

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### **VICTIM ACTIVISM FOCUS AT ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

Boston: From the students in Parkland, FL to the #MeToo movement on social media, the voices of crime victims have joined the national dialogue on crime and violence prevention. Survivors called to action served as the central theme to this year's Victim Rights Conference, hosted by Attorney General Maura Healey, the Victim Witness Assistance Board (VWAB), and the Massachusetts Office for Victim Assistance (MOVA). The day provided a platform for crime victims and service providers to celebrate the achievements made by survivors of crime in serving victims and promoting public safety.

"I am always inspired by the powerful voices of survivors and advocates at the Victim Rights Conference and their willingness to share their stories, empower other victims, and educate the public about victims' rights," said AG Healey. "Now, more than ever, survivors and service providers need a platform to champion their cause and underscore the importance of crime and violence prevention, and this conference does just that."

Keynote Speaker Lucy McBath spoke to an audience of more than 400 victims and their advocates from all counties in Massachusetts. Mrs. McBath's son, Jordan Davis, was shot and killed at a gas station in Jacksonville, FL in 2012 by a man objecting to the music he was playing in his car. The shooter used Florida's "stand-your-ground" law as his defense. Mrs. McBath shared her journey to becoming an activist for gun safety and a national spokesperson for Everytown for Gun Safety and Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America. In line with a trend seen around the country, Mrs. McBath has taken a leave from that position in order to run on a "gun sense platform" for Georgia's 6<sup>th</sup> district Congressional seat.

The day included workshops highlighting achievements in victim rights law by Suffolk County District Attorney Daniel F. Conley and presentations of victims discussing their activism in Massachusetts. The VWAB, which governs MOVA, chose this event to present a "Special Recognition Award" to the founders and board members of the Garden of Peace Memorial to Homicide Victims. The Garden, located at 100 Cambridge Street in Boston, was dedicated in 2004 and was developed and sustained by families of homicide victims and volunteers.

"Victims and survivors often want to see something positive come out of their tragedy," said Liam Lowney, MOVA's Executive Director. "Through the voices of survivor speakers we have highlighted that there are many ways for survivors be involved. We want to provide them the support they need to tell their stories, because as we have seen, the voices of victims is critical to implementing the changes our country needs."

For further information regarding programs available to assist crime victims in Massachusetts contact MOVA at (617) 586-1340 or visit their website at [www.mass.gov/mova](http://www.mass.gov/mova).