



Department of Justice



Office of Justice Programs

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Wednesday, April 9, 2014

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JUSTICE DEPARTMENT HONORS IDENTITY THEFT VICTIM ADVOCATE FOR MORE THAN TWO DECADES OF SERVICE

DENVER, COLO.—The Department of Justice will recognize Colo. victim advocate Hazel Heckers with the National Crime Victim Service Award for more than two decades of advocating on behalf of crime victims, in areas such as identity theft, elder abuse, crimes against people with disabilities and the special needs of raising loved ones following a crime. Department officials will present Heckers with the award during the National Crime Victims' Rights Service Awards ceremony Wed., April 9, in Washington, D.C.

“Through their courage and critical contributions to assist and empower victims, these individuals and organizations have given hope to countless Americans victimized by crime—even under the most difficult circumstances,” said Attorney General Eric Holder. “I am proud to recognize these extraordinary advocates by celebrating their achievements and assure them that the Department of Justice is more determined than ever to help ensure their continued success.”

Heckers served as a vital member of the committee that passed Colorado's At-Risk Adult legislation, defining crimes against elders and people with disabilities and provides guidelines for enforcing the law. Heckers also has served as a leader in the area of identity theft victim response. In 2012, she founded the Identify Theft Advocacy Network of Colorado (ITAN), which serves victims of identity theft and fraud. During the past three years at ITAN, which is hosted by the Identity Theft & Fraud Unit of the Colorado Bureau of Investigation (CBI), Heckers created and conducted identity theft-related training for law enforcement, helping more than 3,200 victims, conducting 200 identity theft-related trainings and assisting in responding to more than 1,700 phone calls received by the unit's 24 hour Theft and Fraud Hotline.

“We are humbled and proud to recognize these extraordinary individuals, teams, and organizations for their outstanding service” said Deputy Attorney General James Cole. “These compassionate honorees have become beacons of hope for so many others who have endured shock and deep sadness in the face of too many incidents involving violence and loss.”

In addition to Heckers, the Department will recognize nine other individuals and programs for their outstanding efforts on behalf of crime victims. Descriptions and videos of the honorees are available at the Office for Victims of Crime's Gallery:

<https://ovcnvrvw.ncjrs.gov/Awards/AwardGallery/gallerysearch.html>.

President Reagan proclaimed the first Victims' Rights Week in 1981, calling for renewed emphasis on, and sensitivity to, the rights of victims. National Crime Victims' Rights Week will be observed this year from April 6-12, and the theme is "30 Years: Restoring the Balance of Justice."

The Office of Justice Programs (OJP), headed by Assistant Attorney General Karol V. Mason, provides federal leadership in developing the nation's capacity to prevent and control crime, administer justice and assist victims. OJP has six components: the Bureau of Justice Assistance; the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the National Institute of Justice; the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; the Office for Victims of Crime and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering and Tracking. More information about OJP can be found at www.ojp.gov.