

# C.A.R.E. Chronicle

SPRING 2016

## C.A.R.E. Victim Advocates - Ready To Help You!

When you are a victim of a crime, getting the help you need often requires you to live through the pain of your own nightmare again and again. If you live in Charlotte County, do you know there are victim advocates from The Center for Abuse and Rape Emergencies, Inc. (C.A.R.E.) trained to support you and your family members?

C.A.R.E. victim advocates provide direct service advocacy to all victims of violent crime, including robbery, homicide, DUI, assault, rape and sexual assault. Services include crisis intervention, direct court advocacy, crimes compensation and language assistance. Advocates work with judges and court personnel, local law enforcement, and the State Attorney's Office of the 20th Judicial Circuit. Trained professional advocates provided by C.A.R.E. are in place to help anyone in our community, and there is no charge for their services.

Surviving a crime is one thing. Surviving the months and years after a crime is committed is a whole different deal. Being the victim of a crime can be devastating because victims must cope with feelings of terror, grief, anger, depression, confusion and even guilt. Victims of violent crimes may suffer financial stress that is as devastating as their physical injuries and emotional trauma. Recovering from violence or abuse is difficult enough without having to worry about how to pay for medical care and counseling, or about how to replace lost income due to disability or death. Working through the legal system can be daunting, and most people do not have a clue how to get started when hoping for justice through the system. That is when C.A.R.E. advocates step in and serve as your representative during times of crisis seeking emergency care or finding help for emotional or mental problems after a crime has been committed.

C.A.R.E. advocates are available to offer sensitive support and information about victims' rights to anyone in Charlotte County regardless of special needs, age, gender, race or economic status. They identify useful resources and offer victims information about options that are available; they can help navigate and fill out crime victim-related benefit forms. C.A.R.E. advocates do not tell victims what to do; they support your decision-making and frequently escort victims and family members through court proceedings or depositions. They are non-judgmental and committed to maintaining the highest levels of confidentiality in their communication with victims and survivors.

It may be very difficult for a person to ask for help, or to know what to ask. A victim advocate can offer support, information, counseling and access to criminal justice services, or serve as a link to social services agencies that can be helpful dealing with the trauma faced by the victim. Some advocates are survivors who choose to help others get through a healing process. Though it may be difficult to reach out and ask for help, please know that C.A.R.E. advocates want to make sure everyone is safe and has access to any help needed to recover from the impact of violent crimes. Typical services are:

- Crisis intervention and emotional support
- Resources, referrals and information about victimization
- Assistance with Crime Victims Compensation applications
- Help navigating medical and mental health benefits and system
- Information about legal rights and protections
- Assistance making funeral/memorial arrangements
- Information about the criminal justice process

*see ADVOCATES on page 4*

### Services Statistics

	2012	2013	2014	2015
Domestic Violence Hotline Calls	1542	1508	1532	2073
Sexual Assault Hotline Calls	208	183	198	265
Civil Legal Assistance Cases	134	170	204	232
Crisis Counseling Hours	1380	1919	1801	1664
Sexual Assault New Victims	175	209	226	220
Victim Services Counseling Hours	3011	3267	4185	3728
Justice System Advocacy Hours	4264	5572	4900	3668
School/Community Presentations	313	363	302	271
Total Attendees	11,689	11,583	9979	8950
Total Volunteer Hours	15,749	12,136	8853	7751

### Current Needs

1. Children's Underwear (all sizes)
2. Pack 'n Play
3. Diapers size 3 and up
4. New washcloths
5. 100% juice boxes

# What's with the Green Dot?

All of a sudden, Charlotte County is buzzing with this “Green Dot” stuff. What exactly is it? What does it mean? Green Dot is a program that is designed to systematically reduce power-based personal violence within our community. It was created by Dr. Dorothy Edwards, founding Director of the University of Kentucky Violence Intervention and Prevention Center. Dr. Edwards believed that there had to be a more effective way to make a difference than what we had been doing for so long to prevent people from getting hurt. The Green Dot Strategy was born from this belief.

