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Restoration, like healing, is a journey that we all must make together. We lean on, support, learn from, give ideas, encourage, and grow in the attempt to heal, make whole again, and restore that which was taken during the commission of a crime. As correctional professionals, advocates, victims, community members and offenders, we are on a journey that will change our lives forever as well as those lives that we touch along the path of our journey.

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Journey

VICTIM ADVISORY COUNCIL NEWSLETTER
IOWA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Spring 2008, Volume 13

Take Back the Night *by Rodney Fritz*

When our son Cody died, we went into deep shock and deep depression!

It was as if darkness had settled in around us, and a fog had completely and totally engulfed us. And trying to focus on just the little tasks seemed so impossible.

So many sleepless nights full of nightmares and fear soon began to take its toll on us. Just to crawl out of bed each morning took so much effort-many days it seemed easier to just pull the covers over our heads and try to just shut out the outside world!

The task that lay ahead of us to rebuild our lives seemed so insurmountable!

After many months of counseling and prayer we set out to rebuild and take back our lives. We faced what looked impossible, to relay all of our foundations.

Looking back almost three years now, it was as if someone had taken a picture of our lives and made a puzzle of it and then dumped all the pieces out.

We knew we had a lot of hard, hard work ahead of us. Our goal was not only to rebuild, but to find the healing we were searching for and desperately needed. We know and understand exactly how you as victims feel. Looking at what seems so impossible and still traveling through the grieving process.

We knew we had lost our son, and yet it seemed like so much more was missing. That's when we discovered what it was we were looking for. It was the cornerstone that everything fits back together upon. That cornerstone was hope! Not only was it the cornerstone, but is also the mortar, the cement, that firmly and tightly holds all the other pieces together! >>

Take Back the Night *by Rodney Fritz*

>> “Hope”

I had lost hope! The dictionary definition: hope is a feeling of expectation and a desire combined; to feel hope; to expect and desire; to feel fairly confident.

Hope is like a huge light, it is so powerful that its rays can reach and penetrate the darkest depths!

Hope is like a flint, that when it is struck it is that spark that can start a fire. It is that flame that burns deep down within our hearts and our souls. And it is that spark that allows us to feel confident.

Confidence is a feeling of certainty, self reliance, and boldness.

Hope is like a bright star in the night, we have all stood under the night sky looking upward to the heavens and there finding our star. It is at that point that we can reach beyond our own boundaries and our own capabilities and make a wish.

The most constant of all creations are the stars. They have remained the same over time. Their placement in our galaxy is a constant. They have outlasted any monuments that man has ever made.

Sailors for thousands of years have plotted their course, and set sail using only a compass and the stars to map their journey. They have set out for the great unknown, with the hope of finding new continents.

We are the same as those sailors. We have charted our course, and using only a compass and the stars, we now set sail for the great unknown that lies out ahead of us. For it is with this hope that we have truly come to believe that our love ones who have passed, now live and play and reside and call it home.

Hope is like a diamond that holds great value. But a diamond does not start out as a diamond. It is only but a lump of coal that has been placed under extreme pressures and heat. When a diamond is found it is rough and needs the skillful hands of a craftsman. His hands will cut and polish it, and bring it to its true value and beauty. Yes we have been victimized. Yes we do have blemishes. But all diamonds have some kind of a blemish. Your value to your communities and to your families is immeasurable.

All of you are diamonds of hope. Like that lump of coal, you have been placed under great, extreme pressures and heat. It is those trials and tribulations that you have gone through that make you as valuable as those diamonds.

You truly are the spark that ignites the flame. You are the lighthouse that sits atop a hill. That light emanates through you and from you like a light of hope that reaches out through the sea of humanity. As the light from a lighthouse shines out to the sea in search of those ships needing safety, rescue, and gentle guidance to the shore, so does your light shine out in search of those in need.

I would say to you tonight to take hold of your stars in the night with all of your might and don't let go. And by doing so, we not only take back the night, but we truly own it. ■

**It began in mystery,
and it will end in
mystery, but what a
savage and beautiful
country lies in
between.**

—Diane Ackerman

Justice for Victims, Justice for All

DOC Victim Advisory Council Prepares for Victims' Rights Week Celebration

>> During the week of April 13-19, 2008, thousands of people who have been victims of crime will be honored across the country. There will be rallies, candlelight vigils, forums, and other public awareness activities to commemorate National Crime Victims' Rights Week.

