



OCTOBER 2025 NEWSLETTER

FROM OUR DIRECTOR



October has been an extraordinary month for MCVRC — one filled with inspiration, progress, and renewed commitment to justice for victims and survivors.

We began the month with our annual gala, an evening that brought together survivors, advocates, partners, and community leaders to celebrate courage, perseverance, and the power of change. Our emcee, Laura Neuman, set a powerful tone for the evening as she shared her deeply personal story of perseverance and bravery in pursuing justice in her own cold case. Her journey — marked by determination, grace, and the pursuit of truth — continues to inspire not only fellow survivors but also all those who work to ensure victims' voices are heard. Laura's story reminds us that justice, while sometimes delayed, can still be achieved and can create pathways for healing and hope for others.

We were also honored to celebrate David Sanford, whose leadership at Sanford Heisler Sharp McKnight led to the landmark *Syed v. Lee* decision — one of the most monumental victories for victims' rights in decades. This case affirmed that victims' Article 47 constitutional rights must be upheld and that no statute may override those rights. Just as importantly, the decision recognized that victims' rights must be meaningful and not merely symbolic. This achievement represents a profound step forward for all Maryland victims seeking fairness and true participation in the justice process.

On October 11, we gathered again for the annual Ceremony of Remembrance in Upper Marlboro. This deeply moving event brought together nearly 200 family members and supporters to honor the lives of loved ones lost to homicide. During the ceremony, more than 35 new memorial bricks were placed in the MCVRC Memorial Garden, each representing a life forever cherished and remembered. The morning was filled with reflection, compassion, and community — a testament to the enduring strength of families who continue to seek healing and justice.

As we look ahead, we know that our advocacy remains as critical as ever. House Bill 853, which went into effect at the beginning of this month, allows violent offenders serving lengthy prison sentences to petition for resentencing hearings after serving only 20 years, and to do so up to three times — once every three years. These petitions are in addition to any parole hearings already available. Only those serving life without parole, sex offenders, and individuals convicted of murdering first responders are excluded. Although we have not yet seen a large number of petitions

filed, we anticipate many will come, as the Public Defender's Office has begun recruiting additional attorneys to manage what is expected to be a high caseload.

We are already hearing from legislators that constituents are expressing concern about the impact of this law on victims and public safety. We encourage you to reach out to your Delegate and Senator to share your views and urge them to repeal or significantly limit HB 853. You can find your representatives here: [Maryland General Assembly Member Lookup](#). This is an exciting opportunity to change hearts and minds.

Your voice matters. Together, we can ensure that Maryland's justice system remains fair, balanced, and truly centered on the rights of victims and survivors.

Let's keep moving forward, together.

Joanna D. Mupanduki
Deputy Director

Free Mental Health Services

MCVRC has contracted with Safe Harbor Behavioral Care, LLC. to assist clients in mental health services. We urge any clients or victims of crime who are seeking mental health services to call our office at **301-952-0063** to get on the referral list.

Share Your Story!

Has MCVRC supported you during a difficult time? We're looking for clients who are willing to share their story on how MCVRC has helped them. Your story could inspire and empower others going through similar experiences.

If you're interested, please reach out to Casey Rosil, at crosil@mdcrimevictims.org

Thank you for considering sharing your voice!

Journey to Justice

MCVRC started an **Employee of the Month Award "Journey to Justice"**-- a monthly recognition to celebrate team members who go above and beyond in their role. This initiative is designed to foster a culture of appreciation, collaboration, and excellence across all departments.

Congratulations to our second awardee: Rochelle Brown! 🎉

Rochelle was nominated by Marta F. (our August Journey to Justice recipient) for always maintaining a positive attitude and always contributing to create an uplifting environment.

Current Employee of the Month will pass the honor forward by nominating a colleague from a *different department*, keeping the recognition rotating across the organization.

Thank you, Rochelle, for setting a high standard and thank you to everyone who continues to make MCVRC a great place to work!



UPCOMING EVENTS

1. Survivors of Homicide Victims Support Group

PLEASE NOTE that our monthly homicide meetings are held on the first Thursday of the month. The next meeting will take place on **Thursday, November 6, 2025**. It will be held in a hybrid format, both virtually and in person at the Upper Marlboro Office (1001 Prince George's Blvd, Suite 750, Upper Marlboro, MD).

The Support Group is a safe place for friends and family members of victims of homicide to meet, discuss, and support each other. All participants need to call us and request a referral to the homicide support group only (if you prefer individual counseling, we offer that too). **You can reach MCVRC at 877-VICTIM1 to get put on the referral list.**

2. Paths to Healing



PATHS TO HEALING: SELF DEFENSE CLASS

NOVEMBER 4, 2025
4:00 P.M.

Fop 89 Rental Facilities,
2905 Old Largo Rd, Upper
Marlboro, MD, 20772-7704, US

Open to all ages

Sponsored by:



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#WHYWEFIGHTWEDNESDAY

Each day we find motivation to continue to be a voice for those who need one.

These are a small fraction of the faces that motivate us. Their names and photos are taken from our Ceremony of Remembrance event slideshow. Each Wednesday, we share a life that was taken on that date and we celebrate them to remind us that crime is not victimless. These people are remembered and their families miss them. These faces are "why we fight."
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Sgt. John D. Platt Sr.

12/05/64 - 10/15/00

#whywefight



Rashad De'Eric Johnson

9/22/83 - 10/15/03

#whywefight



Do you have events you want us to attend?
Do you have something you would like to
share in our next newsletter?

[EMAIL US AND LET US KNOW!](#)

Feeling the love ❤️? Share it here by
supporting our work 🙌! Your 💰 goes
a long way to support victims of crime
and their families!

Donate now!

MCVRC is a non-profit organization funded by government
and community grants, and generous contributions from
former clients and the public who believe in our cause.

Copies of this newsletter will be made available on our website: [Access it here!](#)



Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center, Inc.
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