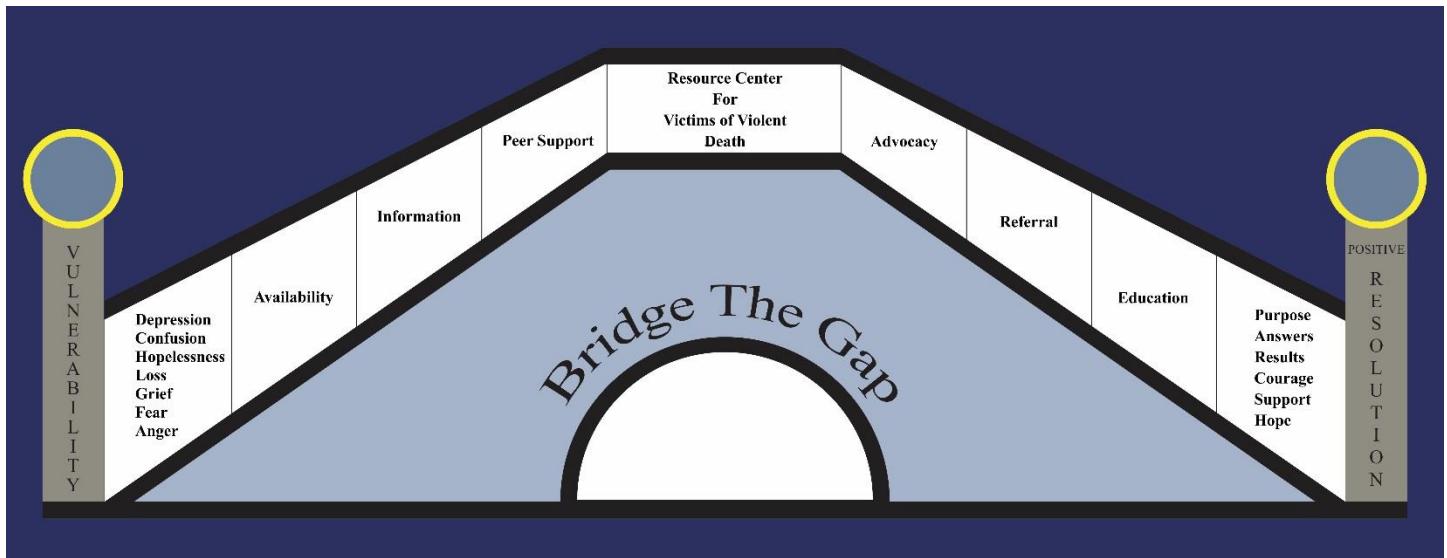




January 2017 note from Joan Shirley, as one victim to another, and the Certified Victim Advocate for the Resource Center for Victims of Violent Death

This month we are going to explore the “BRIDGE” our logo for The Resource Center for Victims of Violent Death. Our mission is to “*bridge the gaps*” in availability of information and services that can impede and discourage victims/families trying to manage in the aftermath of a violent death



“Like a bridge over troubled water....” Simon and Garfunkel 1970

Beginning a new year!

As we enter a new year focusing on self-care, let us first remember the last self-care event that we had here in December; the Snowflake Memorial. We, all 40 of us, were treated to a catered, sit-down dinner while music was provided by Hector Pimentel and John Sanchez. The candle lighting event was meaningful and heartwarming as we gathered together in candlelight to remember our loved ones who have been taken from us by violence. The many volunteers that made this a real evening of self-care were just awesome! Many thanks go out to everyone who helped that night, donated food or financial support to make the evening a success! I hope that you enjoyed yourself, if you were able to attend. For those who were unable to attend; we

remembered your loved one and you that night.

Now, moving forward, we start again seeking support, information, referrals, reparation and education on the criminal justice system together. We know that these are the best weapons we can amass as we take care of ourselves and our families during this long journey ahead.

The Resource Center’s Mission

Our mission involves bringing a survivor from a point of vulnerability - the beginning of your journey - to a place of informed decision-making and next steps to healing and some type of positive resolution. This

process will take a good long while to get to a position of positive resolution, which means that you are finding that you can go on, remembering your loved one as you go, that your life is not the same, but whole for the most part. That is not to say that you don't remember the agony, the pain or the brokenness you have experienced or how it has affected you and your family in the long term. No, all of these feelings and results will make up your "new life."

