

ANNUAL REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2014-15



VICTIM SERVICE CENTER
OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

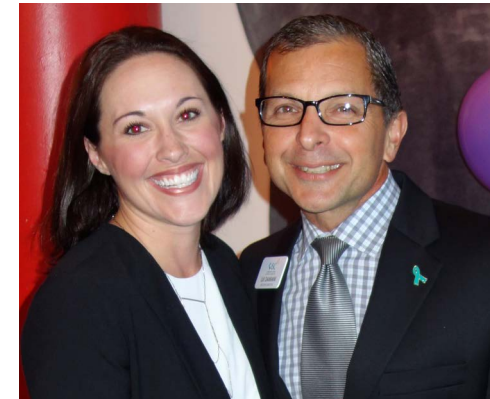
HEALING BEGINS HERE

OUR MISSION

To provide individualized services and resources to victims of sexual assault, violent crime and traumatic circumstances, through crisis response, advocacy, therapy and community awareness.

OUR VISION

To transform victims’ lives and prevent violence in our community.



Dear Friends,

As we enter our 15th year as a nonprofit serving Central Florida, we reflect on the changes and impact we have made together in our community. VSC is pleased to be able to share our many successes and accomplishments with you. We have been thankful for the support of our community partners, donors, and volunteers who have continued to further our efforts to allow us to do what we do best... transform victims’ lives in our community.

Last year, we promised to increase awareness of our programs and services, be a best practice agency, ensure fiscal responsibility, enhance and expand services, and develop a comprehensive fundraising plan. We are excited to share our progress with you. Through our ongoing efforts and the tireless work of our Board of Directors and the VSC Staff, we have made great strides in preventing and ending violence in Central Florida.

Our Marketing Team launched a new website, developed new collateral, created a volunteer program, and launched a billboard campaign in Orange and Osceola Counties to reach victims in Central Florida. Our Therapy Team developed a Dialectical Behavior Therapy skills group and expanded our services in Osceola County by providing direct therapy sessions. Our Advocacy Team continued to provide critical and immediate crisis support with an average response time of 35 minutes to our Orange County forensic exam site. Additionally, we are proud to say that during our annual FCASV sexual assault hotline monitoring, VSC earned a 95% rating. Further, to ensure fiscal accountability and resource management, we hired an in-house Accountant and Bookkeeper.

Over the past year, VSC also advocated for the 43 Days Initiative, which extended the Statute of Limitations from 4 years to 8 years for victims of sexual assault in Florida. Effective July 1, 2015, victims now have 8 years to come forward to report a sexual assault. Florida had ranked among the lowest states in the country when it came to the window for reporting sex crimes. This was a major victory for victims of sexual assault who now have additional time to seek justice.

In the Spring of 2015, our Board of Directors met to review our Strategic Plan and ensure we are on the right path. They were pleased with the agency’s progress and unanimously voted to continue working towards the five goals previously identified.

Our team of professionals is dedicated to conducting our affairs in an open, transparent, honest, and forthright manner. Through community partnerships, grantors, dedicated volunteers and generous supporters, we will continue to strive towards ending violence in our community and providing expert care to the victims we serve.

Sincerely,

Adela Hathaway, Chairperson

Lui Damiani, Executive Director

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Adela Hathaway, *Chairperson*
Craig Swygert, *Vice-Chairperson*
Jacob Stuart, Jr. , *Secretary*
Ana Fernandez, *Treasurer*

BOARD MEMBERS:

Amy Bosley	Allen Johnson	Kelly Trace
Commissioner Scott Boyd	Bridget Keefe	Sarah Hatch
Major Nancy Brown	Karol Lucken, PhD	
LeeAnne Feagan	Laura Owens	



5,125
Minutes spent on our 24/7
Sexual Assault Crisis Hotline

4,004
Total Victims served



274
Forensic Exams by our
Crisis Intervention Team



2,313
Victims of Crime served



1,640
Free therapy sessions

48%
of Sexual Assault Victims
were between the ages of
18-29 years old



1,891
Males received confidential
services and support

34%
of Sexual Assaults were
drug facilitated



SEXUAL ASSAULT SERVICES

VSC's Victim Advocates operate a 24/7 crisis hotline providing immediate crisis intervention to all primary and secondary victims of sexual violence for both Orange and Osceola Counties. The call is answered immediately by a trained, Master's Level, Victim Advocate who can provide support to callers in a state of trauma.