Centered on the community as a whole, the program unifies us, in Charlotte County, to look out for one another, regardless of our backgrounds and beliefs. With a motto of “Nobody has to do everything, but everyone has to do something”, the Green Dot Strategy is built on the foundation of a community in its truest sense.

Dr. Edwards also recognized that people aren't all wired the same way,

meaning that not everybody has that “take charge” personality when they see something happening. Her program teaches bystanders (that's all of us in the community) how to intervene in that moment without putting ourselves in a threatening situation. Furthermore, the program helps people to identify their own individual barriers (which we all have), and how to get around them.



The best part about the program is that it doesn't ask for anything big from anyone. The success of the program stems from small things done, in opportune moments, by everyday people. Single

moments in time that prevent harm to other people. If we all are willing, we can make Charlotte County a safer place for us, for our friends and neighbors, and for our children. When all is said and done, we really have just two choices: to do something or to do nothing.

For more information on the Green Dot Strategy in Charlotte County, contact the Chris Hall at The Center for Abuse and Rape Emergencies at (941) 639-5499.

## PREVENTION CORNER

### Contact for Help, Information and Resources – Save These Numbers

The Center for Abuse and Rape Emergencies, Inc. (C.A.R.E.)  
941-627-6000 Port Charlotte-Punta Gorda or 941-475-6465 Englewood

C.A.R.E. Criminal and Civil Legal Advocacy for Victims - 941-916-4185

Charlotte County Sheriff's Office - Victim Advocate 941-205-5636 or 941-639-2101

Punta Gorda Police Department - Victim Advocate 941-639-4111

Department of Children and Families Abuse Hotline - 1-800-962-2873 or TTY 1-800-453-5145

Victim Information – Florida Department of Corrections - 1-877-VINE-4-FL (1-877-846-3435)

Charlotte Behavioral Health Care - 24-hour Crisis Line 941-575-0222 or Recovery Center 941-347-6444

Parents of Murdered Children (POMC) - 941-916-0677

## Recent

**Englewood Community Action Team**  
March 17, 2016

**C.A.R.E. Auxiliary Dart Tournament**  
The Ice House • March 20, 2016

**National Crime Victims' Dinner**  
April 12, 2016

**NAACP March**  
Lashley Park • April 16, 2016

**Charlotte County Pride Fest**  
Lashley Park • April 30, 2016

**Mental Health Awareness Walk**  
Gilchrist Park • May 7, 2016

## Ongoing

**ReUse Stores**  
[www.carefl.org/reuse-stores](http://www.carefl.org/reuse-stores)

**Drop off household items or look for treasures and great bargains**

**Englewood**  
7070 Environmental Way  
**Port Charlotte**  
16975 Kenilworth Blvd.

## Upcoming

**Cooking with Care**  
The Captain's Table  
June 16, 2016 at 6:30 PM  
Call 941-626-0782 to RSVP

**C.A.R.E. Ball 2017**  
January 28, 2017  
Enchanted Garden

**United Way**



C.A.R.E. Advocates work events around the county to share information with the public.

Pride Fest



NAACP March



C.A.R.E. Auxiliary:  
Kristie Lawson  
accepting the  
President's Gavel  
from Judi Harris



C.A.R.E. receives the Spirit Award from United Way

Thanks to Publix Supermarkets and Associates for supporting United Way Charlotte County in such a big way!



Generous donors provide for many smiles on Christmas morning.



The Winning Team!



John Berry, The Ice House, and Kristie set the tournament rules.



Making plans to leave a gift in your will to C.A.R.E. costs nothing during your lifetime, and you maintain control of your assets. Call Linda Lusk at 941-639-5499 for more information.