The theme for this year is titled, "Justice for Victims, Justice for All."

To celebrate this event, the Victim Advisory Council (VAC) is making plans to host its eighth annual event to honor victims of crime. The program will be held Thursday, April 17, 2008, 10:00 a.m. to noon at the Department of Corrections (DOC).

Department of Corrections—Jesse Parker Building
510 East 12th Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50319

(on the corner of 11th Street & Des Moines Street, 1 block north of Grand Avenue)

Enter the north door and follow the footsteps! The event will be held in the lower level Grant Room.

The Victim Advisory Council is proud to hold this event which draws people from around the state. A victim impact panel will tell their stories of experiencing and overcoming criminal acts, how they coped, and what life is like for them now.

Please mark your calendar for this important event. The Victim Advisory Council would like you to join us as we celebrate and honor victims of crime. For further information contact Betty Brown at the Department of Corrections, 515.725.5742.

We look forward to seeing you.

Justice for Victims, Justice for All!
National Crime Victim Rights Week, 2008

A lot of people are waiting for Martin Luther King or Mahatma Gandhi to come back—but they are gone. We are it. It is up to us. It is up to you.

—Marian Wright Edelman



>> As I back out of a parking spot at one of the states correctional facilities, I ponder. Does what I do make a difference? I come here as a correctional officer, an investigator, a hostage negotiator, a son, brother, husband, father, and a human being.

With nearly twelve years of working for the Iowa Department of Corrections starting out as a Correctional Officer, moving on to investigations and for a large majority of my career as a Crisis Negotiator, I thought I had seen, or at least heard most everything bad in the prison environment. I also know I have personally observed and heard of many good things. There are funny things and sad things. I have personally been happy and mad at situations and myself.

With nearly twenty years of being a husband, sixteen of which being a father and forty-one years of my life as a brother and son, I have experienced tragedy, inspiration, hope, fear and many other feelings that may be shown or described on a motivational poster.

There is no single feeling or word that could describe how I feel when I ask myself the question: Does what I do make a difference? This is a perplexing question. Many days driving away from a prison the answer is no, but the days the answer is yes makes the no's worth while. Many days I feel exhausted and defeated because there is nothing I can do, there is nothing I can say, and there is no counseling or legal remedy that can fix or even begin to help the individuals with whom I deal to stop the reoccurring abuse and turmoil in their lives.

There was a time in my career, not so long ago, when I took things personally, when people's reactions and words affected me. There have been days when I have had to ask people questions so personal that I feel ashamed to receive the answers. I deal with the worst of Iowa's population and wonder, do I make a difference?

Does what I do make a difference, and do I make a difference are such similar questions, but so different at the same time. I've been told that in both cases the answer is yes and in the second question I can even say to myself that the answer

is yes. People have thanked me for being a good role model and for helping them see a better way to live. Individuals have told me they appreciated that I cared enough to help them through a situation. I have gotten notes from people before their release who tell me that I won't see them again, and I haven't. People have offered heartfelt apologies for calling me names and abusing me. The major problem I see with, "do I make a difference" is that it is ultimately about me, about what I am about and how I feel. "Does what I do make a difference," is about outcomes and change, in overall group thought processes.

There have been days when I have had to ask people questions so personal that I feel ashamed to receive the answers. I deal with the worst of Iowa's population and wonder, do I make a difference?

It has become increasingly apparent that the administration for the IDOC and the facilities throughout our state have taken personal and professional measures to make the shift in thinking that inmates, offenders, convicts, et cetera cannot only be the abusers, but can also be the abused. This shift in thought process by IDOC was prevalent for awhile but now, like a glass of water poured down a slide, the rush has past and it may dried up completely.

Initially, the change in thinking reached many and was well-received, but now I wonder if perspective is being considered any longer? Is this something the grass roots care about? Can it actually change? When I first started as a Correctional Officer, a very influential person in the department—or at least I thought they were—said, "Inmates are guilty, dude!" At the time, this statement had nothing to do with offenders being able to become victims. I have come to realize and hope that others can see also that this statement is oh so true. Inmates are guilty, dude. Inmates >>

Making the Difference

>> are guilty of not only their crimes, but of being our past and future neighbors. They are guilty of being fathers, wives, sons, daughters, brothers, sisters. Inmates are guilty of being not only the abusers, but also the abused. The system we have in place puts murderers in the same cells, dorms, and units as bad check writers. It puts individuals that have been abused or are unable to say no with, or around, individuals who have been abusers all their life and enjoy the continuation of such in their current environment.