Additionally, for an acute case (within 120 hours of a sexual assault), Victim Advocates are dispatched and respond within 60 minutes to our forensic exam site to provide support for the victim. The Advocate ensures the victim's interests are represented and their rights are upheld. Additionally, the Advocate guides the victim through the medical and criminal system and informs the victim of all available VSC support services.

Vertical Advocay: VSC Advocates use the Continuity of Care Model which is extremely valuable to our victims. To verify its importance, we used an intern to research the model as a best practice effort. We see continuity of care as vertical advocacy meaning that the same advocate is assisting the victim throughout the entire process. The Advocate who answers the hotline is the same Advocate to respond to the forensic site for accompaniment during the exam and is the same Advocate who will maintain the case to provide ongoing services such as emotional support, information and referrals, crisis counseling, and navigation of the criminal justice process.

“My Advocate was so helpful in giving me the tools, support and perspective I needed to heal from my encounter.”
-Client Quote

FORENSICS

The medical intervention and forensic evidence collection is available to victims of sexual violence 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, all at no cost to the victim. Forensic examinations are provided at one of our two stand-alone, private, and confidential locations. VSC operates one facility in each county we serve. One of the most important roles of the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) is their participation in the prosecution phase of the case, when applicable. If the victim chooses, during the examination, a SANE will assess the physical status of the sexual violence victim, document injuries, provide prophylaxis treatment of sexually transmitted diseases, offer pregnancy prevention prophylaxis, advise on risk/benefit of treatment options, as well as provide referral for follow up care.

Our SANE's maintain an ethical responsibility to remain unbiased within the course of evidence collection while delivering compassionate care to the survivor of sexual violence. As a result of the skill and training of the SANE's in collecting the evidence and testifying in court, many successful prosecutions have resulted during the criminal justice process.

“Clearly the circumstance is all but ideal, yet staff assisting me in the process have certainly made me feel safe and cared for with kindness.”
-Client Quote

VICTIMS OF CRIME

VSC provides support services to victims of all crime including Elder Abuse, Assault, Robbery, DUI/ DWI Crashes, Domestic Violence, Survivors of Homicide, Stalking, Kidnapping, False Imprisonment, Hit & Run, Fraud or Home Invasion. Services include:

Victim Support through the Criminal Justice Process: Includes support, assistance, advocacy and accompaniment provided to a victim of crime at any stage before, during, and after a trial.

Crisis Counseling: Refers to specialized in-person crisis intervention, emotional support, guidance, and counseling provided by counselors, mental health professionals, or peers.

Emergency Legal Advocacy: Actions directly connected to family violence cases that are taken to ensure the health and safety of the victim. This includes filing Protection From Abuse orders, injunctions, elder abuse petitions, child abuse petitions, and other protective orders.

Information and Referral: In-person contact with victims to identify services offered and support available by VSC and partner community agencies.

Follow-up Counseling: Specialized in-person and telephone support, empathetic listening, and guidance after the victimization that is designed to meet the needs of crime victims.

