

Victim Services Unit

(616) 355-1117

When a sudden, unexpected crisis occurs in our lives, we frequently experience degrees of depression, despair, confusion and emotional shock. Imagine what a victim of random violence feels, or someone who has arrived home to find their personal property has been violated, a driver who has struck a child, a wife whose husband suddenly dies, or a homeowner whose home and memories have been destroyed by fire.

Holland's Victim Services Unit (VSU) is an organization of volunteers dedicated to providing initial support needed by victims of crisis or crime. VSU responds to such incident types as:

- Fires - Traffic Accidents - Medicals - Rapes - Missing Persons - Robberies
- Deaths - Drownings - Natural Disasters - Homicides - Industrial Accidents - Plane Crashes
- Shootings - Assaults - Death Notifications

It is these and other life experiences that we all dread but may be forced to endure. VSU volunteers respond to these challenges and:

- Provide comfort and emotional support
- Help arrange for shelter, food, clothing
- Notify family and friends
- Serve as liaison between the victim and other agencies
- Help arrange follow-up services
- Provide information and referral to appropriate agencies for on-going assistance

The VSU provides 24/7/364 coverage for Holland residents. VSU volunteers are scheduled as teams to be on-call for 12 hour shifts (a.m. or p.m.), for seven-day periods to provide initial support for victims. Police and fire personnel, when necessary, contact 911 dispatchers to request VSU assistance. The on-call VSU team is then paged to respond immediately to the scene.

VICTIM ADVOCATE POSITION

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Provide emotional and practical crisis support to victims of crime and survivors of tragedy
- Help arrange for shelter, food, clothing and transportation
- Serve as a liaison between the victim and other agencies
- Cooperatively work with law enforcement and other emergency personnel
- Provide information and referrals

Qualifications:

- Must be at least 21 years old
- Have an open, non-judgment attitude with genuine concern and empathy for crime victims and tragedy survivors
- Able to cooperate with police, staff and other agencies
- Excellent interpersonal communications skills
- Must have own transportation and telephone

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- Be willing and able to follow regulations for appropriate Victim Advocate behavior
- Must have the necessary availability
- Possess a valid driver's license

Training Provided:

Required training courses include crisis intervention skills, victimology, legal procedures, law enforcement and resource information.

Time Commitment:

Must commit no less than one year to the advocate program. Attend monthly meetings and continuing education & training. Be on-call Monday through Sunday for 12 hour shifts one week out of every four as a minimum.

If you are interested in serving the Holland Community, use the Application form below to apply!

Some of Holland VSU's awards:

- Spirit of Volunteerism Award from the Ottawa-Allegan Association of Volunteer Administration (4/23/98)
- Social Justice Award from the City of Holland (1/23/02)
- 2011 "Unit of the Year" from the Michigan Sheriffs' Association

Supporting Documents



[V.S.U. Application Form](#)

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