

The Green Sheet

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Michael C. Potteiger
Chairman

CENTRAL OFFICE PHONE
717.787.5699

INMATE INQUIRY
717.772.4343

WEB SITE
www.pbpp.state.pa.us

Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole

www.pbpp.state.pa.us

Crime Victims' Rights Week: New Challenges • New Solutions - One Survivor's Story

As a victim of domestic violence and a survivor of a loved one who was violently murdered, Nancy Chavez has shared her story countless times as part of her own healing process and her desire to help others.

Healing, helping others, taking a devastating life experience and creating something positive from it are strong reasons for a victim's willingness to relive such a painful event. They gain strength each time they tell their story and find hope again; talking about it on their terms gives them some measure of control over their lives.

On April 26, as part of National Crime Victims' Rights Week, an audience of Board employees heard from Nancy about the impact of crime on her life

life and her journey from survivor to activist. The event was organized by the Office of Victim Advocate to help employees

Nancy Chavez shares her story with Board staff.

of the Board to understand why every year the nation "celebrates" crime victim's rights week.

Victim Advocate Carol Lavery stated that it's a celebration of the "strength and resilience" that victims have in overcoming traumatic events in their lives. It's a time to promote victim's rights and honor crime victims and those who advocate on their behalf.

In her introduction of Nancy, Lavery told the audience, "Nancy has taken her life experience and turned it into something that makes a difference for victims every day."

For Nancy, this year was the tenth anniversary of her daughter's death and it has been over 30 years since she left an abused marriage.

"Each time I tell my story I feel closer to finding peace. I'm able to share my story with you and others in the hope of

helping someone," said Nancy.

Nancy married young, at age 19, against her parent's wishes, and moved to Norfolk, Virginia with her new husband, who was in the Navy. The dream of a happy marriage soon became a nightmare when her husband immediately began abusing her. He punched, choked, locked her in the house and even spit on her. She was helpless to understand his behavior and filled with shame. "I couldn't understand why he couldn't see that I was a good wife and mother," said Nancy. Her shame kept her quiet as she didn't want anyone to know, especially her parents; she thought the abuse would go away.

Nancy suffered over seven years of fear and abuse. Like many domestic violence victims, she was beaten emotionally as well as physically. Lacking self-esteem, she kept going back to her husband because of her marriage



Nancy Chavez (continued)

vows, out of fear, her husband threatened to kill her if she went to the police, and because they had a daughter, Randi.

Then - because of her daughter - she finally left her husband despite the fear. She knew she could not continue to raise her daughter in an abusive environment. Up until the moment she left, her husband continued to abuse her. "The day I was leaving, as I sat in the car he hit me so hard that my head slammed against the window and he continued to threaten me," Nancy said.

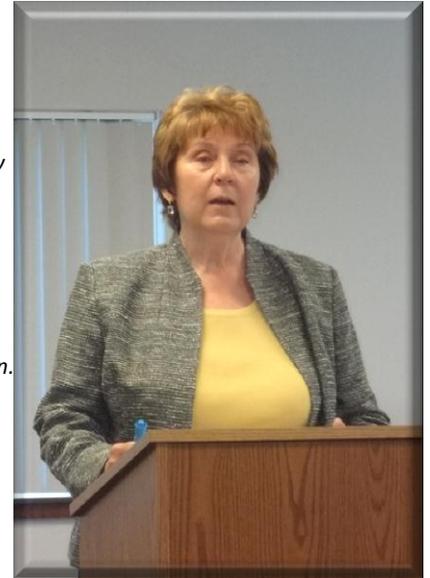
At the age of 25, Nancy was on her own, a single mom with no advanced education or resources. It was the 1970s - domestic violence shelters and domestic violence awareness was virtually non-existent. But Nancy had a daughter to protect and support, a spirit of determination and, fortunately, a loving family.

She found a job in state government, which was the beginning of an impressive career that has now spanned over 30 years; she developed goals for herself and started to attend college. "I kept my focus on staying physically and mentally strong for my daughter," Nancy said. After fifteen years of hard work and night school, she earned a bachelor's degree in business management and a master's degree in public administration.

As Nancy tells her story, the pain is reflected in her face and heard in her voice. She continued to live in fear even after she left her



Chairman Potteiger and Victim Advocate Carol Lavery make opening remarks before the Nancy Chavez presentation.



husband and she suffers from post-traumatic stress syndrome. She is able to control the emotions when she speaks of her abusive marriage and life after she left her husband. However, when she begins to talk about Randi her emotions become raw.