Assistance in Filing Compensation Claims

“I feel more confident in how to handle my emotions and what to do with them when things go wrong.”
-Client Quote

THERAPY SERVICES

VSC provides free and confidential therapy services for victims of crime. Crime Victimization includes:

- Sexual Violence
- Victims of Assault/Battery
- Stalking
- Domestic Violence
- Victim of DUI
- Kidnapping
- Home Invasion
- Other traumatic events

Secondary Victimization Support: In addition to working with the primary victim of the crime, VSC is able to offer free and confidential services to family or loved ones of crime victims. Oftentimes, family members of a victim are impacted greatly by the violence against their loved one. Our therapy services allow for these secondary victims to participate in individual, group or couples therapy as well as therapy workshops which assist them as they cope with the after effects of victimization.

EMDR Therapy: VSC now offers Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing as a therapeutic modality. EMDR is a treatment approach which has demonstrated positive effects with trauma victims. This is used with clients who want to explore memories related to abuse or past trauma. Traumatic memories have a lasting negative effect that interferes with a person's outlook and the way they relate to others. The techniques learned in session have allowed those clients to heal.

“I learned new skills that have helped my self-worth and how to sooth my anxieties.”
-Client Quote

THERAPY SURVIVOR PROFILE



Average age of therapy client:
33 years old

BILLBOARDS

The Victim Service Center, in partnership with Clear Channel Outdoor, launched a \$223,000 in-kind billboard campaign throughout Central Florida. The campaign featured 8 different designs in both Orange and Osceola Counties resulting in over 1.5 million views each week. Due to the generosity of Clear Channel, we were able to reach victims, who in turn, reached out to VSC for support services.

LYNX BUS

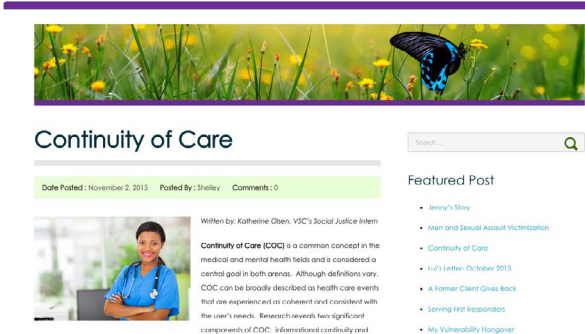
VSC was awarded a grant for \$10,000 for a Lynx Bus Awareness Campaign which included 5 Bus Shelters, 4 Supertails, and Interior Cards on one third of the buses in Orange County. The Lynx Bus campaign ran for 3 months and spread awareness of VSC services through the streets of Central Florida. The campaign resulted in more victims coming forward to seek help.

WEBSITE

In January of 2015, VSC launched an updated website with new information and resources for victims in Central Florida which was read over 40,000 times last year. The website was designed to provide information for victims seeking services, volunteers, community partners, and supporters. The most read article was ‘Helping Hand: What You Can Do for the Survivor in Your Life.’

SOCIAL MEDIA

VSC actively uses social media outlets to reach victims, increase awareness of VSC programs and services, and educate the community about sexual violence. It is one approach to engage the community as well as keep our followers up-to-date on VSC activities.



November Blog Post



585% increase in Twitter Followers



Most liked FACEBOOK post



Conducted **274**
Outreach events in Orange
& Osceola Counties

Targeted “at-risk” populations including:

- College-Aged Individuals
- Men
- Spanish Speaking Community
- LGBTQ+
- Military

ROLLINS COLLEGE TRAININGS

One in four females are a victim of sexual violence while in college. VSC took the steps to reach out to college students to prevent sexual violence before it occurs. Last year, VSC trained all Rollins College Fraternities and Sororities on active bystander intervention. VSC created and conducted an hour and a half presentation which included a pre and post-test.

Impact: After the training, **96%** of the fraternity brothers said they would intervene if they thought another fraternity brother was considering sexually assaulting someone who was unable to consent.

BRAVE MISS WORLD

On February 5th, VSC partnered with Valencia College to hold a screening of Brave Miss World, a documentary about Linor Abargil who was brutally sexually assaulted just six weeks before winning Miss Universe. Following the viewing of the movie, the VSC team held a panel discussion with a sexual assault survivor and law enforcement detective to answer questions from the students regarding the documentary and other questions related to sexual assault.