The paradigm shift that offenders can not only be abusers, but can also be the abused needs to be grasped onto by the grass roots in the IDOC, the first contact for the offenders; the Correctional Officers, Food Service Coordinators, Nurses, Trades Leaders, and so on. Line staff should make it a priority to do what they can to protect offenders from victimization, not only because it is part of our mission, but because it is the right thing to do.

As I sit here putting my thoughts on paper, I not only wonder if I make a difference, but do others make a difference? I hope that others think about this question as I have. Does what I do make a difference? Absolutely! ■

Live as if you were living a second time, and as though you had acted wrongly the first time.

—Victor Frankl

Join the 26th Annual Take Back the Night Rally & March

Justice for victims.

Justice for all.

The 26th Annual Take Back the Night rally and march, sponsored by Polk County Crisis and Advocacy Services, will be Thursday, April 10 at 6 p.m. at Hy-Vee Hall in downtown Des Moines.

The first U.S.-based Take Back the Night rally occurred in San Francisco in 1978. Four years later, Des Moines hosted its first Take Back the Night rally. Twenty-six years later, the need and support of the cause has never been greater.

Take Back the Night is an opportunity for individuals of all races, ages, and backgrounds to peacefully protest violence and to raise our community's awareness of victims' needs and issues.

"This is a great opportunity to honor, support and provide encouragement to victims and survivors of all forms of violence," said Brenda Bash of Polk County Crisis and Advocacy Services. "Members of our community will share their experience through a variety of mediums, allowing the community to collectively support the healing process.

Participants of the event include the Foy School of Irish Dance, the Lincoln High School Show Choir, Prayze and Restoration, and the HOPE Drama Troupe. After the rally the Isiserettes, a 55-member Des Moines Drum and Dance Corps, will lead a candlelight march south of Hy-Vee Hall.

The entire Des Moines community is welcome to attend this free event. Refreshments will be provided.

Sherry's Amazing Journey

>> Each line of the following represents a year in the healing journey of Sherry, a woman raped by a stranger at night outside an office complex. Her wrist was taped to a dumpster, a number 14 carved into her thigh and Sherry was left with ongoing medical issues for all these years.

DEVASTATED

NOT REAL

MAKING NO DECISIONS

NOT SLEEPING AT NIGHT

LOTS OF INCREDIBLE HARD WORK

MANY TRIGGERS ARE STILL WITH ME

TATTOOS, DUCT TAPE, FALL LEAVES AND DUMPSTERS

TALKING ABOUT IT TO PEOPLE THAT LISTEN HELPS

THANK YOU DR. CARITHERS FOR MAKING ME FEEL CLEAN

YELLING AT 10,000 FEET CAN BE EXHILARATING AND WONDERFULLY FREEING

DUMPSTERS ARE DIRTY AND TRASH FILLED BUT NO LONGER AN I

SUPPORT GROUPS, TALKING, HELPING OTHERS ARE ALL PART OF THE HEALING PROCESS

SMELL OF ORANGES TOOK MY MIND THAT NIGHT TO SAFETY AND STILL DOES

DUCT TAPE ISN'T TO BIND THINGS TOGETHER BUT TO CREATE SOMETHING THAT IS FREE ■



Sherry and her art project which helped her find some healing and peace

Violence

The ultimate weakness of violence
is that it is a descending spiral
begetting the very thing it seeks to destroy.
Instead of diminishing evil, it multiplies it.
Through violence you may murder the liar,
but you cannot murder the lie, nor establish the truth.
Through violence you murder the hater,
but you do not murder hate.
In fact, violence merely increases hate . . .
Returning violence for violence multiplies violence,
adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars.
Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that.
Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.

—Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Living a Month in Poverty

by Shelly Silver and LuAnn Smith

>> Shelly Silver and LuAnn Smith, 5th JD DCS, attended a Poverty Simulation and found it to be an eye-opener to the realities of poverty. Shelly had the role of a low income father struggling to make ends meet. LuAnn played the role of a drug using teenager who wound up in jail after attempting a drug deal to earn money for the family.

A poverty simulation is a role-play experience designed to help participants begin to understand the fears and frustrations of a typical low-income family as they try to survive from week to week. The experience is a simulation that sensitizes participants to the realities of life in poverty. Participants leave with a motivation to become involved in activities which help address poverty in their own community. Although it uses “play” money and other props, fictional scenarios, and time limits, the poverty simulation is not a game. It is a simulation tool that enables participants to view poverty from different angles in an experiential setting.

