PROSECUTOR’S OFFICE TO HOLD CANDLELIGHT VIGIL SUNDAY EVENING TO HONOR CRIME VICTIMS AND MARK THE START OF A WEEKLONG TRIBUTE

MOUNT HOLLY - Burlington County Prosecutor Robert D. Bernardi announced today that a candlelight vigil will be held to honor victims of crime on Sunday, April 22 at 6 p.m. at the Burlington County College Culinary Arts Center, 21 Mill Street, Mount Holly, New Jersey.

The candlelight vigil, which marks the beginning of National Crime Victims’ Rights Week, will honor victims of crime and also recognize the progress that has been made in serving their needs. The public and members of the media are invited and encouraged to attend.

Celebrations are planned throughout the nation as part of National Crime Victims’ Rights Week. This year’s theme, “Extending the Vision: Reaching Every Victim,” celebrates the vision behind the progress that has been made and stresses the need to serve all victims of crime.

Still, there is much to be done. National statistics provided by the Office for Victims of Crime, U.S. Department of Justice indicate that more than 50 percent of crimes are not reported, and fewer than 20 percent of victims receive needed services.

“Victims of crime have historically been an underserved population,” said Burlington County Prosecutor Robert D. Bernardi. “While services have improved and an emphasis has been placed on meeting their needs, statistics show us that there are still several victims who need help but do not receive it. The year’s theme is an appropriate rallying cry for all of us to continue our efforts to better meet the needs of those who have been directly affected by crime.”

In addition to the vigil, the BCPO’s Office of Victim Witness Advocacy will pay tribute to victims with our 25th Annual Crime Victims’ Rights Breakfast, which will be held Wednesday, April 25th.

The week will close out with a 5k fun run and walk dubbed Stride For Survivors. The event is free and will be held rain or shine on Saturday April 28 at Smithville Park in Eastamton. Registration is from 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. To register online, visit http://strideforsurvivors2012-eorgf.eventbrite.com/

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Stride for Survivors is jointly sponsored by CONTACT of Burlington County, the Burlington County Sheriff's Department, the Office of Victim Witness Advocacy in the Burlington County Prosecutor's Office, and Providence House Domestic Violence Services.

The support network for victims in New Jersey is extensive, statistics show. In 2011, total services to 93,168 crime victims were provided in New Jersey on 548,261 occasions. This assistance ranged from providing referrals for services to helping secure admission to a shelter/safehouse. During that same period, Burlington County provided services to 3,441 victims on 15,205 total occasions.

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