

Selma Times-Journal

# Group works to aid all crime victims

By **Lauren Fenton** | Selma Times-Journal

Published Friday, November 20, 2009

When director Christopher Peterson started the Selma chapter of Victims of Crime and Leniency, VOCAL, in 2008, he wanted to improve the quality of justice for all crime victims.

VOCAL is a non-profit organization dedicated to assisting victims of crime with court processes.

“If they’re a victim, they don’t necessarily know the process of going through the court system,” Peterson said.

The organization also advocates for victims in the legislature, informs people about the victim bill of rights, crisis intervention and other projects for the community.

“VOCAL is designed to help a victim of a crime,” Peterson said. “But you don’t have to be a victim to be a member. Right now, we’re just trying to accomplish getting the word out and the service that is available.”

Headquarters of the organization is in Montgomery. The chapter uses most resources from Montgomery as the membership and community involvement continue to grow in the Selma area.

“Eventually being self-sufficient will be our goal,” Peterson said.

As Peterson looks to increase membership, he wants to soon hold a membership meeting and elect officers.

Then members can help to choose the projects the organization will also try to implement in the community.

“I hope people won’t need the service, but it is there if they do,” Peterson said.

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