Participants are assigned roles as members in one of 26 different families. Some family roles are newly unemployed, others are recently deserted by the “breadwinner,” and some may be recipients of TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families). Still others are senior citizens receiving social security or grandparents raising their grandchildren.

During the course of four 15-minute “weeks,” families must keep their home secure, feed their family, keep utilities on, make necessary loan payments, pay for miscellaneous expenses, and meet unexpected situations. Family members who work must report to the employer each week. Families with school-age children must see to it that their kids are in school every week. Working parents with infants, toddlers, or preschoolers must ensure that children receive quality child care. These tasks are completed as families interact with community resources and services, including a bank, super center, Community Action Agency, employer, utility company, pawn broker, grocery, DHS office, payday and title loan facility, mortgage company, school, and child care facility.

Together, WE hold the keys. At the heart of every human relation is the desire to thrive. The Community Action Poverty Simulation opens your mind to truly understand the dynamics of working poverty. LIVING A MONTH in poverty:

WEEK 1

The month has just begun and participants have to figure out what to do first.

“I have no job and my bills are due.”

“I have to get to work, what am I going to do with the baby?”

“Where do I go, what do I do?”

WEEK 2

Participants are realizing that it is frustrating to wait in line and not have enough money to pay the bills.

“I’m so hungry and dad hasn’t gone to the store.”

“If I’m late again, I’ll be fired.”

“I have no money for gas.”

“My grandson needs his medication and we are out of money.”

You just need to be a flea against injustice. Enough committed fleas biting strategically can make even the biggest dog uncomfortable and transform even the biggest nation.

—Marian Wright Edelman

Living a Month in Poverty

>> WEEK 3

The school had a pipe burst and the kids are being sent home, who will stay with

them? Participants that have not paid their mortgage will receive eviction notices.

“I’m so hungry!”

“I wonder what the Pawn Shop will give me for this?”

“What is this note stuck on my door?”

WEEK 4

Participants will have to get all of their bills paid and the family fed by the end of the week.

“I wonder what the minimum amount I can pay to keep my utilities on?”

“The house needs so many repairs.”

The power of this unique learning resource is that it creates, like nothing else out there, insight into the state of chronic crisis that consumes so many working poor families. Participants experience one month of poverty compressed into the real time of the simulation. Afterwards, in the debriefing, they share insights of extraordinary vividness and intensity. As a result bankers and ministers, teachers and clerks, ordinary people from all walks of life can share a very special kind of awakening.

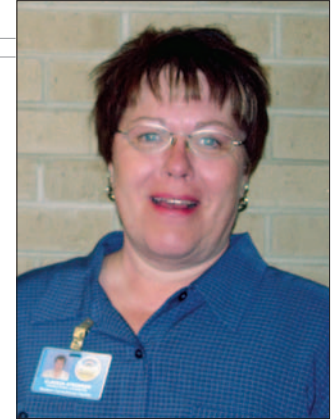
How do we get our neighbors, our leaders, and our community to see how poverty feeds into cycles of teen pregnancy, drug and alcohol abuse, and violence and incarceration?

Together we hold the keys to ending the cycles of isolation that destroy lives and sap the wealth of our communities.

If you have the opportunity to experience a poverty simulation—it’s a worthwhile experience. ■

Getting to Know the Victim Advisory Council: Claudia Atkinson, Correctional Counselor

by Jim Davis, NCF



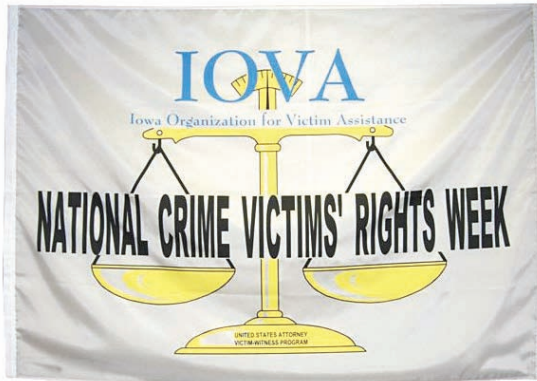
I have known Claudia Atkinson for some time; she seems to follow me wherever I go! Claudia started working in 1976 in manufacturing at a place called Bourn’s Inc. located in Ames, Iowa. I started at Bourn’s in 1977. In 1990, without warning they announced the plant would be closing and moving operations out of the country. This was a very traumatic situation for Claudia and me. We both decided to go back to college and retool in order to find another career. We both chose Criminal Justice and completed our studies in May of 1992. I started as a correctional officer at Newton in 1993, Claudia soon followed as a correctional officer in 1994. When the medium site opened in 1997, I was promoted to a counselor, and once again Claudia soon followed and was promoted as well.

