

Crime Survivors Run/Walk draws good crowds



By Laura Herzog

One day in 2003, Patricia Wenskunas' personal trainer drugged her, wrapped her in saran wrap and left her for dead. Meanwhile, he threatened to murder her son if she screamed or made any noise.

Wenskunas physically survived the ordeal, but the terror that haunted her was relentless.

She has found some relief by trying to help other victims of abuse.

Wenskunas is the founder and chief executive officer of Crime Survivors.

At the Joint Forces Training Base in Los Alamitos on Saturday, law enforcement and authorities came out in full force to participate in the 5th Annual Crime Survivors Run/Walk held at the Joint Forces Training Base in Los Alamitos.

"Victims of crimes often not only feel black and blue on the outside but the inside as well," Wenskunas said.

In opening the event Todd Spitzer, representing the 71st District of our California State Assembly shared how victims of crimes are too often left without any rights.

Spitzer said he is an ardent supporter of victims' rights and public safety, and participated in the event to support victims and their families.

Victims of crimes are often not only hurt by perpetrators of the crimes against them, but of our justice system as well. Many times they are left looking for justice in a system that fails them.

"How many rights do victims have? Zero," Spitzer said.

Participants were encouraged at the conclusion of the event to vote yes on Proposition 9 (Marcy's Law).

Proposition 9 (Marcy's Law) takes the extra steps of ensuring that any rights provided for victims would be constitutional rights rather than merely statutory rights. In elevating these rights to the state constitutional level, victims would be provided more equal and fair treatment similar to the Constitutional rights afforded inmates.

The feeling among crime survivors is that no one should have to endure the pain, suffering, or helplessness of being a victim of a crime and then be told they don't have any rights.

Victims are encouraged to do four things during the first 24 hours after being victimized. First, establish a safe place and don't be afraid to ask for help finding that safe place. Secondly, go to the hospital to be treated for any and all injuries, and be sure to tell them you are a victim of a crime before you are treated. Thirdly, notify law enforcement immediately and be sure to leave the scene intact to ensure evidence is not destroyed. . Fourthly, even though it may be the last thing on your mind and you may be emotionally overwhelmed, take a moment to write down exactly what happened as soon as possible.

Monies raised for the event will be used to open a full-service Crime Victims resource center here in Orange County, and to assist with Crime Victim bags that will be provided to victims of crime from Orange County law enforcement agencies.

“Victims of crime need a place like the Run/Walk where they can come together, share their stories, and provide hope to each other” says Wenskunas.

For more information and to get involved visit www.crimesurvivors.com