She and Randi were probably closer than most mothers and daughters, protective of Randi and, as any parent, would never want her to suffer from an abusive relationship as she had. At night when Randi was working on homework, so was Nancy. Even when Randi was an adult, they spoke on the phone daily. When Randi moved out, Nancy felt she should break some of the ties, but Randi wouldn't hear of it. "You're my best friend" Randi told Nancy. Randi was Nancy's life.

In 1997, Randi would meet someone who would change the course of Nancy's life forever.

Randi met her future husband, Brian Trimble, while they were applying for a job at a day care center. They both were hired, and as they worked together the

romance blossomed. Three years later they were engaged. During this time, Brian became ill and was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. Randi's unconditional love for Brian never wavered, and despite this devastating news they were married in September 2000. In 2002, things began to change.

Randi did not know that Brian was plotting her murder. He had been painting a picture of her to his co-workers as a controlling and difficult wife. Then he met Blaine Norris. Blaine had left his wife and wanted to become a filmmaker, making a movie that was an off-shoot of the Blair Witch Project. He was seeking \$5,000 from donors to fund this project. Brian wanted to support him, but Randi felt it was more important to save for their future and their plans to start a family.

One day at work, Brian made a comment to Blaine that "he could just kill her (Randi)" and Blaine responded that he could do it for him. Brian wanted freedom and money; Blaine needed to pay off debt from his failed effort to make a movie. Blaine wanted the "thrill" of killing someone. They planned Randi's murder - all for the benefit of a \$100,000 life insurance policy.

Nancy Chavez (continued)

While Nancy was on a cruise on January 10, 2003, Brian invited Blaine to his home after work. Blaine brought a black sweat suit to change into, a gun and a knife. Together they destroyed the house to make it appear as if a robbery had occurred. Brian left the house and made sure he was seen on video surveillance cameras at the gas station and other establishments.

In the meantime, Randi finished work and went home. As she walked into the house, Blaine grabbed her and strangled her with an extension cord. He then dragged her to the garage where he brutally stabbed her 27 times.

When Nancy was told of her daughter's death she responded as most of us would – it was incomprehensible. Her world had been turned upside down, this couldn't be happening.

Despite her grief she was able to reach out to Brian and help him cope with his loss. It wasn't until three months later that Nancy learned the police suspected Brian. Looking back, Nancy stated that the week after the murder Brian gave an "academy award" winning performance. She subsequently learned that he didn't have multiple sclerosis; Brian had perfected the art of manipulation.

A month later the police arrested Brian; five months later Blaine was arrested. They both pleaded guilty to first-degree murder and are now serving life sentences without parole.

As Nancy shared her story, she stated "I am a survivor. My daughter is an innocent victim. I need to be her

voice." As her daughter's voice she has become a community activist and speaker, turning her grief into advocacy and hope.

Although Nancy has been able to turn her grief and suffering into positive action, the impact of the crime on her life never ends. She continues to suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder due to the abuse from her ex-husband. She does not have closure in Randi's murder. It's hard for her to accept that the murderers are still living. Further, the case remains alive because Brian has filed an appeal. She lives with fear that someday a governor may pardon him.

Nancy misses Randi tremendously. Several times she mentioned that pictures of Randi fill her house. The void in her life is filled by her mission to educate people about domestic violence and to help children of domestic violence.

In 2005, she established the first annual Randi's Race for Hope and Courage, a 5K run/walk in memory of her daughter. The event has raised more than \$260,000 for domestic violence services.

In October 2011, Nancy established Randi's House of Angels (randishouseofangels.org) as a tribute to her daughter. "I have had a new journey – reaching out to the community about domestic violence and its impact, including its impact on children," she said.

An estimated 3.3 million children are exposed to domestic violence annually. Randi's House of Angels helps children who have experienced domestic violence in their lives. It partners with the YWCA of Greater



Harrisburg, the YWCA of York, Domestic Violence Intervention of Lebanon County and the Domestic Violence Services of Cumberland and Perry Counties.

The reach of domestic violence was evident in those members of the audience who acknowledged they are also survivors or know of someone who is in a domestic violence relationship. Several participants remained after the lecture to talk to Nancy to share their stories and to seek advice.

Dorinda Wertheimer, an Operations Center Monitor, stated, "I could relate to a great deal of what she described. I was abused for 8 years. After she shared with us, I felt like I was surrounded by family – there were so many other women who had suffered from abuse in that same room and who would have known? I didn't. She brought so many of us together."

