

Collaborations

The Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center, Inc.

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Chaplains Helping Crime Victims

by *Scott Beard*

Introduction: For many of us, our knowledge of Chaplains begins and ends with Father Mulcahey on M*A*S*H. But besides serving in the military in times of war, chaplains have expanded their services into a variety of disciplines including response to crime victims. In *The New Lexicon Webster's Encyclopedic Dictionary (Copyright 1990)* "Chaplain" is defined as a priest or minister who officiates in a private chapel; a priest, minister or rabbi who serves a school, college, prison or hospital; a priest, minister or rabbi attached to the armed forces. *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary (Copyright 1988)* defines "Chaplain" as a clergyman in charge of a chapel; a clergyman officially attached to a branch of the military, to an institution, or to a family or court; a person chosen to conduct religious exercises (as at a club or society); a clergyman appointed to assist a bishop.

Chaplains and faith affiliation: Most chaplains provide spiritual comfort at times of crisis. Some chaplaincy groups are funded by a particular religious group and therefore they cater to those constituencies. (Continued on



Event Food Provision Policy: Just a reminder of requirements for reimbursement under OJP guidelines: The following is the top ten tips for food and beverage: 1. Provide a speaker at a lunch or dinner; 2. Support the event with a formal agenda; 3. The event must be mandatory for all; 4. Do not pay for bar charges with registration fees (i.e. program income); 5. Do not make alcohol available; 6. Provide appropriate break foods; 7. Surrounding events must provide several hours of substantive information; 8. Do not end events with a meal or break; 9. Costs must be reasonable; and 10. Participants must reduce per diem appropriately.

"One person can make a difference—and every person should try." Stephanie Roper

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Right:

National Project Consultants Janice Lord and Sharon English meet with Editor-in-chief of *Hinduism Today* Acharya Palaniswami to discuss the Hinduism section of the Multi-Faith Handbook for Victim Assistance practitioners. Palaniswami commented, “you can congratulate yourselves on achieving something rare: an authentic, sympathetic, and practical summation of Hinduism.”



Above: Project Staff from the five sites along with MCVRC project staff and consultants brave the cold weather to say “cheese” at the Donaldson-Brown Center in Port Deposit, MD in February.

(Views expressed by the authors of the preceding articles and websites do not necessarily reflect the opinions of OVC or MCVRC)

<http://www.ovcttac.org/resources.cfm> *Creating a Victim Focus: A Guide to Working with Victims During Offender Reentry* was developed by the Office for Victims of Crime to help key partners create reentry initiatives that address the needs and concerns of victims during the offender reentry process. The Guide incorporates innovative tools, programs, policies, and protocols to assist reentry partners in expanding the focus of their reentry initiatives to include victims. The Guide's *Executive Summary* (PDF; 2,757 KB) provides an overview.

www.islam-guide.com This Islamic guide is for non-Muslims who would like to understand Islam, Muslims (Moslems), and the Holy Quran (Koran). The Guide is rich in information, references, bibliography, and illustrations. It has been reviewed and edited by many professors and well-educated people. It is brief and simple to read, yet contains much scientific knowledge, and contains the whole book, *A Brief Illustrated Guide to Understanding Islam*, and more.

page 3) On the whole, however, chaplains respond to any person seeking a faith presence in a time of crisis. Therefore, many chaplains are trained to respond to a person's general spiritual needs and often they are cross-trained to respond to different faiths and belief systems. More than anything, they provide a comforting ear in a time of crisis.

Crime and Chaplains: Chaplains have become a presence in many prisons and jails. Also, many law enforcement departments have hired chaplains to work with police officers who may need a comforting ear in a stressful and violent profession. In recent years an effort has been underway to incorporate chaplains in response to crime victim needs.

