

VOICe

Victims Outreach Intervention Center

Victim Outreach Intervention Center (VOICe) is the sole provider of comprehensive domestic violence, sexual assault and other crime victim services for the more than 180,000 people who call Butler County, Pennsylvania, home.

The agency's mission is: "VOICe is a system-change organization that provides free and confidential services to individuals and families who are victims of violent crime. VOICe will work within our community to provide survivors with the resources, tools and options that allow them to assert their personal power and self-determination."

VOICe's staff and dedicated corps of volunteers provide confidential services at no cost to victims throughout Butler County.

History of the Agency

In 1978, the Volunteers Against Abuse Center (VAAC) of Butler County organized from grassroots volunteers to address the specific needs of victims of domestic violence. In that same year, the Center on Rape and Assault (CORA) also organized to address the needs of victims of rape and incest. In 1993, CORA expanded its outreach, began offering services to victims of other violent crime and became Crime Victim Services (CVS).

Even though services were being provided to victims, no shelter facility was available in Butler County. Women and children sought refuge from domestic violence in "safe houses" – a covert network of private residences where courageous volunteers provided the only source of safety for battered women and their children. In 1988, VAAC opened the first emergency shelter in Herman, Pennsylvania, and relocated the shelter to its present site in 1989.

Recognizing that these two agencies often provided services to the same clients as many victims of domestic violence have also been victims of sexual assault, VAAC and CVS found ways to collaborate in the interest of victims.

The next logical step was to become one agency; creating a single comprehensive agency that would provide confidential, professional services to all victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and other violent crimes. All agreed that this merger – the first voluntary merger of two distinct victim service agencies in Pennsylvania – would create a seamless continuum of care for all victims.

By bringing together expert staff from both programs and reducing administrative overhead we would eliminate confusion and effectively increase funds available for essential victim services. On January 1, 2000, Victim Outreach Intervention Center (VOICe) was born.