

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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“Men Ending Violence” Campaign Launches with April 10 Market Square Event
*Pittsburgh Celebrates National Victims’ Rights Week, April 6-12, and
30th Anniversary of Victims of Crime Act (VOCA)*

PITTSBURGH – District Attorney Stephen Zappala will join Center for Victims for the “Restoring the Balance of Justice” event at 12 noon in Market Square on April 10 as part of National Victims’ Rights Week (April 6 to 12). This event launches the **Men Ending violence (MEN)** Challenge, which encourages men to commit to learn more about how to be proactive bystanders and speak out about violence against women and girls. The **MEN** Challenge is an ongoing campaign, pledge and action plan to engage men in the work Center for Victims does in Allegheny County.

“We believe that men do want to be actively involved in violence prevention, but don’t know where to start or what to do. Our goal is to educate men and give them the tools and resources necessary to use their voices and their actions to be social change agents,” said Laurie MacDonald, chief executive officer, Center for Victims. “We are pleased to have District Attorney Zappala join us to publicly sign the pledge for our **MEN** Challenge and to help us launch this effort to encourage men to take the steps to end violence.”

“We are quite fortunate to have agencies like the Center for Victims assisting us on a daily basis, said District Attorney Stephen Z. Zappala. I am proud to be part of this effort to educate men, young and old, on what the agency does and how they can take a more active role not just in responding to violence in our community but in learning how to prevent violence before it happens.”

The “Restoring the Balance of Justice” event strives to raise awareness of the balance between crimes and the support services Center of Victims provides to local crime victims and their families.

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MacDonald said while this event obviously has a serious message, it incorporates a lighter side to draw attention to the “balance” needed in helping victims and their families recover from a tragedy. Participants can hop on a “teeter-totter” in the center of Market Square to challenge themselves to create a “balance” with a friend or coworker. Center for Victims staff will be on hand to share information about victims’ services and to gather pledges from men who want enroll in the **Men Ending Violence Challenge**.

The Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), passed by Congress in 1984, created a national fund to ease victims’ suffering. It is funded by fines and penalties paid by offenders. The crime victims programs and victim compensation programs pay many of victims’ out-of-pocket expenses resulting from a crime, such as counseling, funeral expenses and lost wages.

“Victims’ rights advocates have scored remarkable victories over the last 30 years since Congress passed VOCA, but there is still a lot of work to be done,” MacDonald said. “As we move forward, we are increasingly expanding our reach to previously underserved victim populations.”

Those unable to attend the event but interested in the MEN Challenge can get more information at www.centerforvictims.org.

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Center for Victims is the most comprehensive and inclusive provider of services, advocacy, and education for victims of all crimes in Allegheny County and in Pennsylvania. Center for Victims was formed in July 2012 through the merger of Womansplace of McKeesport and the Center for Victims of Violent Crimes, located in Pittsburgh.

Website: www.centerforvictims.org

Twitter: @center4victims

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