



## Office of the Texas Governor Sexual Assault Survivors' Task Force

Greetings,

We are pleased to share the March issue of the Governor's Sexual Assault Survivors' Task Force (SASTF) newsletter, featuring important updates, announcements, and opportunities from across our statewide network.

In this issue, we are happy to welcome Andrew Friedrichs, the new Executive Director for the Governor's Public Safety Office, as an SASTF Steering Committee Member. We extend our sincere appreciation to Aimee Snoddy for her years of dedicated service as she enters retirement. We also spotlight Task Force Member Detective Kamesha Sheer and recognize her ongoing commitment to strengthening survivor-centered responses in Texas.

Additionally, we share updates regarding Texas Department of Public Safety's Limited Consent DNA Testing Program and announce the establishment of the Governor's new Family Violence Homicide Task Force. We also recognize April as Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month and Child Abuse and Prevention Month.

We are also pleased to feature community engagement efforts, including Marcus Reese's 4th Annual Break the Silence Fun Run and Summer Willis' The Denim Run Austin, as well as the Office of the Attorney General's Crime Victim Services Division Outreach Newsletter.

This issue includes current training opportunities for professionals working to strengthen Texas's response to sexual assault and support survivors across the state.

Thank you for your continued dedication to this important work and for your partnership in advancing survivor-centered practices throughout Texas.

Sincerely,  
The SASTF Team

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## Welcome Andrew Friedrichs



Andrew Friedrichs is the new Executive Director for the Governor's Public Safety Office. He previously served as the Executive Director for the Commission on State Emergency Communications which oversees the administration of 9-1-1 and poison control services throughout Texas. Andrew re-joins the PSO where he worked in multiple capacities for seven years. Prior to his state service, Andrew served on active duty in the U.S. Navy. He received a B.A. degree in Psychology from the

University of Minnesota and a M.A. degree in Criminology from RMIT University in Australia.

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## Congratulations on your retirement, Aimee Snoddy!

Aimee Snoddy, SASTF Steering Committee Member and Executive Director of the Governor's Public Safety Office recently retired from the Office of the Governor (OOG). Aimee devoted over 28 years of dedicated service to the State of Texas, with 26 of those years at the Governor's Office. Starting her career as an intern with OOG, Aimee continued to earn new opportunities and promotions, working her way up to become the Executive Director of the Public Safety Office (PSO), a position she has held since 2018.



As Executive Director, Aimee ensured that the PSO mission to "promote strategies that improve public safety, support victims of crime, prevent terrorism, and prepare communities for the threats and hazards that pose the greatest risks to Texans" was honored and upheld on a

daily basis, and that it closely guided the work that all PSO staff do on behalf of our fellow Texans. Aimee's wisdom and leadership will be greatly missed.

*Thank you for your contributions to the SASTF,  
and we wish you all the best for your retirement!*

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## Task Force Member Spotlight: Detective Kamesha Scheer



### **Detective Senior Police Officer Kamesha Scheer, MBA Houston Police Department**

Detective Senior Police Officer Kamesha Scheer has served for more than a decade in law enforcement and is a dedicated Sex Crimes Detective with the Houston Police Department's Special Victim's Division. Since 2016, she has specialized in complex adult sexual assault investigations, trauma-informed interviews, and evidence-based practices that support survivors of sexual violence.

Detective Scheer became a certified Sexual Assault/Family Violence Investigator Course (SAFVIC) Instructor in 2025 and has provided training to law enforcement professionals since 2017 in case management, on-scene investigative skills, and evidence collection. In 2022–2023, she contributed to revising the Sexual Assault component of the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement's (TCOLE) Basic Peace Officer Course (BPOC) to strengthen trauma-informed, survivor-centered instruction for new officers.

Detective Scheer has completed extensive specialized training in Sexual Assault Investigations, Family Violence Investigations, strangulation, neurobiology of trauma, and investigative best practices. She is currently pursuing certification as a Forensic Experiential Trauma Interview (FETI) interviewer.

In addition to her professional work, Detective Scheer is currently completing her doctoral studies, focusing her research on **"A Qualitative Analysis of Bias Indicators in Adult Sexual Assault Case Processing."** Her academic

work aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of how bias influences investigative outcomes and to inform strategies that enhance fairness and consistency in case handling across the state.

As a member of the Governor's Sexual Assault Survivors' Task Force, she collaborates with statewide partners to develop and advance best practices that improve investigative processes and outcomes for survivors in Texas. Prior to joining HPD, she served as a Credit, Skiptrace, and Fraud Supervisor in the finance sector, where she gained valuable analytical, supervisory, and training experience.

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## Texas Department of Public Safety's Limited Consent Testing Program

Effective December 1, 2025, Texas launched a new reporting option for sexual assault survivors through the Texas Department of Public Safety's (DPS) Limited Consent for DNA Testing Program. Established pursuant to House Bill 1422, the program allows survivors to have evidence collected through a Sexual Assault Forensic Exam tested for foreign DNA material without making a report to law enforcement. Survivors retain the option, for up to five years, to report the offense to law enforcement and consent to the release of their evidence and lab results if they decide to pursue an investigation. For more information on the program, please visit DPS' [Limited Consent DNA Testing](#) page.

The SASTF recently hosted a webinar on this new program, which was presented by Rebecca Vieh, DPS' Sexual Assault Evidence Tracking Program Specialist, elaborating on how this new option supports survivor choice, how evidence is handled and retained, and what the program may mean for professionals who work with survivors. The webinar can be viewed on the [SASTF Archived Webinars Page](#).

