

2018 National Crime Victims' Rights Week Theme Video Transcript

PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN: The innocent victims of crime have frequently been overlooked by our criminal justice system, and their pleas for justice have gone unheeded and their wounds—personal, emotional, and financial--have gone unattended. So I am signing today an executive order establishing the President's Task Force on Victims of Crime.

JUDGE LOIS HAIGHT, CHAIR, 1982 PRESIDENT'S TASK FORCE ON VICTIMS OF CRIME: When I look back into the history of the victims' movement, I'm amazed at how far we've come.

MACK JENKINS: CHIEF PROBATION OFFICER (RETIRED), SAN DIEGO COUNTY: Crime victims, at one point in the criminal justice system, were an afterthought.

LOIS HAIGHT: Victims felt very isolated. First of all, they were blamed--Why were you on that street? Why did you do that? Why'd you open your door? It wasn't until some of the grassroots organizations made people aware that, hey, these are people that are suffering. They need our help.

MACK JENKINS: Now victims in the system have rights that generations ago weren't recognized.

LOIS HAIGHT: They have a right to be heard. They have a right to be present. Of course the biggest change has been into the services provided.

JEREMY NEVILLES-SORELL, WHITE EARTH OJIBWE AND WINNEBAGO TRAINING AND RESOURCES DIRECTOR, MENDING THE SACRED HOOP: People are more aware of trauma-informed practices and how do we make sure the voices of who we're advocating for are included in the way that we design services.

NANCY SMITH, DIRECTOR, CENTER ON VICTIMIZATION & SAFETY, VERA INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE: When systems are not connected, there's a high likelihood that people are falling through the cracks and they're not getting the full range of healing services that exist in a community.

MACK JENKINS: And our job is done more effectively in a collaboration than working in silos.

ELIZABETH DUGAN, CLINICAL DIRECTOR, VIOLENCE INTERVENTION ADVOCACY PROGRAM, BOSTON MEDICAL CENTER: So the more we build the circle, and the bigger the circle gets, the healthier communities we have.

LOIS HAIGHT: I'd like to see every victim have somebody that would help them through the system, help them to understand about the Victims Compensation Program, help them to understand what services they can get in counseling and therapy.

WOMAN: And so if you are really working for your community, you need to start thinking of people with disabilities, as well as seniors, everybody.

NANCY SMITH: The work that we do as victim service providers can be really hard work, and sometimes we can feel like we're doing it alone. And we're seeing some real shifts in terms of silos

actually coming down, and we're seeing a lot more of an emphasis now on building partnerships and really lifting up programs that work.

ELIZABETH DUGAN: Hospital-based programs are a new standard of care for victims of violence because the continuum of care starts in the trauma room when the victim comes in shot or stabbed. So we have a team of people that wrap around that victim.

REENA BROWN, HOMICIDE SURVIVOR: They were just there with open arms, you know, sayin', you know, we're here if you need us, to talk.

ELIZABETH DUGAN: The magic is in the relationship and the intervention that they provide. People are from the community. People have an ability to do interventions in a more honest, refreshing, credible way with clients.

JEREMY NEVILLES-SORELL: I feel we really expanded the circle for victims served by creating a national method of organizing. So it's not that we're in isolation in our own states or in our own tribes, but we know people across the country and we connect people up with other people who are doing similar work. By expanding knowledge and awareness and giving people direction on where to go, we can have a more comprehensive response and include people that are nontraditional responders, like friends, family, relatives, and so that our circle grows.

MACK JENKINS: When I ran the San Diego County Probation Department, one of the things that I did was make sure that every single employee understood we were going to be protecting the community, trying to reduce crime, providing assistance to crime victims while we tried to change behavior. That was our mission. What is unique and both special about the Community Transition Center is the multidisciplinary collaboration. Crime is about behavior. So if we want to reduce recidivism, create fewer victims, what we have to do is change the behavior of the justice-involved individuals. And through evidence-based practices for community corrections, we can do things where we're not guessing.

LOIS HAIGHT: In order for all victims to be reached, I think it's very important that all the participants know each other and work together.

JEREMY NEVILLES-SORELL: You have to be at the social events, the feasts, the pow wows, and everything else because everyone's not going to wait to come to your office to see you, and that's one way of really removing those barriers and social stigma.

NANCY SMITH: Being able to come to a conference and meet other people who are like us, who are doing similar work but maybe have different strategies that are working is incredibly empowering.

LOIS HAIGHT: We have resources now for victims that we never had before. So, in looking at the whole spectrum of how far we've come, I'm so proud to see what has happened and the people that have made it happen, and they have been courageous and wonderful.

NANCY SMITH: We have broadened who is at the table, and I think, in so doing, we have begun to understand better who all is experiencing crime, what their needs are, and we've really had a shift in terms of awareness.

JEREMY NEVILLES-SORELL: We're for healing.

We're for building a community. We're for reestablishing a strong foundation so our communities are better places for the next generation.

ELIZABETH DUGAN: Having deep community connections and partnerships are critical. The ultimate goal is to expand the circle of care and the resources for our clients.

LOIS HAIGHT: So that all victims are reached.