[Albuquerque, New Mexico, April 24, 2023] The National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA), a recognized leader in the victims’ rights movement for over 45 years, is kicking-off the first day of National Crime Victims’ Rights Week (NCVRW) by hosting a Youth Advocacy Corps Town Hall for college students, community members, and victim service providers at the University of New Mexico (UNM) in Albuquerque on April 24, 2023. The Town Hall will center the voices of historically marginalized survivors of multiple forms of violence and crime, and address the importance of youth leadership in the field of victim advocacy by announcing the launch of a new service corps program: the Youth Advocacy Corps.

The Youth Advocacy Corps, a pilot program led by NOVA with funding from the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC), aims to elevate the next generation of youth leaders in victim services. In collaboration with researchers and college campuses, the Youth Advocacy Corps will uplift and celebrate the voices of marginalized youth in victim advocacy by providing student fellows with training, mentorship, and a paid field-placement in a local victim service organization. The Youth Advocacy Corps will be developed in partnership with Rainbow Research and five minority-serving campus pilot sites: Aaniiih Nakoda College, Dominican University, University of Texas at El Paso, University of New Mexico, and Coahoma Community College.

The Town Hall will be held in UNM’s Student Union Building (SUB) Ballroom B (1 University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM 87106), and doors will open at 9:30 AM MDT. The event will open with tabling from student and community organizations and will feature a performance by UNM’s Something Major A Capella group. Following the performance, NOVA Executive Director Claire Ponder Selib will introduce OVC Director Kristina Rose for opening remarks at
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10:00 AM MDT. The Youth Survivor-Advocate Panel Discussion will commence shortly thereafter and be followed by a brief Q&A before the event closes at 11:00 AM MDT.

The Town Hall and Panel Discussion will be moderated by Abrianna Morales—sexual assault survivor-advocate, founder of Sexual Assault Youth Support Network (SAYSN), and NOVA’s Youth Program Manager—and will feature the following youth survivor-advocates:

- **Brandon Wolf**: Pulse Nightclub survivor and Equality Florida Press Secretary
- **D'Angelo McDade**: Educator and former Executive Director of Chicago Peace Warriors
- **Kaylyn Ahn**: Student Advocate from Northwestern University

Abrianna Morales, NOVA’s Youth Program Manager and a young survivor herself, had this to say about youth leadership in victim services: “Having been a survivor and advocate since I was fifteen years old, I know how important it is to feel that your voice is heard and how empowering advocacy and activism can be. The Youth Advocacy Corps, to me, is a commitment from the current leaders in victim services to transform advocacy as we know it…the Youth Advocacy Corps is a commitment to elevating voices that have been silenced for far too long.

Kristina Rose, Director of the Office for Victims of Crime, remarked: “I’m so excited to watch how the Youth Advocacy Corps develops and inspires the next generation of leaders in victims’ rights and services. I envision a passionate, knowledgeable force spreading throughout the country and working in communities most affected by crime – communities that may not be aware of the rights and services available to them in the aftermath of crime. It’s fitting that the Corps is being announced during National Crime Victims’ Rights Week as their work will no doubt amplify survivor voices in all spaces, especially those where they are seldom heard.”

For Media and Press attendance, please email youthcorps@trynova.org to express your interest in attending.

# # #

Addendum A: Survivor-Advocate Panelists and Project Partner Information Sheet
Addendum B: Youth Advocacy Corps Town Hall Save the Date
Addendum C: University of New Mexico Student Union Building Campus Maps
Addendum A.

Youth Advocacy Corps Town Hall

Survivor-Advocate Panelist and Project Partner Information Sheet

Abrianna Morales
Abrianna Morales is a sexual assault survivor, activist, and advocate for sexual assault survivors’ rights and empowerment from Las Cruces, New Mexico. After being sexually assaulted at age fifteen, Abrianna was inspired to create the Sexual Assault Youth Support Network (SAYSN): an organization that focuses on the support, empowerment, and connection of youth sexual assault survivors and those that support them. Through her work with SAYSN, Abrianna has had the opportunity to share her story and devotion to advocacy as a speaker at TEDxABQ Women 2017 and as an expert witness for NM Senate Bill 55, a bill brought forward by NM Sen. Jeff Steinborn, to extend the statute of limitations for child sexual abuse during the 2019 New Mexico Legislative Session. In addition to her work with SAYSN, Abrianna also held the title of Miss New Mexico’s Outstanding Teen 2018. A rising senior at the University of New Mexico, Abrianna is majoring in Psychology and Criminology, and plans to pursue J.D. and Ph.D. in Forensic Psychology/Criminology with an interest in conducting research at the intersection of law, psychology, and criminology. Abrianna was recently named as a 2022 Truman Scholar.