For other staff members, hearing Nancy's story will impact the work they do. Donna Ferguson, a parole staff technician, said, "Hearing the victim speak out gave me more realization about the victims aspect and to be more aware of

Nancy Chavez (continued)

the importance of the response from the DA and Judge letters and the victims response before entering a Board Action to parole an offender.” She continued, “It also helped me to be able to help out friends that are in an abusive relationship and to find out that there are more people in that type of relationship than I realized, a lot more people that don’t know how to get out.”

As a result of this event, further educational seminars on the subject of domestic violence are being planned in order to learn more about the issue and how to help someone suffering from abuse.

During the week of April 21-27, Pennsylvania joined the nation in recognition of Crime Victims’ Rights Week to acknowledge victims and their supporters who have labored to ensure victims’ rights are honored and respected within the justice system. For more information about crime victim’s rights in Pennsylvania visit the Office of Victim Advocate website at www.o.va.state.pa.us. For more information about domestic violence and services available to victims visit the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence website at www.pcadv.state.pa.us.

This year’s National Crime Victims’ Rights theme *New Challenges. New Solutions* recognizes that crime victims and advocates face enduring and emerging challenges. According to The National Center for the Victims of Crime, “about 50 percent of violent crimes are not reported, and only a fraction of victims receive the help they need. We need to know more about these victims, how we can best help them, and how to better target our services to reach every victim. At the same time, we must adapt to funding cuts, globalization, changing demographics, new types of crimes, and the changes (both good and bad) brought by technology. These challenges require bold, new solutions.”

Great American Clean-Up

From March 1 to May 31 each year, Pennsylvanians across the state - and Americans across the country - participate in the Great American Cleanup by removing litter and trash along our roads, streams, parks, forests and neighborhoods. Additional events include recycling events for hard-to-dispose of items like tires and appliances, creating or enhancing green areas by planting flowers, bulbs and trees, removing or painting over graffiti that devalues neighborhoods and other activities that help beautify communities.

Recently, Harrisburg District Office ASCRA Agent Sheaffer implemented this community service project for parolees in Harrisburg. Under his supervision, parolees are cleaning up Cameron and Herr Streets, up to Paxton Street, at designated times through May 31st. During one of their clean-up sessions 25 bags of garbage were collected and disposed of for the betterment of Harrisburg.



Bags of collected garbage from the Great American Clean-Up

All in an Agent's Day...Stories from the Streets

Altoona DO

⇒ Conducting routine contacts, Agents Clawson and Hauser stopped at a special probation offender's residence. When they entered, the offender and an unidentified male were behaving strangely, the unidentified male attempted to leave through the back door. Both were detained.

Dressed in black, a ski mask in their pockets, a search uncovered a fully loaded Beretta 22 on the unidentified male. Johnstown police were called; the individual was a convicted felon from New York. A search of the residence uncovered a .357 Magnum loaded with hollow points in a baby bag. The police and parole agents also discovered a scale and a bag of a white-powdered substance. Both men were arrested and are facing criminal charges

⇒ Because of his participation with the Altoona Fugitive Apprehension and Search Team (FAST) unit, Agent Rucosky's assistance was requested by the U. S. Marshals Service's Western Pennsylvania Fugitive Task Force. State parole agents across the state work hand-in-hand with the U.S. Marshals, who have the authority to deputize them. The Task Force was searching for an individual who was not on parole, but was wanted by the Pennsylvania State Police in Indiana on charges of a burglary of the Aztec Well Service. He also had outstanding bench warrants from

the counties of Jefferson and Cambria for theft related charges.

The suspect was arrested in March in the 200 block of Barron Avenue, Johnstown when Agent Rucosky and a state police officer found him hiding behind debris in a third floor attic.

Chester DO

⇒ Following a request for a urine sample during a home visit with a female parolee in early April, the parolee confessed to Agents Giunta and Kohler that she would probably test positive for Xanax, methadone and cocaine. The agents began a home search and found evidence of multiple violations of parole. More importantly, while searching the home and talking with the parolee, Agent Kohler noticed bruises on the four-year old daughter of the parolee. They also learned that the parolee's husband had been reported to Children and Youth Services for allegedly abusing the daughter. Agent Kohler contacted the CYS hotline and a CYS worker arrived at the home and interviewed the child who admitted her father "smashed her" and whips her. The daughter and her 6-month old sibling were removed from the home and taken to their aunt's residence. The parolee was placed into custody and the local police department was contacted about the alleged abuse of the father.

