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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Ben Pennymon, (904) 630-1212 x6608

**MAYOR'S VICTIM ASSISTANCE ADVISORY COUNCIL PRESENTS
23RD ANNUAL NATIONAL CRIME VICTIMS' WEEK**

JACKSONVILLE, Fla., April 21, 2009 – Residents, city officials and community leaders will come together to support series of events sponsored by the Mayor's Victim Assistance Advisory Council (VAAC) to recognize crime victims as part of the local observance of National Crime Victims' Rights Week, April 26 through May 2, 2009.

This year's theme, "25 Years of Rebuilding Lives: Celebrating the Victims of Crime Act," recognizes the dedication of VAAC agencies that provide valuable services victims in the community. Coinciding with public rallies, candlelight vigils, and other similar activities held across the nation, the events will honor victims, their families and those who serve them.

Kickoff news conference

WHEN: Monday, April 27
1 p.m.

WHERE: Hemming Plaza
(Downtown across from City Hall, 117 W. Duval St.)

WHO: State Attorney Angela Corey
Jacksonville City Council member Glorious Johnson
Jacksonville City Council member Stephen Joost
Jacksonville City Council member Clay Yarborough
Richard Collier, former Jaguar offensive tackle and crime victim
Roslyn Phillips, chief community officer
Circuit Court Judge Lance Day, Duval County, City of Jacksonville
Chief Rick Graham, Jacksonville Sheriff's Office, Detective Division
Dr. Delphia Williams, chief, Behavior and Human Services Division, City of Jacksonville
Rich Komando, chair, VAAC
Ann Dugger, executive director, Justice Coalition

WHAT: As the community faces the devastating implications of violent crime, leaders will outline the importance of this designation and what is being done reverse these trends and enhance Jacksonville's quality of life. This event is free and open to the public.

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April 27th News Conference Photos



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Crime Prevention Seminar

WHEN: Tuesday, April 28
9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

WHERE: Mary Singleton Center Auditorium, 150 East 1st Street

WHAT: This interesting and interactive seminar will be facilitated by Chris Gilpin from the National Crime Stop Program. Chris' presentation specializes in crime prevention for seniors and the disabled. Tips will be given on how to recognize many of the latest schemes of scam artists, as well as how to implement crime prevention techniques that will allow you to protect yourself when faced with victimization.

Strength in Unity March

WHEN: Tuesday, April 28
5:30 p.m.

WHERE: March starts at The Jacksonville Landing, 2 Independent Drive

WHAT: Members of the community, including those who have been victimized by crime, will demonstrate that the community can better support victims by standing together for justice. Participants will march across the Main Street Bridge to Friendship Fountain Park where a memorial tribute and candlelight vigil will be held. This event is free and open to the public.

Memorial Tribute and Candlelight Vigil

WHEN: Tuesday, April 28
6 p.m.

WHERE: Friendship Fountain Park, 1015 Museum Circle

WHO: Hosted by Compassionate Families in cooperation with the VAAC

WHAT: Following the march, crime victims' will be honored as their names are read aloud during a candlelight vigil. This event is free and open to the public.

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Children in Crisis: A Community Response to Violence and Its Aftermath

- WHEN:** Thursday, April 30
9-11 a.m. Workshop: "Children in Crisis: A Community Response to Violence and Its Aftermath"
11-11:30 a.m. Resource arena
11:30-1 p.m. Annual awards luncheon
- WHERE:** Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront Hotel
225 E. Coastline Drive
- WHO:** Mayor John Peyton, City of Jacksonville
Welcoming remarks
- Council member Glorious Johnson
Resolution presentation
- Harry Williams, LMHC, director of Family Based Treatment Program/Daniel Memorial
Seminar presenter
- WHAT:** The workshop will feature a closer look at different ways youth are affected by crisis and trauma, and what can be done as a community to help and protect them.
- The award luncheon will honor extraordinary individuals and programs that provide services to crime victims. The VAAC will present awards in the following categories: *Courageous Victim, Outstanding Victim Advocate, Judicial Victim Advocate, Law Enforcement Victim Advocate and Media.*
- This event is open to the public. The cost of lunch is \$28 per person and the workshop is free. For lunch reservations, call Kay Davis, (904) 354-0076 by April 24, 2009.

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Victims' Rights Ceremony

WHEN: Friday, May 1
5 pm.

WHERE: Clay County Courthouse, 825 N. Orange Avenue, Green Cove Springs, FL 32043

Jacksonville's observance of National Crime Victims' Rights Week is sponsored by the Mayor's Victim Assistance Advisory Council, the City of Jacksonville Behavioral and Human Services Division, the Justice Coalition and Compassionate Families.

National Crime Victims' Rights Week is a time for all Americans to learn about victimization, reflect on the societal costs of crime and promote laws, policies and programs to help crime victims rebuild their lives.

During the past three decades, the U.S. has made dramatic progress in securing rights, protections and services for victims of crime. Every state has enacted victims' rights laws; law enforcement agencies give victims greater protection and more than 10,000 victim assistance programs have been established throughout the country.

Despite these advances, many crime victims have not experienced the promise of such progress. Only a fraction of victims report the crimes against them and participate in the criminal justice system.

Victims' rights vary from state to state. Not all protections are enforced. Services are not always available, or they may not meet the physical, financial and psychological needs of the victims or their families.

Particularly vulnerable populations—the elderly, disabled, ethnic or racial minorities or residents of rural areas—may not receive the support they need to rebuild their lives.

For more information about the Jacksonville's Victims' Rights Week events visit www.coj.net, keyword "VAAC". For additional information about National Crime Victims' Rights Week visit www.crimevictims.gov.

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