

November Newsletter



*Acts of Kindness
Can Change Lives!*



UNDERSTANDING CO-HOMICIDE SURVIVORS ENDLESS PAIN



Russell Craig is a painter and a Philadelphia native who is taking his art experience to another level. Working with co-homicide survivors to learn about their loved one and to learn about how the loss destroyed their lives. Russell understood the delicate nature of working with co-homicide survivors and he knew the trust that was extended to him was genuine. Russell is currently working with five family members who lost a child and/or grandchild to violence in the city of Philadelphia. Russell's **Act of Kindness** to paint portraits of the homicide victims at no cost will provide a sense of LOVE for the families.

SELFLESS ACTS OF KINDNESS

Long Time Friend of Northwest Victim Services

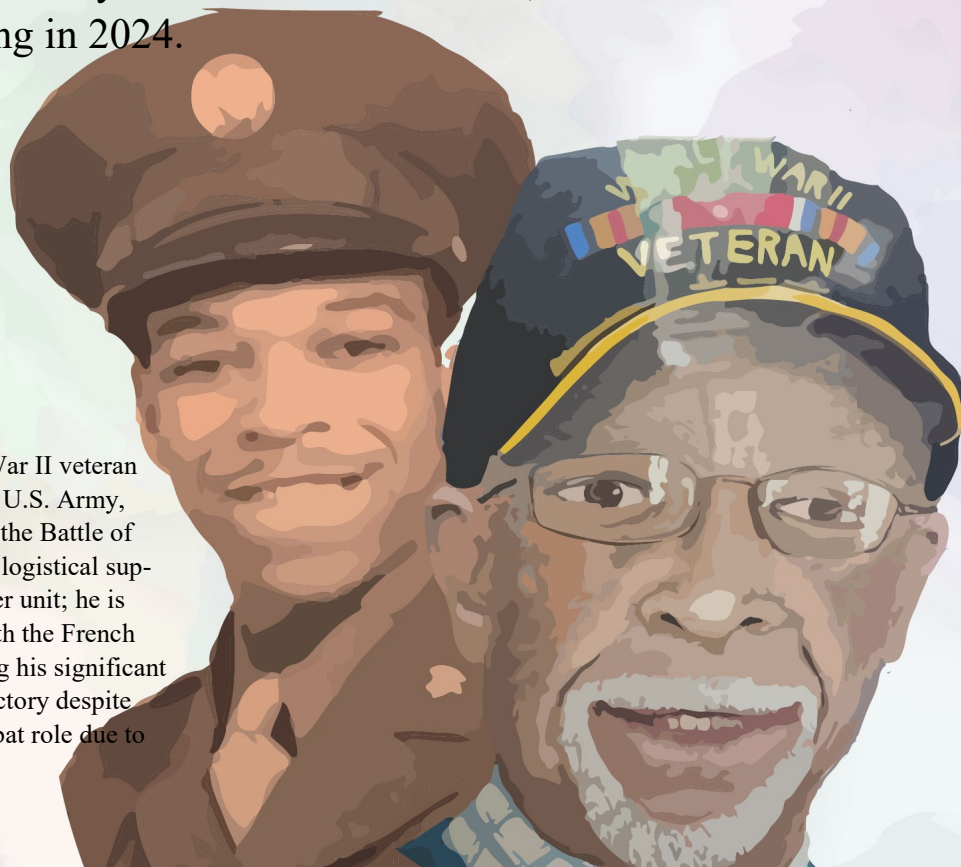
Mr. Benjamin Melvin Berry turned 101 on September 21, 2024 and he is still giving back to his community. Living in the Germantown section of Philadelphia since 1947 has been rewarding for him and he met many wonderful people over the years. “I thought my community needed me, but I needed my community—the unity” Mr. Berry stated. Families and their children were living in harmony, that is what I loved about Germantown.

In the 1990’s Mr. Berry connected with one of the previous Executive Directors of Northwest Victim Services, Patricia A. Payne and he assisted her in many ways for community events.

Helping within your community is the perfect opportunity for everyone to grow as a person and to better understand how we can all fit into the world around us to keep each other safe.

Important FACT about Mr. Benjamin Berry:

Mr. Berry was drafted into the US Army at the age of 19 in 1943. In 19144 Black Soldiers were assigned to serve units, Mr. Berry’s unit was called to join the frontlines in the Battle of the Bulge. Mr. Berry was one of more than 2,500 Black soldiers and now there are only two of them living in 2024.



Benjamin Berry is a World War II veteran who served in the segregated U.S. Army, most notably participating in the Battle of the Bulge where he provided logistical support as part of a Quartermaster unit; he is recognized for his service with the French Legion of Honor, highlighting his significant contributions to the Allied victory despite being assigned to a non-combat role due to racial segregation at the time.

