CPSO to celebrate National Crime Victims' Rights Week, April 10-16

Thursday, April 7, 2016

Honoring crime victims and advocating on their behalf will take center stage in Caddo Parish next week as the community comes together to participate in National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRW).

The annual observance will be held April 10-16 to highlight the importance of providing needed services at the earliest stage of victimization, said Caddo Sheriff Steve Prator.

Locally, officials will gather at the U.S. District Courthouse, 300 Fannin Street, at 11 a.m. on Monday, April 11, to officially kick off the week's activities with a proclamation ceremony involving local, state, and federal officials. Caddo District Attorney James Stewart will be the guest speaker. In the event of rain, the event will move inside the courthouse.

At 11 a.m. Thursday, April 14, the Caddo Sheriff's Office will host a Crime Victims' Service Awards ceremony at the Sheriff's Re-Entry Facility, 1121 Forum Drive, to honor outstanding agencies that serve victims of crime.

Agencies that will be recognized are the Caddo District Attorney's Victims' Assistance Program, MADD, Adult Protective Services (elderly crime victims), Forensic Nurse Examiners (SANE), Caddo Parish Community Response Team, (human trafficking), FREE Coalition (human trafficking), Gingerbread House (child advocacy center), Project Celebration (sexual assault/domestic violence), and Volunteers of Youth Justice/CASA (abused and neglected children).

A special presentation will be made to Alexis Scott in memory of the late Caddo Parish District Attorney Charles Rex Scott for his many contributions in the area of crime victims rights.

National Crime Victims' Rights Week honors and celebrates the achievements of the past 30 years in securing rights, protections, and services for victims. The bipartisan Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), passed by Congress in 1984, created a national fund to ease victims' suffering. Financed by fines and penalties paid by offenders, the Crime Victims Fund supports services for victims of all types of crime, including assistance for homicide survivors, survivors of child sexual abuse and victims of human trafficking as well as rape crisis centers and domestic violence programs among others. VOCA also funds victim compensation programs that pay victims' out-of-pocket expenses such as counseling, funeral expenses, and lost wages.

"Restoring hope for victims starts with focusing on their needs at the earliest possible point," Prator said. "This week provides an opportunity for us to call attention to the programs in our community that are available to do just that by helping victims rebuild their lives."

For more information about victims services in Caddo Parish, contact Deputy Vickie Johnson at 681-0870.