**ADVOCATES from page 1**

- Assisting victims and family members submit statements to the court
- Information on crime prevention and help with safety planning

The Crime Victims Fund was established by the Victims of Crime Act of 1984 (VOCA) and it is the major funding source for victims services across the United States. These funds come from convicted offenders' crimes, not from taxpayers. Annually millions of dollars are deposited into this fund from criminal fines, forfeited bail bonds, penalty fees and special assessments collected by U. S. Attorneys' Offices, U. S. Courts, and the Bureau of Prisons. C.A.R.E. actively seeks grant funding each year to bring into Charlotte County to assist our citizens with recovery. Claims must be filed within a fixed period of time, usually 2 years. Time limits may be extended with good cause. These funds can only be used to serve victims; they do not fund offender rehabilitation or crime prevention activities. Victim services are available to crime victims whether a perpetrator is arrested or not. Services and compensation include:

- Crisis intervention
- Counseling services
- Emergency shelter
- Criminal justice advocacy
- Emergency transportation
- Medical expenses
- Mental health counseling
- Funeral and burial costs
- Lost wages or loss of support
- Relocation and moving expenses

Other compensable expenses may include eyeglasses and corrective lenses, dental services and devices, prosthetic devices and crime scene clean-up.

C.A.R.E. advocates are in place to help you in the State Attorney's Office in the Charlotte County Justice Center, at the Charlotte County Sheriff's Office and at the Punta Gorda Police

Department. Every day these dedicated and caring individuals review crime reports and arrest records, and then make direct contact with victims of crime in our community. Telling victims about the services and compensation they are eligible for is the responsibility of law enforcement and our advocates. While no amount of money can erase the trauma and grief victims and families suffer, this aid is crucial to restoring physical and mental health for those who are suffering. C.A.R.E. advocates provide personal support to crime victims from the point in time a crime is reported. Advocates notify families of bond amounts, pleas, sentencing, or other important court dates. C.A.R.E. advocates make calls to victims to assess contact with offenders, the need for 3rd party contacts, and about probation.

If you or someone in your family needs help dealing with the after-effects or violent crimes, please call C.A.R.E. at 941-639-5499 and ask to speak with an advocate. They are waiting to hear from you to help you and those you love.

A grateful mother shared: "As the stress of the home invasion compounded daily, patience deteriorated and I needed to help myself in order to help my children. I contacted victim services for help. The immediacy in service from the victim services representative was remarkable. My own inquiries to the police had left me in the dark. The victim advocate immediately brought our family up to date regarding court dates. Our advocate's positive attitude was contagious, and I could see small comfort creep its way into my children. In my opinion, the victim services worker never underestimated the power of a smile, a few comforting words, a comforting touch, or of listening to others, of giving someone an honest compliment — delivering the message that she really cares.

"Thank you to our advocate for being the wonderful human being that you are, for having the ability to turn someone else's life around for the better, and for helping us look forward to tomorrow. I have learned not to shy away from an outstretched, helping hand."

C.A.R.E. gratefully acknowledges the U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime, for allowing us to reproduce parts of this article.

**YES, I would like to help survivors of violence in Charlotte County.  
You can count on my support to help families stay safe.**



- \$18 provides a 20-minute crisis hotline call for a victim of sexual assault
- \$23 sponsors a survivor safety/legal services screening with a paralegal
- \$50 provides a week's supply of paper goods, laundry and cleaning supplies for the shelter
- \$90 supports private counseling services for a child victim
- \$121 provides for replacement of critical documents for a family of 4 (birth certificates, ID card)
- \$325 provides a consultation with a domestic violence attorney for injunctive representation

Other amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_ in honor of \_\_\_\_\_

For:  Birthday  Anniversary  Other occasion \_\_\_\_\_

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**To make a credit card donation, please go to [www.carefl.org](http://www.carefl.org) OR**

- Please bill my credit card.  VISA  MASTERCARD  DISCOVER  AMERICAN EXPRESS

Name on card \_\_\_\_\_ CC# \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ CW# \_\_\_\_\_ The Center for Abuse and Rape Emergencies, Inc. PO Box 510234, Punta Gorda, FL 33951-0234