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# DISABLED CRIME VICTIMS ASSISTANCE, INC.



Summer 2003

Vol. 2 Issue 1

## Mission Statement

Disabled Crime Victims Assistance, Inc. is committed to assisting the Disabled Crime Victim and their families and promoting awareness of their specialized needs to those who serve victims and the community.

## Board of Directors

Wanda Page	Terry Vernon
Elizabeth Page	John Page
Dub Gillum	Becky Gibbs
Bob Edwards	Dianne Hengst
Debra Simons	Theresa Wright

Special Thanks to our intern that we had this year. Robin Hurt spent spring semester at our agency. We enjoyed and appreciated all the hard work she did while she was here. She Graduated from University of Texas Nursing Program in May. Good Luck Robin and we look forward to you coming back and volunteering in the future.

## Words of Hope

*"I can be changed by what happens to me. But I refuse to be reduced by it."*

Maya Angelou

Thanks to NIXIN Printing for donating the cost of printing of this newsletter.

## In the Blink of an Eye

By Becky Gibbs

The telephone call every mother fears came to me in the early morning of June 15, 2000. When I walked into the Emergency Room. I saw my youngest son, lying very still, on the treatment table. He was run over by a drunk driver and left lying in a parking lot with his legs bent backwards and his knees up to his shoulders. He told me that he would walk again – the doctors were skeptical. I heard what they were saying but I never dreamed how our lives were about to change.

The first hurdle was lack of insurance. Away to the county hospital we went, and after many weeks of medical treatment and retraining my son came home. Getting from point A to point B was impossible without a wheelchair. A custom wheelchair is like buying your first car – expensive. There was no money for the cost of remodeling our home to be equipped for a paraplegic.

Initially, the doors to every room had to be widened for the wheelchair. Ramps are a necessity at most front and back doors. The bathroom needed to be transformed to either a roll-in shower or a tub with a shower seat – and then the hand held shower head. The toilet had to be raised for easy transfer from the wheelchair. Don't forget the catheters, lubricant and plastic gloves. There is no more feeling the urge to use the bathroom, rather planning around the clock for trips to a convenient bathroom every 4-6 hours.

While in rehabilitation we were visited by Wanda Page of Disabled Crime Victim's Assistance, Inc. Wanda had walked the road of paraplegia when her daughter, Elizabeth, was shot and her spinal cord was injured. The Page family had to pioneer their way through the uncertainties of this life altering event. DCVA was there to make our travel through the legal system a more understanding and bearable process. Wanda made many phone calls to Austin to the Texas Crime Victim's Compensation Office for us. She was there the day we went to trial to face the driver who ran over my son. She was my rock. During the

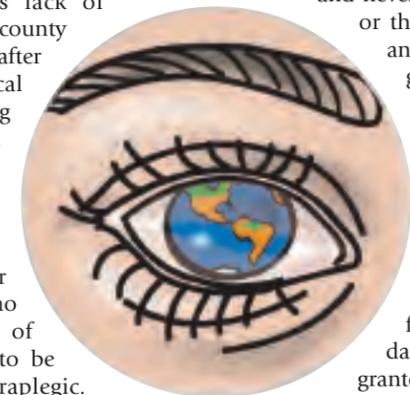
time of our acute trauma there were many sleepless nights and the inability to focus or concentrate on anything but the life of your loved one. DCVA was there to provide a map for a road we had never traveled.

Do you get the picture yet? Everything in your life gets more difficult. How do you pay for all of these things? When the access to daily life routines becomes manageable you begin to take on the task of occupation retraining. How will you support yourself? Did your previous occupation allow you to sit in a chair all day and never get up? Driving to the office or the grocery store or the bank is another roadblock. You have to get special hand controls installed in your car, have your driver's license changed to reflect that you are handicapped, and apply for handicap parking permits. \$\$\$ Are you starting to see the apparent changes a handicapped person has to face just to participate in the daily activities you and I take for granted?