WORLD WAR II



Rysheda Elliott, Peer Support Advocate
Victim Advocate



Rachael Reyes-Vazquez, Bilingual Court
Advocate

Dear Everyone,

Completing my 6 months of being back home at Northwest Victim Services has been amazing. Working with two incredible Advocates Rysheda Elliott and Rachael Reyes-Vazquez is great and rewarding. I admire their passion and the **Kindness** that bleeds from their hearts everyday when they are serving those affected by crime. They go above and beyond daily and they both understand the importance of serving outside of normal business hours. I am truly honored to work along side of them while we put all victims and co-homicide survivors first within the 5th , 14th, 35th, and 39th police districts. I take pride in the accomplishments Rysheda and Rachael have made. We listen to the voices of those affected by crime because they help us to better serve and meet their needs.

I am truly grateful for the tremendous **Act of Kindness** from Dr. Janet Etzi, Licensed Psychologist who saw the need of Northwest Victim Services and she began donating her time on May 26, 2021. Dr. Etzi has served countless victims and co-homicides in need of therapy. She understands the urgency of trauma and having a waiting list is NOT an option for her. I thank Trina Dow, Art Therapy for joining the Northwest Victim Services Family.

I am thankful for Wynter Downing, Youth Engagement Coordinator & Social Media Assistant for all she does. Working evenings and weekends to ensure youth events take place and to ensure the agencies is engaged in positive social media interactions. Wynter ensures the agency 's social media platform strengthens our connection with the public, displays transparencies, and responds to the Northwest community needs.

I look forward to a bright future at Northwest Victim Services with a strong, determined, and giving TEAM!

With Love,

Melany P. Nelson

Northwest Victim Services



Melany Nelson, Executive Director



Wynter Downing, Youth Engagement
Coordinator

Northwest Victim Services
6023 Germantown Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19144

215.438.4410

267.808.0350, Melany P. Nelson, Executive Director

PA Victim's Rights

As a victim, you have rights; some of these rights are listed below:

You have the right to be told

- About basic services available to you in your county.
- Certain court events include information on bail, escape of the offender, and release of an offender.

About the details of the final disposition of a case.

You have the right to receive

- Notice of the arrest of the offender.
- Information about restitution and assistance with compensation.

Accompaniment to all criminal proceedings by a family member, a victim advocate, or a support person.

You have the right to provide input

- Into sentencing decisions.

Into post-sentencing decisions.

You have the right to receive assistance with

- Filing a claim for victims' compensation.
 - Submitting a restitution claim.
 - Preparing a victim impact statement.

For a complete list of your rights as a crime victim in Pennsylvania, please visit <http://www.pacrimevictims.com> or call NVS at [215-438-4410](tel:215-438-4410).

The Power of ONE Starts with YOU!

Please donate to NVS as we provide all our services/programs at no cost, and private donations are critical for us to sustain provision of our services at a high level.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES IN PHILADELPHIA

Network of Neighbors: A Trauma Response Network

The Network of Neighbors Trauma Response Network is composed of community members trained to support — and lead — responses to stress, trauma, loss, and violence within their own communities.

The Network is not a violence-prevention or anti-violence program. Instead, the Network is focused on addressing the impact of trauma on individuals and communities

Connect with the Network

For more information, contact the Network at 267-233-4837.

<https://dbhids.org/about/organization/planning-innovation/emergency-preparedness-and-response-unit/network-of-neighbors/>

FACE TO FACE

Face to Face relieves suffering in our guests by giving them support to meet their immediate needs through these core programs. We meet our guests where they are, and our program staff from all of our services work together to develop a unique plan of action for each guest that addresses their complex mix of issues.

Philadelphia has the highest rate of poverty of any large city in the United States. Germantown has levels 50% higher than the city as a whole, with one third of its residents living in Deep Poverty (\$6,380 individual; \$13,100 family of 4), making it difficult to afford basic necessities of food or shelter.

Every Monday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, dedicated volunteers give their time to help Face to Face guests. Some volunteers prepare or serve meals, some help in the Legal Center, Health Center, Social Services Center or in our computer lab. Some others give their time to our Auction or Turkey Trot fundraisers. We rely on the energy and enthusiasm of many volunteers each week to make a difference in Germantown.

Any questions, please email Ally Monteiro at Ally@facetofacegermantown.org. (215) 849-0179

<https://facetofacegermantown.org/volunteer/>

PHILADELPHIA CORPORATION FOR AGING (PCA)

Become a Senior Companion: PCA's Senior Companion Program is a person-to-person service program for older adults.

Lead a Chronic Disease Self-Management Course: PCA's Health Promotion Unit relies on "lay leader" volunteers to lead chronic disease and pain self-management courses.

Become a Volunteer Ombudsman: Volunteer ombudsmen visit long-term care facilities with the goal of helping to improve the quality of life for residents.

<https://www.pcacares.org/services/community-connection/volunteer/>

To learn more about these volunteer opportunities, call the PCA Helpline at 215-765-9040.

PLEASE CONSIDER VOLUNTEERING AT NORTHWEST VICTIM SERVICES



HOW ARE YOU HELPING YOUR COMMUNITY?

THE POWER OF ONE STARTS WITH YOU!