We all start with raw vulnerability, with depression, confusion, hopelessness, loss, grief, fear and anger. I never felt more vulnerable than that morning when the detectives told us know that Kevin had been murdered with Luis and Matt and that the killer was still on the loose. However, I can say that I now have new purpose in my life. I have worked hard to survive the many struggles of 18 years and I have developed courage in my struggles. I still have moments when Kevin's death weighs heavily on my heart and tears flow; that's the price of love. However, now, my life continues to present new hopes and dreams and his memory goes with me. I am the product of our mission bridge, going one step at a time to a better time. For those who are "new" in your journey and are actively grieving, this may sound callous and impossible to achieve. I can assure you, if you are taking care of yourself and doing all that you can to survive; one day, this will be a reality for you as well. Each day we manage to get up and live our lives; sometimes it feels unbearable, but we do it without answers or guarantees. We hope that there is an end to our suffering and life is better; positive resolution.



The first stepping stone; Availability

*As we serve you and your family, you will see that there are "stepping stones" in our bridge to guide you on your way to your positive resolution. The first step is availability. Someone once asked us what that means... **We are here for you!** If you have ever called your prosecutor, detective, furnace repair person or your doctor and found that it took them awhile to get back to you or sadly sometimes, they never call back; you know that feeling of confusion, agitation and totally frustration. You want personal attention; you want results and answers right now. It is our hope that you can reach us most of the time. That does not mean that there won't be times when you will have to wait for me...there is only one of me and many of you. Pat is in the office Monday through Friday. She is extremely knowledgeable, caring, and totally empathic to your unique needs and will do everything that she can to help; she has many skills that will help you. Aussy is also available and the same is true of her.*

There are many ways to reach us:

My direct e-mail: jsvictimadvocate@gmail.com
Office e-mail: pacnia@usa.net
Website:
www.bridgesforvictimsofviolentdeath.org.
Phone: 505-243-2222 – we will return your call promptly.

We do our very best to answer questions, listen to and evaluate your needs and concerns, offer personal support, provide referrals to other agencies and services and walk you through today as well as the future.



The second stepping stone: Information

Our next “stepping stone” is information. Between the three of us, Pat, Aussy and I are very knowledgeable about the criminal justice system and the benefits of the civil justice system.

*Pat is an experienced private investigator. I have many hours of court experience and training. We can pass on our knowledge to you so you don't feel like you have no understanding of what the system can and cannot do for you. If you understand the system, it is no longer daunting and you have a feeling of control rather than being tossed around in a furious sea of terms and situations beyond your control. I can help you get ready for court settings, explaining what may or may not happen, how to act in a courtroom, what to expect and help you write your victim impact statements. We can help with contacting detectives, getting police incident reports, contacting OMI or the NM Crime Victims Reparation Commission to check on your case status. **We are especially here if there is no suspect identified in your case and you don't have an advocate from the District Attorney's office.** Aussy is very knowledgeable about community support agencies and getting help when you need those resources. Let us inform you of your victims' rights; yes, you do have rights if there is an arrest in your case. There is a phrase that says “knowledge is power.” In a situation of victimization, if there is one thing we victims/survivors need; we need a sense of power within a system that doesn't cater to our needs. If you have questions about any part of the criminal or civil justice systems or your victim rights; just call. If you have not had someone fill out a NM*

Crime Victims Reparation Commission application, please call us and we will walk you through the process; every victim has the right to be given reparation for the damage done by crime.

We hope that you will let us help you with obtaining information and support of many kinds. You can call, email, text Joan, Facebook us or go through our website and we will do our very best to support you during your entire journey. We want to take some of the burden off of you so that you can be a prepared, supported, aware participant in every phase of your personal journey as well as in the courtroom.

You are not alone; we are here for you!

Sending our best thoughts for you as you take care of yourself in 2017,

Joan,

And Pat, and Aussy

“Bridge Over Troubled Water”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jjNgn4r6SOA>

*When you're weary, feeling small
When tears are in your eyes, I'll dry them all
I'm on your side, oh, when times get rough
And friends just can't be found
Like a bridge over troubled water
I will lay me down
Like a bridge over troubled water
I will lay me down.....paraphrase, additional verses*

*Songwriters
PAUL SIMON*

*Published by
Lyrics © Universal Music Publishing Group*