Claudia has taught Anger Management, Victim Impact, and BEP. She has been an active member of Peer Support, Hostage Negotiation Team, DOC Victim Advisory Council, BEP committee, and she serves on the Board of Directors for Domestic Violence for a four county coalition. She also went to New York for 9/11 victims.

Claudia is committed to victim issues, whether the victims are in the community or on staff. We are fortunate to have her voice. Thanks Claudia! ■

It is not hard work which is dreary; it is superficial work.

—Edith Hamilton



National Crime Victims' Rights Week

*Justice For Victims.
Justice For All.*

April 13–19, 2008

This year's theme declares that justice for all cannot be achieved without justice for victims of crime.

To commemorate National Crime Victims' Rights Week, the Fifth Judicial District Department of Correctional Services invites you to a ceremony honoring crime victims and survivors:

April 15, 2008 at 12:00 PM



**Fort Des Moines Correctional Facility
Victim Memorial Garden
66 Gruber, Des Moines**

Beginning at 11:30 AM, survivors will have an opportunity to write their loved one's name and a message on a ribbon which will be tied to commemorate a cross or a star.

During the ceremony, survivors will be invited to place the cross or star in memory of a loved one at the Fort Des Moines Victim Memorial Garden.

As a tribute, the crosses and stars will remain standing during Crime Victims' Rights Week.

Music and refreshments will be provided. ■

Lakes and Volcanoes *by Erin McGee*

Nicaragua is the largest nation in Central America, the second poorest nation after Haiti, and my home for the next 2 years and three months of service in the Peace Corps. Known as the land of lakes and volcanoes, Nicaragua is home to the largest freshwater volcanic island in the world, the largest rainforest north of the Amazon in Brazil, and plenty of active volcanoes.

It's been a little over two weeks since I received my invitation and accepted a volunteer position in the Peace Corps. Here's what I know: My primary duty is to serve as a TEFL Teacher Trainer and work closely with the Nicaraguan Ministry of Education. I will be assigned to a secondary school in a small- to medium-sized town and will work alongside a high school educator to help enhance their English teaching methods. As this is only the second year the Peace Corps has offered this program, I will most likely be the first native English speaker with whom the Nicaraguan students have worked.

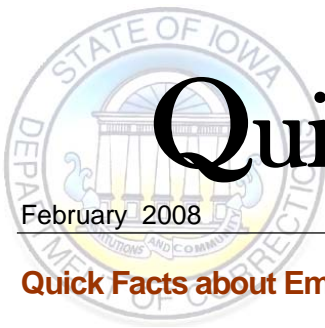
In addition to a primary job, I will have a secondary project of my own choosing—I'm already curious about the criminal justice system in country. I've heard that baseball is quite popular in Nicaragua. It's a good thing I started playing ball with my brother when I was five.

I won't know until a month or two into my training, exactly where I'll live. To start, all of the volunteers stay in one city and undergo three months of language, culture, and technical training. After that, we're released to our respective job assignments and our skills are put to the test.

If all goes to plan, I shall send notes to Betty Brown to keep her up-to-date. She said I could be a foreign correspondent and that sounds pretty great to me. In my absence, we'll need someone to take over the editing and layout of *The Journey*. I suspect there's an organized, creative person among you. Please come forward and speak with Betty about this important work. Pass the word to your friends!

**What we call the secret of happiness
is no more a secret than our
willingness to choose life.**

—Leo Buscaglia



Quick Facts

February 2008

Visit our Website at www.doc.state.ia.us

Quick Facts about Employees

Number of Employees

	<u>Filled FTE's</u>
Institutions	3,113
Community	1,136
Central Office	43

Diversity Profile of Full-Time Employees

	<u>Prisons</u>	<u>CBC</u>
Female	30.0%	52.7%
People of Color	5.6%	9.3%

Quick Facts about Finance

Operating Budget FY 2008

General Fund	\$353,388,416
Tobacco Money	\$3,676,474
Other Revenue	\$3,361,174

Quick Facts about Offenders

Offenders Supervised in the Community

Probation	18,500
Low Risk Probation	3,967
Parole	3,193
Pretrial Release w/Supervision	1,329
Residential Facilities	1,479
Intensive Supervision	1,755
Other	22
Total	30,243

