



June 2015

Newsletter

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A Message from Lui

On May 21, the VSC Board of Directors held the Annual Board Meeting which reflected on past events and successes over the last 12 months. The VSC Team has made great strides in supporting our community and serving victims of sexual assault, violent crime, and traumatic circumstances.

During the meeting, the VSC Board of Directors elected new Officers. Craig Swygart reached the end of his term limit as Chairperson after serving 3 consecutive years (6 in total), but was nominated and has graciously agreed to stay on the VSC Board as Vice-Chairperson. The Board of Directors elected a new Chairperson, Adela Hathaway, a new Secretary, Jacob Stuart, Jr., and Ana Fernandez has agreed to continue to serve as the Treasurer. Additionally, the Board approved and welcomed a new Board Member, Commissioner Scott Boyd, who currently serves as an Orange County Commissioner. [Read More](#)

Board Officers

Chairperson

Adela Hathaway

Vice-Chairperson

Craig Swygert

Treasurer

Ana Fernandez

Secretary

Jacob Stuart, Jr.

Board Members

Allen Johnson

Amy Bosley

Bridget Keefe

Commissioner Scott Boyd

Major Nancy Brown

Karol Lucken, PhD

Kelly Trace

LeeAnne Feagan

VSC Founder

Mary I. Johnson

Quick Links

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Summer Spike in Sexual Assault Cases We Need Your Help NOW More than Ever

Over the summer months, the VSC Team responds to a dramatic number of sexual assault cases. So far this summer, we already know this alarming trend is true as we have had a 200% increase in sexual assault forensic exams. The numbers are showing an even greater spike in cases than we have seen in past years.

If you'd like to support victims of sexual assault, please help by giving just a Dollar-a-Day. Your money will go *directly* to support victims of sexual assault and will ensure we are able to continue to provide FREE programs and services to those we serve. Please consider giving:

- [Dollar-a-Day for One Month \(\\$30\)](#)- Provides a Care Package to a victim of sexual assault which includes a change of new clothing, hygiene kit, new towel, new blanket, and food/beverages.
- [Dollar-a-Day for 3 Months \(\\$100\)](#)- Provides 4 Hours of Free Therapy Services for victims of sexual violence, violent crime, and traumatic circumstance to begin the healing process.
- [Dollar-a-Day for 1 Year \(\\$365\)](#)- Provides a Forensic Exam, Care Package, and



Crisis Intervention Support following a sexual assault.



Every dollar truly makes a difference to the victims in our community.

[Visit our website to learn more.](#)



Survivor Story



John (name changed for confidentiality), a 64 year old African American man, recently moved from California to Orlando to enjoy his retirement with his wife. John is a survivor of childhood sexual abuse which occurred when he was 15-17 years old by a neighborhood sex offender. The abuse was never reported to authorities and, unfortunately, the offender never spent time in jail. The client experienced years of emotional torment with an unexplained origin.



After the man served his country in the United States Military, he realized the root cause of his torment was the victimization that occurred in his teenage years. He spent 35 years searching for someone who understood his pain. He was given medications, had his feelings denied, and had his story questioned. He eventually gave up seeking support.

After moving to Orlando, the man began seeing a billboard saying "Healing Begins Here." He was confused because in the past, he never had found anyone who understood sexual abuse from his perspective. The man called our 24/7 Crisis Hotline Number and connected with a VSC Victim Advocate. She helped him understand how normal his feelings were, and that healing was possible.

The veteran and his wife began long-term therapy with a licensed professional. John finally feels at peace because he knows there are brighter days around the corner.

Wish List

- Gift Cards in \$5-\$10 increments
- T-Shirts (Large and XL)
- Elastic Waist Pants in all sizes
- Sports Bras
- Flip Flops (6,7,8)
- Office Supplies
- Bus Passes
- Children's DVDs
- Children's Books

[For our full list of top needs, visit our website!](#)

Welcome to our New Victim Advocate!

VSC is happy to announce that one of our former graduate

Media Coverage

interns, Meghan Hahl has been hired as a Sexual Assault Counselor and Victim Advocate. She was hired as a full-time employee following the completion of her Master's of Social Work from the University of Central Florida. Welcome, Meghan!



Recently, WFTV Channel 9 News did a story on the increase in sexual assault. Reporter, Michael Lopardi, interviewed our Executive Director, Lui Damiani, and our former client and current member of our Speaker's Bureau, Rachel Sines. As noted in the story, the VSC team attributes the recent increase to additional

awareness of the programs and services provided in the Central Florida community, including a billboard campaign in both Orange and Osceola Counties. Clear Channel Outdoors very generously sponsored the billboard campaign and, as a result, the VSC team has witnessed an increase in the number of victims that have come forward to receive the help they need. [You can check out the story here!](#)

Education

Learn how you can make our community safer! Schedule a personalized training with our Outreach and Prevention Specialist!

You could learn about:

- Sexual Assault
- Stalking
- How Men Can Prevent Sexual Violence (Sensitivity Training)
- Crime Prevention
- Identity Theft
- Internet Safety
- Personal Safety Planning

[Click here](#) to setup your training today!

Join a Support Group

VSC offers many opportunities for empowerment. Join one of our support groups to continue your growth and healing.

VSC's Therapist Presented at the 34th Annual Gainesville Commission on the Status of Women's Conference

On May 12, 2015, VSC Lead Therapist/Clinical Coordinator, Holly Smith, facilitated a presentation at the 34th Annual Gainesville Commission on the Status of Women's Conference. The presentation on the topic, Vulnerability as a Necessity, was highly rated by all attendees.

Some feedback from participants included: *"Holly was an excellent presenter. One powerful point for me was when she encouraged as to not hide our own vulnerability to our clients if appropriate and done in an authentic, professional manner.*

What a wonderful program and speaker!! I enjoyed her energy and compassion for her clients!"



If you are interested in learning more information please do not hesitate to schedule an appointment (407) 254-9415.

VSC Volunteer Program Kicks Off



On May 27, the Victim Service Center kicked off the Volunteer Program! The Orientation began with a brief history of VSC and the attendees met VSC staff members in effort to learn more about the agency. Volunteers received the updated 2015 Volunteer Manual, Application, and reviewed VSC volunteer opportunities. In order to fully meet our mission, volunteers will assist the VSC staff in expanding our reach and providing additional support for victims of sexual assault, violent

crime, and traumatic circumstances.

If you'd like to learn more and attend our upcoming volunteer orientation, please [email us!](#)

Mark Your Calendars

Lunch & Learn

Wednesday - June 24, 2015

12:00pm - 1:00pm

RSVP by calling (407) 254-9415 or e-mail [Rhonda Wilson](#).

Held the Last Wednesday of Every Month

By attending, you will learn about our history, mission, services, goals, and ways to get involved. To attend our Monthly Lunch & Learn, you must RSVP. Space is limited and lunch will be provided. We hope to see you there!

Victim Service Center of Central Florida

Contact Information

Hours: Monday - Friday (8AM-5PM) | Office: (407) 254-9415

2111 E Michigan St, Suite 210
Orlando, Florida 32806

24-Hour Sexual Assault Hotline: (407) 497-6701
Toll Free: 1(866) 757-2046

VictimServiceCenter.org