Agent saves boy from burning building

On the evening of April 9, around 7:30 p.m., Agent Mike Davis arrived at a parolee's residence to conduct a required supervision contact. As he pulled up to the residence, an unidentified male was running out of an upstairs apartment shouting, "fire!" Agent Davis responded quickly and determined this man was a friend of the parolee and that the girlfriend and daughter of the parolee were not home, but their seven-year-old son was in the downstairs apartment. Without hesitation, Agent Davis entered the downstairs apartment and removed the young boy. There was also an adult sleeping on the couch who Agent Davis roused awake so that he could safely exit the building. Agent Davis attempted to enter the upstairs apartment to make sure no one else was inside, but he was unable to because of the heavy smoke in the room. The fire apparently started from a grease fire on the stove.

Commenting on Agent Davis's actions District Director Lightner said, "I think his calm, purposeful behavior saved the life of the boy and the other resident not to mention it reduced the property damage to the residence and nearby residences. This is a great example of how agents positively impact the community beyond their job requirements just by their presence."

All in an Agent's Day...

⇒ In late May, Agents Peterson, Theobald, Tamaro and Walters encountered an offender who was leaving a local bar. He was detained for a violation of his condition of parole not to be in an establishment that sells alcohol. The offender was taken back to his home for a compliance check and in plain view was a scale with cocaine residue and baggies used for drug packaging. At that time Supervisor Swatski authorized a search of the residence. Found in the offender's room was 3.7 ounces of cocaine and a box of .380 ammunition, but no gun. The Chester Police Department was notified and the offender was taken into custody. The offender has been charged with possession with intent to deliver, possession of drug paraphernalia, and possession of controlled substance as well as multiple parole violations.



Williamsport DO

⇒ In April, a group of parole agents on their way to lunch had to put in a quick "work out" before they had a chance to sit down to eat. While walking to a local pizza restaurant, the agents spotted a fugitive sitting in a car outside the restaurant. The agents approached the car and ordered the man out of the vehicle. The suspect gave false identification, but the agents were able to verify his correct identity and proceeded to handcuff him. The suspect resisted and took off running. He didn't get far. The agents ran in pursuit, apprehended him and found drug paraphernalia in his pants pocket. Unlucky for the offender, the parole office is across the street from the pizza restaurant.

⇒ In October 2012, during a search of a parolee's vehicle, Parole Agent Stout found 20.7 grams of cocaine, various prescription pills and drug packaging paraphernalia. The parolee was returned to prison on parole violations and while there he was charged pursuant to a state grand jury investigation with selling cocaine and heroin in eastern Northumberland County over a 2 1/2-year period. The parolee was charged with nine felony counts of possession with intent to deliver, one felony count each of illegal

possession of a firearm and criminal use of a communication facility, and one count of possession of drug paraphernalia.

Harrisburg DO

⇒ Agent Roland of the Harrisburg FAST unit was searching for a fugitive offender and for employment, vehicle and address information for the offender's wife. Agent Roland contacted the Pennsylvania State Police's Criminal Intelligence Center (PaCIC) for assistance.

PaCIC provides law enforcement agencies throughout the commonwealth with a central point of contact for information needs. PaCIC, which is referred to as a FUSION center, was able to inform the agent of the vehicle information and address for the offender's wife. Agent Roland went to the address with task force members and located the vehicle near the front of the residence. Contact was eventually made with offender's wife, who indicated that she was there with her husband. The fugitive was then taken into custody without incident to SCI-Camp Hill.

NW Philadelphia SO

⇒ Agents Williams-Jones, Jackson, Joe, Cook, Stevenson and Supervisor Canada searched an offender's home in late May. After a thorough search, the agents uncovered a .44 caliber revolver loaded with 6 rounds, 19 zip lock bags of marijuana, 17 bottles containing a clear liquid and 1 bottle containing a yellow colored liquid. Local police, who were present during the search, took custody of the offender and the recovered items. The offender was charged with a variety of narcotics violations and weapons offenses, including four felony charges.

Scranton DO

⇒ An absconder from Scranton had a busy week in April. The parolee stole a car, assaulted a New Jersey police officer, then escaped, stole another car, assaulted another New Jersey police officer and escaped again. He stole another car before breaking in to his father's house in the Pocono's. As the local police converged on the house, he escaped again.

All in an Agent's Day...

However, the offender used a stolen cell phone from his father's house and parole agents, with the assistance of the U.S. Marshals Task Force, were able to "ping" the cell phone number and found the offender hiding out in a cabin in New Jersey. The offender also has outstanding Pennsylvania charges for pushing a PA State Trooper during a traffic stop and fleeing the scene.