The trauma of a life changing event such as becoming a paraplegic often has mental constraints. Depression is very common – more medications. Often, many of your friends leave you, bringing on more depression.

The life of a physically handicapped person has taken on a whole new meaning in our family. It means dealing with many emotional and financial changes. It means learning to let go of your loved one as you knew them before the accident. It means living your life as a handicapped person in a world where most people take their legs and arms so much for granted.

In the three years since our family has experienced a life changing event, it has taken us on a mental, physical, emotional, and financial rollercoaster. Some hurdles have been conquered, some are still staring us in the face. The trauma affects not only the victim but the entire family. God gives us sufficient grace to face each new day and each new challenge.



## DID YOU KNOW?

**THERE ARE 54 MILLION PEOPLE, ACCORDING TO THE CENSUS BUREAU, WITH DISABILITIES IN THE UNITED STATES AND 4 MILLION TEXANS WITH A DISABILITY.**

## DID YOU KNOW?

**THERE ARE 13 CRIME VICTIMS RIGHTS IN THE STATE OF TEXAS. (CODE OF CRIMINAL PROCEDURE, CHAPTER 56) THE FIRST ONE OF THE THIRTEEN IS:**

**1. RECEIVE ADEQUATE PROTECTION FROM HARM AND THREATS OF HARM ARISING FROM COOPERATION WITH PROSECUTION EFFORTS.**

*Thank you for your support and your time.*

We have a request for everyone who receives this newsletter...

Will you please respond to this mailing in one (or More) of four ways?

(Each of the four responses involves envelope.)



*Thank You!*

- Return the envelope to Disabled Crime Victims Assistance, Inc. with a donation to help continue our goals and mission of assisting Disabled Crime Victims.
- Send us the name, address and ZIP code of one or more individuals, business, leaders, church or community groups who would likely be interested in helping us support our efforts to assist disabled crime victims.
- Write out your prayer for Disabled Crime Victims or a note of encouragement and return it to us in the enclosed envelope.
- Invite us to come speak at your civic, community, neighbor, or church function to inform others of the needs, problems and services for the disabled crime victims and all crime victims.

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and  
Color Printer



*The Page Family with Danny and Linda Shelton at 3 ABN. The Shelton's founded 3 ABN, a 24 hour Christian Satellite television and radio network that can be seen worldwide, in 1986. We were delighted to have the opportunity to travel to Illinois in December to be on their program. We shared the needs of the disabled crime victims and how DCVA assists them and their families. The program has aired a number of times since then. We have received several donations and numerous calls across the country from crime victims seeking assistance. We wish to thank Anita Britton and Wanda's prayer group; they both wrote in separately telling 3 ABN about DCVA.*

## CRIME VICTIM'S COMPENSATION

By Elizabeth Page

What would you do if your husband, or your wife was suddenly a crime victim and you were told they were be permanently injured with a head injury? That they may never be able to work again.

One of the first concerns that each individual and family has is how are they going to pay for all these medical expenses? How are they going to afford being off work? What can they do if they can not return to work?

The financial loss to an individual facing a disability after a crime can be overwhelming. The crime victim suffers and the family suffers. The disability may be a spinal cord injury, loss of an arm or leg, blindness, head injury, and many other long term medical/physical problems.

It is not uncommon for the individual with a new disability to face a long period of time before they are able to return to work. If they are able to return to work, they may face changing careers. For instance, if they worked in construction they may not physically be able to return

to that type of work. As a result, they may have to go back to school or be re-trained.

Some injuries are so devastating the individual may never be able to return to work. When an individual cannot return to work it is not only financially devastating but emotionally devastating as well. It can affect the family roles such as a wife may now have to go to work and support the family.

Families often suffer loss from work due to the long hospitalization. The hospital may require them to be involved with care and medical training for when the victim returns home. They often become the caregiver after they return home and have to be available for doctor appointments and other medical needs for the injured victim.

One of the first things that DCVA addresses when meeting with victims is the financial issues. We recognize that the financial trauma can be a secondary problem. There are resources available but they are limited.

