

# PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

## VICTIM/WITNESS PROGRAM

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NEWS RELEASE

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### **Crime Victims Recognized During Awareness Week**

*National Crime Victims' Rights Week Will Spread Knowledge of Victims' Rights*

**GRAND RAPIDS, Mich.** – Kent County will honor 25 years of victim rights during National Crime Victims' Rights Week.

This annual event given by the Office for Victims of Crime will be observed in Kent County by the Victim/Witness Unit, a branch of the prosecutor's office dedicated to assisting victims and witnesses of crimes.

April 26 through May 2 will be devoted to spreading awareness of victims' rights, as expressed in the Crime Victim's Rights Act of 1985.

"When crime victims are more aware of the rights that they have, they are more likely to seek out help, said Anita Droog, Administrative Manager of the Victim/Witness Unit in Kent County. "We want victims to know that we are here for them. We provide a support system to victims and aid them throughout court proceedings. Anyone that has been victimized or witnessed a crime should first call the police to report the crime and then contact the Victim/Witness Unit."

The Victim/Witness Unit was established in 1988 when Michigan voters overwhelmingly voted for a constitutional amendment that mandated that certain services be provided for victims of crimes. It has grown from a one person unit to a staff of 10, including seven case managers. Case managers are crisis intervention workers that provide support, keep victims informed, help them apply for compensation, and reduce secondary trauma for crime victims and witnesses.

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