⇒ Working with a local police department into the late hours of the evening, Agents Taylor, Culkin, Harte and Berry assisted local police with the arrest of two offenders. At the end of the evening, 10 bricks and a few bundles of heroin (560 bags), 40 grams of crack and \$7,200 were seized.



Lancaster SO

⇒ Agent Monroe was driving in Lebanon County when he noticed an individual who appeared to be acting suspiciously, dressed in all black and running down the street. Agent Monroe turned on his Board-issued police radio, and heard news of a robbery at gunpoint that just occurred of a local pawn shop. The description of the suspect matched the person Agent Monroe had in sight. Agent Monroe then radioed that he had the suspect in sight and provided his location while following the offender. Agent Monroe observed the suspect shoving a wad of money down his pants and throw a book bag under trucks in a parking lot. A city police officer and Agent Monroe boxed the suspect in between two trucks in a parking lot, where the suspect was taken into custody without incident. They retrieved the book bag, which contained a gun, from under the trucks and found the money on the suspect.

⇒ Agents Monroe, Wehrman and Sweigart from the Lancaster Sub-Office were involved in a multi-agency investigation regarding an offender selling drugs (anti-cancer, Viagra, steroids). It was reported to authorities that the offender was making in excess of \$500,000 of illegal transactions from his business. A search warrant and arrest of the offender took place on Friday, May 17. Post-arrest investigation is ongoing by federal agencies and the drug task force.



Pittsburgh DO

⇒ In collaboration with the local police and the Allegheny County Adult Probation, Agent Vojacek assisted them with the apprehension of a county probation absconder at a specified address. After police entered the home, four occupants were found. One of the offenders was on special probation and in possession of \$8,402 in cash at the time of arrest. The police charged all in the home with possession of a controlled substance, PWID, criminal conspiracy, and various firearms violations. A search warrant was obtained by the police who discovered: 2 assault rifles, 5 pistols, 7 cell phones, 20 grams of pure heroin, and numerous items of drug paraphernalia.

Board's Reentry Programs Continue to be a Success

The Board operates three court-based Reentry Programs, which provide intensive supervision and oversight to higher risk offenders with a history of substance abuse, and it does so in a unique way by having a Parole Board Member and Common Pleas Judge meet with the offender on a monthly basis in the court room. The Board currently has Reentry Programs operating in Berks, Lackawanna and York counties, with a 23, 17 and 17 percent one-year recidivism rate respectively. In April and May, the Berks and Lackawanna Reentry Programs held graduations.

Reentry Program graduations



Reentry Bureau Director Rich Podguski looks on as Edwin Rivera (center) accepts his graduation plaque from the Board.

Berks Reentry Program

Edwin Rivera began the Berks Reentry Program on February 2, 2012, and graduated on April 4, 2013. Throughout his time in the program, he demonstrated commitment toward recovery by being active in Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous, leading many of these meetings.

In addition, Mr. Rivera assisted in the maintenance of the site where the meetings were held. Mr. Rivera has been successful partly due to his strong family support, and in turn he was able to help his family by visiting his ailing mother and providing her with emotional support. With the help of the Berks Reentry Program, Mr. Rivera was able to become financially independent and is now living with his daughter in order to provide assistance to her.

Lackawanna Reentry Program

On May 9, the spring graduation ceremony was held for the Lackawanna Reentry Program. Team members who participate in this program and who helped these six offenders graduate are: Lackawanna County Judge Barasse, Board Member Viglione, Parole Manager Missy Repsher, Parole Supervisor Suzanne Wilson and Parole Agent Spears.



Parole Agent Spears (far left) and Board Member Viglione (far right) pose with the most recent Lackawanna Reentry Program graduates.

2012 SECA results

The Board of Probation and Parole met and exceeded their State Employee Combined Appeal (SECA) goal for 2012. The employee participation goal was 12% and the Board reached 11.07% participation. The Board's monetary goal was \$23,599.09. Through generous donations, a total of \$28,237.18 was raised, which was 119.65% of the goal. The average donation was \$224.10.

Thanks to the generosity of over 15,000 state employees, more than \$2.8 million was raised in the 2012 SECA state-wide campaign. These funds will be distributed to hundreds of designated charities to support their important work on behalf of people and the environment.

These outstanding results are a testament to commonwealth employees' enthusiasm for helping those in need locally, statewide, and worldwide. Board and all commonwealth employees should be proud of their collective efforts to help make Pennsylvania and the world a better place.