Crime Victims Compensation is financial assistance that helps crime

victims with certain expenses related to the crime. The funds from this program come from a variety of sources one of which is court costs paid by criminals. They are a resource of last resort. If a person has health insurance, auto insurance, Medicaid, Medicare, or Workman's' Compensation then the victim has to utilize these resources first. They will assist by paying insurance co-pays when necessary. Crime Victims compensation does not pay for items lost in a burglary of a home or auto.

If a crime victim receives restitution, settlement from a civil suit, or payment from any other insurance party even Medicare, VA, car insurance, etc. the victim may have to reimburse the crime victims fund.

Staff at DCVA assists with completing an application with each victim. There has to be a police report to document that there was a crime. The application process can take time and has to go through review at the attorney general's office.

DCVA recognizes that when a person has been injured they often need medical equipment such as a wheelchair right away. We work with the Attorney General's office to be sure this is accomplished in a timely way. This is done by calling the caseworker and explaining the need, the reason for the speedy approval, and making sure the proper document is done with the physician. In some cases there is an emergency fund available to assist with emergency expenses.

The types of crimes that are included are those that suffer substantial physical or emotion harm. Family members that have

lost a loved one may qualify for funeral expenses and loss of support for dependents. Crimes covered may include sexual assault, kidnapping, robbery, assault, homicide and other violent crimes. Vehicular crimes that are covered include DWI – Driving while intoxicated, failure to stop and render aide, criminally negligent homicide, aggravated assault, intoxicated manslaughter and intoxication assault.

Benefits may be awarded for the following:

- medical, hospital, or nursing care
- psychiatric care or counseling
- One time relocation assistance for victims of family violence or a victim of sexual assault who is assaulted in the victims' place of residence.
- loss of earnings or support
- loss of wages due to participation in, or attendance at, the investigation, prosecutorial and judicial processes
- care of a child or a dependent
- funeral and burial expenses
- crime scene clean-up
- replacement costs for clothing, bedding, or property seized as evidence or rendered unusable as a result of the investigation
- attorney fees for assistance in filing the Crime Victims' Compensation application and in obtaining benefits, if the claim is approved
- loss of wages and travel to seek medical treatment

Benefits can be approved up to a total of \$50,000. And cases of catastrophic injuries resulting in a total and permanent disability, victims may be eligible for an

additional \$75,000.

Additional benefits that may be covered if a victim has a catastrophic injury may include:

- Making a home or car accessible
- job training and vocation rehabilitation
- training in the use of special appliances
- home health care
- reimbursement of lost wages
- Rehabilitation technology, long term medical expenses and durable medical equipment

DCVA assists the crime victims with the application and then as needed will assist the victim in advocating for the needs with the Attorney Generals' office.

DCVA refers the victim and family to other financial resources that they may qualify, for such as: Social Security Disability which will include Medicare after 2 years, Medicaid, Texas Rehabilitation Commission, community programs, and many other programs. In some cases a crime victim may pursue a civil suit which may provide some financial assistance with the medical bills and with the loss they have sustained.

This is one of the ways DCVA assists crime victims: we strive to provide them with the financial resources to minimize this stress and so that they can focus on their physical and emotional recovery.

Each newsletter we will feature a topic related to the disabled crime victim and the services that DCVA offers.

Information From the Crime Victims Compensation office, Texas Attorney General's Office. 

**We wish to thank each of you that have provided support to DCVA. It is because of you that we are able to serve disabled crime victims.**

*In Sorrow*

We dedicate this issue to Dianne and her Daughter Elizabeth. Elizabeth was a victim of domestic violence. She suffered a severe head injury leaving her with major disabilities. She has spent the last two years in the nursing home and passed away on May 24, 2003. We have deep sorrow for the loss of Elizabeth and for all the pain her mother and family has endured. Dianne has suffered and advocated for her daughter for the last two years. Our hearts and prayers are with you at this time of loss.

