

Victim Services Unit



(616) 355-1117

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

The first group of Victim Service Unit Advocates became active the end of February 1997. Since then, there have been three additional training programs for new advocates. Currently 14 members comprise the Unit.

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.

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

- 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

VSU volunteers are scheduled as teams to be on-call 24 hours a day for seven-day periods to provide this necessary initial support. 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.

The Holland VSU has received the following 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)

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