statewide and we got some national attention for what it is that we're doing.

We created the National Child Protection Training Center. We now operate under the umbrella of the Zero Abuse Project. The vision was the coursework would be interdisciplinary. *This is the Etta Angel Wheeler House. It's designed for experiential training...*

We also said the courses would be experiential. We teach you a skill, and then you practice. So every year we train about 30,000 professionals. Our goal is literally to end child abuse, to think outside the box, and to address child abuse from multiple levels. And that is what we do.

Most children who are abused are not only impacted physically and emotionally, but they're also impacted spiritually. We launched an initiative. The idea was pretty simple. Let's get frontline child protection professionals in the same room with pastors, priests, rabbis, imams, and then teach them this research.

Nothing builds trust between a professional and a victim quite like competence. When I teach, I say to child protection professionals, "Every child abuse victim will remember two people. They

will remember the person who hurt them, and they will remember you. They will remember whether you were kind. They will remember if you gave it your all into making their life better." So I've never looked back. There's nothing more important that I can do with my life.

KATHERINE DARKE SCHMITT: Victor, your work in the realms of victim rights and protection of children is truly legendary. I and others are moved by the passion that you bring to your work. Thank you.

Finally, the Special Courage Award recognizes a victim or a survivor who has exhibited exceptional perseverance or determination in dealing with his or her own victimization. Jennifer Elmore of Survivors United, and Jennifer Luther, CEO of Correctional Rehabilitation Services, are being honored with this year's Special Courage Award. Please play Jennifer Elmore's video.

JENNIFER ELMORE, SURVIVORS UNITED, CHAPEL HILL, NORTH CAROLINA: My father was a career military officer. Retired as a two-star general. My memory at 3 years old is him taking sexual liberties with me. It was a pattern that really grew into regular visits to my room at night. I felt utter hopelessness.

When I was in my early 40s, it felt a lot like going through a dark tunnel. What felt very important to me was creating a memorialization that, "This is what was true." So I called the JAG office at Fort Bragg.

Within 2 weeks of trial, the statute of limitations that had permitted the prosecution of my case was overturned. His case in the military justice system was dismissed. That ruling ignited that old sense of powerlessness and futility. My two twin daughters, that really fueled picking the pieces back up.

I know, I'm just not feeling that.

The civilian justice system was able to prosecute the acts that he perpetrated while we lived off-base. He decided to plead guilty. And then for the judge to acknowledge me in the courtroom was, for me, justice. "I reclaim my life from you. I reclaim the truth." To be a warrior on behalf of other victims feels highly purposeful to me.

I've become a victims advocate and very active voice on Capitol Hill. Whether it's in sitting with a victim or helping them through the military justice system or legislative changes, I am passionate about really standing for victims in a way that makes us a relevant part of the process. I'd like to see the empowerment given back to victims to pursue justice in their own eyes, and that they're worthy of it.

KATHERINE DARKE SCHMITT: Jennifer, thank you for sharing your story. Your remarkable perseverance and determination throughout your journey are so inspiring. I know you offer a voice of hope and change for so many other survivors.

Now let's learn more about Jennifer Luther's work with justice-involved individuals.

JENNIFER LUTHER, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, CORRECTIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES, LLC, TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA: My life was forever changed in August of '92. I was coming home late from work one night and ended up being robbed and shot. I asked the same question a lot of victims ask: Why me? Why did this happen to me?

When you get to face your own death, you start to see that the priorities that you had before maybe aren't quite on point. I went back to college. I studied both criminal justice and human science. Then I started doing speaking engagements at prisons and at juvenile facilities and getting a lot more on their stories, as well, opening more of that dialogue. And nobody cared if they ended up in prison for life. And if nobody cares about you, what motivation do you have? So, I knew that I was going to be someone who cared, who cared about them. *And in that moment, a little piece of my heart broke for this kid.*

I've had the honor of training thousands of professionals in the field of criminal justice, and I was able to be a part of the development of a new program called Shaping Success for Re-Entry. And we rolled that out first at one of our female facilities here in North Florida. And the focus was how can we, towards the end of their sentence, better support this really big transition from incarceration life to community life?

These are our neighbors. So the more we can engage not just them, but their families and their support networks, the greater ultimate success is possible through that engagement. And that when we come with compassion and when we come with empathy, we provide hope, and that can make all the difference.

KATHERINE DARKE SCHMITT: Jennifer, we hold up your passion for supporting justice-involved individuals in an effort to make a positive impact and prevent future victimization. Thank you.

And with that last tribute video, congratulations to our 2021 National Crime Victims' Service Awards recipients.

Our awardees have dedicated their careers and often their volunteer hours, as well, to uplifting victims in the wake of traumatic events. They are a part of America's vast network of first responders, victim service providers, health care providers, court and legal professionals, and others who have prevented so many from slipping through the cracks during a devastating pandemic. Throughout it all, they've astounded us with their hard work, innovation, resilience, courage, and bravery in the service of others. Thank you.

I want to take a moment to recognize the staff at the Office for Victims of Crime for all of their planning efforts. Thank you particularly to Susan Frate for orchestrating this event, to J Street Productions for their production assistance, and to Robin Smith and all of the producers and editors at Video/Action for capturing our award recipients' stories so evocatively.

Lauren Lambert in our Office of Communications serves us well by knowing how to run every trap imaginable. And this event would never happen, let alone happen in the midst of a pandemic, without the work ethic, passion, and pure genius of Emily Bauernfeind, our communications lead at OVC. Emily, you are one of the most talented people I've ever had the privilege to work with. Thank you.

Everyone at the Office for Victims of Crime plays such an important role in the critical programming we provide to support victim service organizations, allied professionals, and victims of crime throughout the country. Thank you, OVC staff, for your hard work and your dedication and your passion for victim advocacy. Congratulations to our 2021 National Crime Victims' Service Awards recipients, and on behalf of the Office for Victims of Crime, thank you again for all of your efforts in serving victims of crime. This concludes our event.