



## **Commemorating Domestic Violence Awareness Month October 2015**

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) Office of Victim and Survivor Rights and Services (OVSRS) will join with community organizations, law enforcement and numerous government agencies to commemorate Domestic Violence Awareness Month for October of 2015.

CDCR enforces the constitutional rights of crime victims and survivors of stalking and domestic violence, ensuring they are afforded the utmost respect. Over the years, through various legislative mandates and Department policies, CDCR has strengthened the notification procedures for victims of these tragic, often times overlooked, crimes. In an effort to streamline requests for notification of release, CDCR implemented automated release notification using the Victim Information Notification Everyday (VINE) system. Victims are able to access this site at any time to confirm their offender's status. This site also allows for a victim to request to register for electronic notification of release via email or phone. In 2014, OVSRS processed more than 36,000 victim requests for notification and services.

OVSRS works with numerous agencies to ensure victims' rights are upheld while offenders are in the prison system and post incarceration as offenders are discharged to parole. However, with social networking, such as Facebook there are legitimate concerns about safety risks and confidentiality. There are many benefits to social networking but unfortunately it has opened the doors of communication to allow opportunities for stalking, intimidation and many forms of manipulation.

OVSRS assists with harassment intervention to protect the rights and safety of victims by working in partnership with our institutions and/or local law enforcement. This often includes working with the Facebook Security team to shut down accounts that violate facebook's user terms and conditions.

In March 2015 OVSRS was contacted by a survivor of domestic violence. Her offender was subsequently convicted and served time in prison. After the conviction, the survivor changed her residence and was able to start on the path of recovery. Unfortunately, the offender was unable to do the same. Although she moved after the incident the offender was able to find the victim using social media. Once the offender was released from prison and placed on parole, he began harassing the victim by sending her several threatening messages blaming her for his incarceration. Once OVSRS was notified we contacted the CDCR, Department of Parole Operations (DAPO). In these situations, DAPO is able to place special conditions of parole on this type of offender. DAPO ensured that all contact was terminated with the victim and the offender was subsequently referred to local law enforcement for new charges.

We value our partnership with agencies that are committed to providing quality services to victims by holding offenders accountable for their actions. As a survivor of domestic violence and/or stalking you have the right to live free of harassment and fear. If there is an offender in CDCR custody who is currently harassing a victim of their crime or any member of your community, please contact the CDCR, Office of Victim and Survivor Rights and Services toll free at 1-(877) 256-6877 or via email at [victimservices@cdcr.ca.gov](mailto:victimservices@cdcr.ca.gov).