



ERIK NASARENKO
VENTURA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY
NEWS RELEASE



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Contact: Joey Buttitta
Title: Communications Manager/PIO
Phone: (805) 767-3400
Email: Joey.Buttitta@ventura.org

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Commemorating National Crime Victims' Rights Week April 23–29, 2023

VENTURA, Calif. - The Ventura County District Attorney's Office will host a ceremony at Simi Valley City Hall commemorating National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRW) on April 27, 2023. This will be the first time the annual event will be held in the east county. The event takes place from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. and will include speakers and a march to raise awareness about crime victims.

Simi Valley is the third largest city in Ventura County and is home to Safe Harbor East, a county-owned facility that assists victims of sexual violence and human trafficking in a residential, homelike setting. The facility offers sexual assault nurse exams, forensic interviews, and one-on-one counseling.

The theme for NCVRW 2023 is "Survivor Voices: Elevate. Engage. Effect Change." This year's ceremony will focus on human trafficking and include remarks from Alia Dewees, a dedicated advocate and trafficking survivor working to end human trafficking and empower others.

Ms. Dewees will also be honored with the Resilience Award at the event.

The Ventura County Family Justice Center has served 1,474 victims of crime or trauma who are residents of Simi Valley, Moorpark or Thousand Oaks since opening in 2019.

"Since 1981, we have hosted this annual event to raise awareness of victims' rights and honor crime victims and those who advocate on their behalf," said District Attorney Erik Nasarenko. "The District Attorney's Office is committed to protecting victims of crime, learning from their experiences, and amplifying their voices so they are heard, believed and supported."

Deputy District Attorney Rikole Kelly will also speak at the ceremony. Ms. Kelly is a member of the Ventura County Human Trafficking Task Force (VCHTTF), which was established in 2019. Co-led by the Ventura County Sheriff's Office and Interface Children & Family Services, the task force works to prevent, identify, investigate, disrupt, and prosecute human trafficking crimes in our

community. In addition to holding perpetrators accountable, the VCHTTF provides services and resources to victims, spreads community awareness and compiles county-level data and statistics.

The ceremony will honor Dr. Anthony Walls from Healthcare for Justice, Simi Valley Police Detective Kellyn King, and Ventura County Sheriff's Office Detective Kathryn Torres, with the Justice for Victims Award for their tireless advocacy on behalf of communities that have been affected by crime.

More than 30 community-based organizations and governmental agencies will be on hand providing information about victims' rights and resources for the public. The event will conclude with a march around Simi Valley City Hall, and food provided by the Habit Burger truck sponsored by the Ventura County Family Justice Center Foundation.

Members of the public are invited to attend. Those unable to be at this in-person event can watch the event live-streamed on the Ventura County District Attorney's Office social media platforms. Simultaneous Spanish and Mixteco language interpretation will be provided at the in-person event.

Members of the media are invited to cover the National Crime Victims' Rights Week ceremony and march in Simi Valley. Interviews in advance of the event may be arranged by contacting Ventura County District Attorney's Office Communications Manager Joey Buttitta at (805) 767-3400.

