

VALOR

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Dear Colleague:

This year, we commemorate National Crime Victims' Rights Week with the theme, "*Victims' Voices: Silent No More.*" What a fitting theme for crime victims and those who serve them! During the week of April 25 to May 1, 1999, we have the opportunity to promote victims' rights and services, and offer vital information and resources to victims who need support and assistance. It is indeed an honor to join together with crime victims and the countless volunteers and professionals who dedicate their lives to ensuring that victims' voices and needs are *heard* and *heeded* throughout our justice system, and in communities large and small across our nation.

Victims' voices have left a powerful imprint on the face of American society. Today, over 10,000 community- and system-based organizations provide assistance and support to victims of crime. Victims' rights are defined in nearly 30,000 federal and state statutes, including 32 state-level constitutional amendments. Myriad partnerships have developed among victim advocates, justice professionals, public policymakers, the faith community, social service organizations, schools, and community groups to protect victims' rights, and to expand greatly needed services. These and other admirable efforts are propelled by the powerful voices of victims, and the poignancy of individual stories of pain and suffering.

VALOR, the Victims' Assistance Legal Organization, is pleased to have the opportunity to