Offenders in Prison 8,684

Offenders Served (FY 2007)

Community	59,197
Prisons	14,945

Prison Population Forecast

July 2008	8,785	July 2013	9,039
July 2009	8,683	July 2014	9,234
July 2010	8,691	July 2015	9,398
July 2011	8,794	July 2016	9,576
July 2012	8,898	July 2017	9,730

Prison – Releases to Community (FY 2007)

Parole	3,171
Work Release	1,268

Community-Outcomes (FY 2007)

Successful	75%
Unsuccessful	18%
Administrative	6%
Intermediate Sanction (includes field and residential)	1%

Quick Facts about Offender Profile

Demographics of Offenders

<u>Gender</u>	<u>CBC</u>	<u>Prison</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Women	7,662	735	8,397	21.6%
Men	22,391	7,949	30,340	77.9%
Unknown	190	0	190	0.5%

Race

Asian	296	63	359	0.9%
African American	3,777	2,169	5,946	15.3%
Hispanic	1,546	535	2,081	5.3%
Native American	321	146	467	1.2%
White	24,080	5,755	29,835	76.7%
Unknown	223	16	239	0.6%

Age

Under 31	15,379	3,512	18,891	48.5%
31-50	12,571	4,274	16,845	43.3%
Over 50	2,259	891	3,150	8.1%
Unknown	34	7	41	0.1%

Crime Type

Violent	4,007	3,879	7,886	20.3%
Property	7,889	1,696	9,585	24.6%
Drug	8,092	2,027	10,119	26.0%
Other	706	396	1,102	2.8%
Public Order	9,511	579	10,090	25.9%
Unknown	38	107	145	0.4%

Quick Facts Additional Information

Prisons

Average Daily Cost (FY 2007)	\$76.59
Per meal cost	\$1.52
Inmates with	
Life Sentences	616
Mandatory Minimums	1,628

Community

Average Daily Cost (FY 2007) (no treatment costs included)	
Residential Facilities	\$60.26
Probation	\$3.70
Parole	\$4.21

Victim Restitution Collected (FY 2005)

\$5.1 million

Recidivism

FY 2004 Releases from Corrections	
OWI Continuum	18.8%
Parole	28.0%
Prison	46.0%
Probation	11.8%
Work Release	40.7%
Recidivism Defined: New convictions for aggravated misdemeanors or felony offenses within three years of final discharge.	

Iowa Department Of Corrections

The mission of the Iowa Department of Corrections is:

We protect the Public, Employees, and Offenders from Victimization.

Victim Advisory Council Goals

- Expand victim outreach programs and services.
- Assist judicial districts in providing victim services in community corrections agencies and other related community agencies.
- Enhance public awareness concerning victim rights and services through public education programs.
- Assist other agencies in the development of victim education efforts and assist in cross-training programs with allied criminal justice and victim service professionals.
- Develop legislative and Department proposals to enhance victim rights, services, and programs.



DOC is fortunate to have the enthusiastic participation of the victim, community and corrections representatives on the Victim Advisory Council to ensure the victims' voices are heard.

Do not be daunted by the enormity of the world's grief. Do justly, now. Love mercy, now. Walk humbly, now. You are not obligated to complete the work, but neither are you free to abandon it.

—Talmud (attributed)

Editor Needed for *The Journey*

Previous editor is moving to Nicaragua for service in the Peace Corps, see "Lakes and Volcanoes," page 10. Please contact Betty Brown if you're interested!

Victims' Stories Needed . . .

The Iowa Department of Corrections Victim Advisory Council is eliciting interest in producing an anthology of stories by Iowa crime victims and survivors. The stories will be written by the victims and survivors of any crime and will underscore the impact of crime on their lives.

If preferable, authors are free to use pseudonyms and every effort will be made to maintain that confidentiality. An editor will work closely with each writer to make sure the stories are professionally edited and presented.

This project is very much in the brainstorming stage; so related ideas are also welcome. The project will not proceed without adequate interest. If you would like to contribute a story, or if you know someone who might, please contact Chris Baker at chris.baker@iowa.gov or (641) 472-4242 Ext. 109.

Editor of *The Journey*:
Erin McGee, Volunteer

Iowa Department of Corrections
Victim and Restorative Justice Programs
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