BarTAB ORLANDO

Over the course of the year, the VSC team responded to 274 sexual assault cases. Of those cases, 33% were drug facilitated with alcohol being the number one drug used. Our team understood the need to reach individuals who have the opportunity to intervene. VSC partnered with Orlando Police Department and University of Central Florida Victim Services to reach Central Florida bar staff and educate them on active bystander intervention. 100% of the participants said that they would recommend the program to others.



PRISON RAPE ELIMINATION ACT

It is estimated that 80% of incarcerated females have experienced sexual trauma or victimization. In order to address the related trauma from abuse, Orange County Corrections Department collaborated with VSC to operate the Sexual Trauma Survivor Program for inmates within the female dormitories. The program offers the opportunity for the participants to identify and replace dysfunctional coping patterns with appropriate coping skills, essential for long-term change and recovery to occur. Since January 2015, VSC has provided 25 Sexual Trauma Orientation sessions for the female inmates within the Orange County Corrections Center. Last year, 245 females received training on the impact of sexual trauma and the availability of services to cope.

Impact: **97%** of participants indicated an increased knowledge level on the post-test results following the orientation.



CITY OF ORLANDO TURNED TEAL

On April 6th, the entire City of Orlando was lit in teal including the Lake Eola Fountain, Tower of Light, and Amway Center Spire, the global color for sexual assault awareness.

SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH

April is nationally known as Sexual Assault Awareness Month. Every year, the VSC Team holds our Annual Gala, Cheers to Change, along with other awareness and fundraising events throughout the month. We enjoyed watching our community come to together to support victims of sexual violence.

OSCEOLA COUNTY SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS CONFERENCE

On April 10th, the Victim Service Center partnered with the Osceola County Sexual Assault Response Team to hold a day-long conference at the Kissimmee Civic Center during Sexual Assault Awareness Month. The conference, which had over 150 attendees, featured presentations from Sex Crime Detectives, VSC's Lead Therapist Holly Smith, and a panel of sexual assault survivors. The conference was free to attend and educated professionals, first responders, and community partners about sexual violence.



CHEERS TO CHANGE

Over 300 VSC supporters gathered on April 17th for our 2nd Annual Gala, Cheers to Change. The evening took place at the Mennello Museum of American Art and featured fine wine, delicious food, spectacular live entertainment and beautiful art. We were so pleased to have our community come together for a wonderful evening to support the victims we serve.



PROCLAMATIONS

This year, SAAM was kicked off by the City of Orlando Mayor, Buddy Dyer, and Orange County Mayor, Teresa Jacobs, reading separate proclamations for the City and Orange County respectively, declaring the Month of April as Sexual Assault Awareness Month. Both proclamations were presented to the Victim Service Center of Central Florida. During the City of Orlando Proclamation, Congressman Daniel Webster generously donated an American Flag which was flown over the Capitol on 9/11 to be auctioned off at Cheers to Change.



DENIM DAY

In recognition of Sexual Assault Awareness Month and Denim Day, VSC encouraged the Central Florida community to wear jeans on Wednesday, April 29, 2015, to raise awareness about sexual assault and show support for victims. We received an overwhelming response from the community including Orange County Government, the City of Orlando, local colleges and universities, and a multitude of local businesses.

