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**Sheriff Lou Vallario**  
**Garfield County, Colorado**

## NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Date: March 12, 2024

Time: 11:15 AM

Title: Victim Response Team in Garfield County

**IMPORTANT:** Please direct any media requests to the contact above. Do not contact the Garfield County Emergency Communications Center or Patrol staff for media requests.

GARFIELD COUNTY, CO.--



Today Deputy Sandquist (shown above) a Coordinator for the Garfield County Sheriff's Office Victim Response Team (GCSO VRT) presented a program to the Kiwanis Club of Grand Valley/Parachute on the GCSO VRT.

The local need for a VRT dates back to an incident on March 30, 1981, President of the United States Ronald Reagan was shot and wounded in Washington, D.C., as he was returning to his limousine after a speaking

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engagement at the Washington Hilton. Following the attempted assassination, it became obvious to President Reagan that there was no program or services available, even to the President, to assist the victims of violent crimes or acts. In 1982, he assigned a Presidential Task Force to explore this void. The task force came up with their recommendations and the Victims of Crime Act of 1984 (VOCA) was established by Congress.

VOCA authorizes the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) to provide an annual formula grant from the Crime Victims Fund to each State and eligible territory for the purpose of providing assistance to victims of crime. In 1992, Colorado passed a constitutional amendment that provides crime victims with certain and specific rights. Colorado law guarantees that victims of certain crimes are protected by a law called The Victim Rights Act (VRA). This law ensures that victims of crime are treated with fairness, respect, and dignity and that victims are free from intimidation, harassment, and abuse.

In 2004, Sheriff Vallario established the Garfield County Sheriff's Office Victims Response Team to aid the responding Patrol Deputies when dealing with the public on specific crimes or incidences. In 2008, the program was expanded to each municipality in Garfield County. The respective Police Departments have the ability to call on the Victim Response Team when needed.

GCSO VRT was established with a two-fold mission. First, and foremost, they provide immediate support to victims and their families during the chaos following a traumatic event. i.e. Crimes of Domestic Violence, Homicides, Sexual Assault, Robberies, Kidnapping, Child Abuse, Suicide, Sudden Death, Crimes against at-risk adults and Ethnic intimidation. Second, the Victim Response Team provides support to the Patrol, Detectives and Detentions Divisions along with the Officers of the six municipalities within Garfield County. Additional support for other Critical Incidents and Crisis situations that may require crisis support, emotional support, and information on referrals to the public is also provided

The Victim Response Team in Garfield County is a product of the Sheriff's Office and supervised by Dr. Adam Ford with two full time paid coordinators and nine volunteers. If you are interested in being a volunteer and working as an advocate for the Victim Response Team, please check our website <https://www.garcosheriff.com> or contact the Sheriff's Office at (970) 945-0453.

**No additional information will be released.**

*The mission of the Garfield County Sheriff's Office is to provide solutions for the people through professional, ethical and compassionate conduct.*

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