Types of Crime Victim Related Chaplain Programs: Most chaplaincy programs rely on volunteers. One model is to have one or a handful of paid chaplains and a cadre of volunteer chaplains available on-call. Often, law enforcement departments support chaplaincy programs with space, resources and money. In other communities, the chaplaincy program exists as a stand alone non-profit organization that relies on community support. The following websites describe local and national chaplaincy programs:

www.crisishelp.us - U.S. Community Chaplaincy (USCC) helps law enforcement agencies to develop volunteer-based, first-response crisis intervention programs that help victims immediately after a trauma. USCC also provides technical assistance to existing programs, and they administer a national mutual aid system in case of major incidents.

<http://www.ifoc.org/>- The **International Fellowship of Chaplains, Inc.** (IFOC) is a non profit, providing training, recognition, certification and information in the varied areas of chaplaincy. They also interface with the secular and ministry worlds for the purpose of promoting tolerance and understanding, as well as, provide professional, trained and dedicated Chaplains in the various fields of need.

<http://www.harriscountycitizen corps.com/volunteer/orgabstract.asp?org=3> - Victim Relief of Harris County (VRHC) is a collaborative effort between the Victim Assistance Centre, Victim Relief Ministries, and Victim Chaplain Association of America. VRHC's mission is to foster residents' emergency preparedness and to provide comprehensive services to meet the emotional, physical, informational, financial and spiritual needs of victims of violent crime as well as man-made and natural disasters.

http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/ncvrw/ncvrw2002_pr.html - Press Release, April, 2002: Attorney General Ashcroft honors chaplains who responded to the tragedy of 911.

<http://www.co.forsyth.nc.us/fcsd/chaplain.htm> - The Office of the Sheriff of Forsyth County North Carolina employes a full-time chaplain to assist victims of violent crime and other trauma in the community. The chaplain also provides confidential support to officers and their families in times of joy and sadness. The chaplain's work is challenging and he often responds to the scene of the crisis, homes, workplaces, hospitals, on a 24 hour basis.

<http://www.icpc4cops.org/> - International Conference of Police Chaplains

Law enforcement chaplains do some or all of the following:

- (1) Counsel law enforcement officers;
 - (2) Counsel other members of a department;
 - (3) Counsel the families of law enforcement officers and other department personnel;
 - (4) Visit sick or injured officers and departmental personnel in homes and hospitals;
 - (5) Make death notifications;
 - (6) Provide assistance to victims;
 - (7) Teach officers in areas such as stress Management, ethics, family life, and pre-retirement classes and courses;
- (Continued on page 4)

- (8) Serve as part of a department's crisis response team;
- (9) Assist at suicide incidents;
- (10) Serve as liaison with other clergy in the community;
- (11) Provide for the spiritual needs of prisoners;
- (12) Furnish expert responses to religious questions;
- (13) Offer prayers at special occasions such as recruit graduations, awards ceremonies, and dedication of buildings;
- (14) Serve on review boards, award boards, and other committees;
- (15) Deal with transients and the homeless

<http://www.computerconsultingservices.net/abuse.htm>

A Community of Compassion and Safety. The Jewish Chaplain's Abuse and Trauma Resources. The Jewish Chaplain's Resources for Overcoming Trauma. (Includes various links and resources).

http://www.gbmg-umc.org/bedfordpaumc/other_missions.htm

Bedford United Methodist Church, Bedford, PA sponsors Safe Haven, Inc., a Comprehensive Crime Victim Center providing crisis intervention and supportive services to all crime victims, their children, and their significant others. Persons impacted by such crimes as: Domestic Violence; Sexual Assault; Theft; Physical Assault; Burglary; Robbery; Homicide; DUI-Related Crimes; and Adult Survivors of Sexual Assault are eligible to receive all agency services "free-of-charge." These services include: 24 Hour Hotline; Information & Referral; Emergency Shelter; Counseling Services; Legal and Medical Accompaniment; Advocacy; Victim/Witness Services through the Adult and Juvenile Justice Systems; and assistance in applying for Crime Victims' Compensation funds. Additionally, a variety of free educational programs are available to all members of the community and community residents are encouraged to "get involved" in responding to victims within their community through the agency's volunteer opportunities.

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