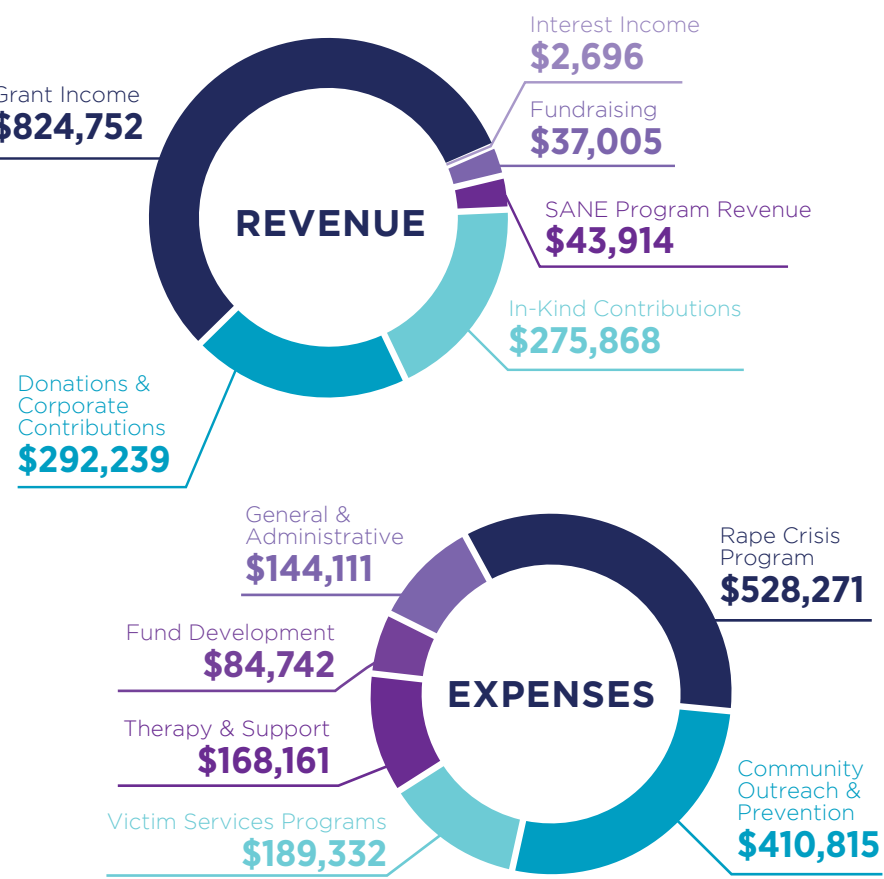


JOHN’S STORY

John, 64 year old African American male, recently moved to Orlando Florida to enjoy his retirement with his wife. Like many of the victims we serve, John is a survivor of childhood sexual abuse which occurred from ages 15-17 by a neighborhood sexual offender. The abuse was never reported to authorities and the offender never spent a day in jail. John experienced years of emotional torment with an unexplained origin. After John served his country in the United States Military, it finally clicked and occurred to him that he had been the victim of childhood sexual abuse. He spent 35 years searching for someone who understood his pain. He was given medications, had his feelings denied, his story questioned and he eventually gave up seeking support.

After John moved to Orlando, he began seeing a VSC billboard in his neighborhood saying “Healing Begins Here.” He was confused because in the past, he never found anyone who understood sexual abuse from his perspective. John called VSC’s 24/7 crisis hotline and was immediately in touch with a Victim Advocate. During the call, his Advocate helped him understand how normal his feelings were and that healing was possible. John and his wife are receiving long-term therapy with a licensed professional at VSC. Because of the generous donation from Clear Channel Outdoor, John finally feels at peace because he knows there are brighter days around the corner.

FINANCIALS



IN-KIND PARTNERS

- Florida Hospital
- Orange County Government
- Clear Channel Outdoor
- Dr. George Ralls
- BB&T
- OUC
- Commissioner Scott Boyd
- Dubsdread Catering
- Averett Warmus Durkee

GRANTORS / FUNDERS

- Florida Council Against Sexual Violence (FCASV)
- Orange County Government
- Office of the Attorney General
- Osceola County Government
- Kissimmee Police Department
- St. Cloud Police Department
- Osceola County Sheriff’s Office



THANK YOU!



**VICTIM SERVICE CENTER
OF CENTRAL FLORIDA**

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Connect with Us



www.VictimServiceCenter.org