Twitter: https://twitter.com/abrielisem?lang=en

Brandon Wolf
Brandon Wolf is a nationally recognized LGBTQ civil rights advocate, leader in the movement to end gun violence in America, and survivor of the 2016 shooting at Pulse Nightclub. After narrowly escaping that night, during what was the deadliest mass shooting in US history at the time, Brandon channeled his life into fighting for a safer world for future generations and honoring victims of injustice with action. He is a frequent face on MSNBC, CNN, Black News Channel, and is a featured voice in CNN digital, Newsweek, USA Today, and others. Brandon has graced the cover of Dazed Magazine and LGBTQ publications nationwide, recently being named one of the Logo TV 30. He has been recognized as one of Huffington Post’s 30 LGBTQ Influencers under 30 and Business Equality Magazine’s 40 LGBTQ Leaders Under 40. Brandon was a national surrogate for Senator Elizabeth Warren’s Presidential Campaign and an advisory committee member for President Biden’s General Election bid. He is a co-founder and current Vice President of The Dru Project, a nonprofit organization that empowers safe spaces in schools for LGBTQ youth, and the Press Secretary for Equality Florida, the state’s LGBTQ civil rights organization. Brandon’s work is done through the same lens of intersectionality through which he experiences the world, centering those living at the crossroads of identity and acknowledging that the simple act of caring for oneself is radical in society today.
D'Angelo McDade

D’Angelo McDade recently served as the Executive Director of the Peace Warrior Organization which empowers youth to create proactive change within their communities. As a student at North Lawndale College Prep (NLCP) of Chicago’s West Side, D’Angelo held the role of Assistant Director of Civic Engagement and co-founded the Peace Warrior Organization Summer Employment program. Prior to serving as the Executive Director of the Peace Warrior Organization, D’Angelo served as Interim Intern Director of Operations at Galapagos Charter School and a Coordinator of Special Learning and Community Projects. D’Angelo is a nationally certified trainer of Kingian Nonviolence Reconciliation. Due to his activism in reforming gun violence, D’Angelo was honored with the Youth Activism Award. He is currently enrolled at Depauw University as a rising senior, majoring in Educational Studies and Leadership in Development and Student Affairs.

Twitter: https://twitter.com/DAngelo4Change

Kaylyn Ahn

Kaylyn Ahn is the queer daughter of Korean immigrants and a survivor of domestic and sexual violence. After their sexual assault case was denied by prosecutors, she helped draft and testified for HB5441 to close a loophole in Illinois criminal sexual assault law. She organized a March For Asian Lives and Say it With Pride: Equality Now! which successfully repealed laws that prohibited dressing in clothing “of the opposite sex.” Currently, she is a sophomore studying Social Policy and Legal Studies at Northwestern University. On campus, she is the Equity Inclusion Chair for the Undergraduate Prison Education Partnership and the Events Chair for SPEAK (for sexual assault awareness). In the winter of 2021, she fled her home due to domestic violence and became a homeless/unaccompanied youth. Kaylyn hopes to conduct research on employment and domestic violence; in her future, she hopes to become a lawyer to advocate for homeless queer youth.

Twitter: https://twitter.com/kaylyn_ahn?lang=en
SAVE THE DATE

YOUTH ADVOCACY CORPS TOWN HALL

APRIL 24, 2023
UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO
STUDENT UNION BALLROOM B

EVENT SCHEDULE:
9:30 AM - 10:00 AM
• DOORS OPEN: BAGELS & COMMUNITY TABLING
10:00 AM - 11:00 AM
• EVENT BEGINS: TOWN HALL PANEL & PERFORMANCE
11:00 AM - 11:30 AM
• CLOSING: COMMUNITY TABLING

JOIN US!
The National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA) invites students and community partners to kick off National Crime Victims’ Rights Week with the launch of the Youth Advocacy Corps, a project designed to empower youth advocates and elevate the next generation of leaders.

PANELISTS:

Abrianna Morales
Sexual Assault Survivor, Advocate; NOVA Youth Program Manager

Brandon Wolf
Pulse Nightclub Survivor Equality Florida, Press Secretary

D’Angelo McDade
Educator & Former Executive Director of Chicago Peace Warriors

Kaylyn Ahn
Student Advocate, Northwestern University

PERFORMANCE BY: SOMETHING MAJOR A CAPPELLA

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