The Texas Association Against Sexual Assault (TAASA) has developed two documents explaining the three options for sexual assault reporting in Texas: a [one-pager](#) and an [expanded detail document](#). TAASA will additionally be hosting a webinar on the Limited Consent DNA Testing Program on Tuesday, March 31, 2026, at 9am. You can register for the webinar [here](#).

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## Family Violence Homicide Task Force: Honoring Texas Victims

The Governor's [Family Violence Criminal Homicide Prevention Task Force](#), which was authorized in the 89<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session, held its first meeting on Tuesday, January 27, 2026. The Task Force, comprising 20 subject matter experts from across Texas, will analyze the top risk factors that may lead to family violence criminal homicide, advise and provide resources to state agencies and nonprofit organizations to develop and improve training for professionals who interact with survivors of family violence; collect, analyze, and make publicly available information that is not privileged, confidential, or otherwise prohibited from disclosure by law, organized by region, and develop policy recommendations to assist the state. The Task Force's efforts are being coordinated by staff within the Governor's Public Safety Office.

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## Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month

April is around the corner, as is our observance of [Child Abuse Prevention Month](#) and [Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month](#). The SASTF was established to ensure a survivor-centered, trauma-informed, collaborative, and coordinated response to sexual violence experienced by both adults and children in Texas. A critical component of the SASTF is to address the prevention of sexual violence.

Next month, we proudly stand alongside survivors, organizations, and communities who work tirelessly to prevent child abuse and sexual assault. Click below to learn more about Child Abuse Prevention Month and Sexual Assault Awareness & Prevention Month.

[Child Abuse Prevention Month](#)

[Sexual Assault Awareness & Prevention  
Month](#)

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## Community Spotlight

### Break The Silence 4th Annual Fun Run



The Break The Silence Project was created to provide victims of child sexual abuse the ability to break their silence and access the resources they need to heal and remain safe.

At its core, the organization exists to ensure that survivors are seen, heard, and supported at every stage of their healing journey.

Now in its fourth year, the Break The Silence Fun Run continues to serve

as more than just a community event. It is a powerful gathering rooted in awareness, education, and action.

Each year, the event brings together survivors, families, advocates, and community partners with a shared purpose: to confront the reality of child sexual abuse and connect individuals directly with life changing resources.

One of the most impactful aspects of the Fun Run is the presence of direct services on site.

Attendees are able to learn about local and regional resources available to victims and families, ask questions, and take meaningful steps toward safety and healing. By meeting the community where they are, the event removes barriers and opens doors that many survivors may not know exist.

This year's Fun Run centers around the powerful theme, "Don't Wait," highlighted by an incredible survivor story.

The message is clear and urgent. Help is available, and no one has to suffer in silence.

By sharing lived experiences, survivors help shine a light on the realities of abuse while offering hope to those who may still be searching for the courage to speak out.

Thanks to the generosity of community sponsors, the Break The Silence Fun Run is completely free to attend.

This commitment ensures that cost is never a barrier to participation, education, or access to support. Lunch is provided for attendees, though registration is required.

As co-founder Marcus Reese said, “I can’t think of a more difficult subject to speak about, and yet over the last four years we have opened a window into what child abuse survivors experience. To really make an impact, we need to hear from survivors and meet them where they’re at. This is exactly what this event does.”

The 4th Annual Break The Silence Fun Run is an invitation to the community to stand together, listen, learn, and take action. Through compassion, connection, and collective effort, this event continues to break the silence one step at a time.

### **4th Annual Break The Silence Fun Run**

**When:** April 11, 2026, from 8:00am - 12:00pm

**Where:** Murphy Park (1600 Veterans Drive, Taylor, TX 76574)

#### **Break The Silence Registration**



## **The Denim Run – Austin** *Hosted by the Summer Willis Foundation*

The Denim Runs are the first national race series dedicated to honoring survivors of sexual assault. These runs will unite cities across the country and beyond for a month of resilience, awareness, and action. This run/walk welcomes everyone to come together to amplify the voices of survivors and make strides toward change, all in denim. Runs are currently scheduled to be held in Santa Monica on April 12<sup>th</sup>, New York City on April 18<sup>th</sup>, and in Austin on April 25<sup>th</sup>. Throughout April, recognized as Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM), these runs unite communities across the country to celebrate survivor strength, foster belonging, and redefine what support and solidarity look like, one stride at a time.

The Denim Run Austin is coming to Camp Mabry Parade Field for a day of running, resilience, and community! Join us as we celebrate survivors, spark important conversations, and bring the community together around a shared commitment to end sexual violence. Whether you're running, walking, cheering, or enjoying the festival, this is your chance to make a bold statement of support and solidarity – one mind, one voice, one denim-powered step at a time.

**Why Denim?** Because it already stands for solidarity.

[Denim Day](#) is an internationally recognized symbol of standing with survivors. The movement began after a ruling by the Italian Supreme Court overturned a rape conviction based on the victim's clothing, prompting global action to challenge harmful myths about consent and reaffirm respect for survivors.

**When:** Saturday, April 25, 2026, from 9:00am – 12:30pm

**Where:** Camp Mabry – Austin (2200 West 35<sup>th</sup> Street, Austin, Texas 78703)

**Location:** Festival and Start/Finish at Camp Mabry Parade Field

*Come join us for a memorable day of purpose, fun, and community. Lace up, show up, and stand with survivors at the 2026 Denim Run Austin!*

[\*\*The Denim Run Austin Registration\*\*](#)

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## **Office of the Attorney General's Crime Victim Services Division Outreach Newsletter**

The Crime Victim Services Division Outreach Newsletter is a quarterly publication designed to support crime victim advocates, service providers, and community partners across Texas. Each issue highlights program updates, policy changes, training opportunities, and practical guidance to help advocates navigate crime victim compensation and related services. The newsletter is intended to be a

reliable, easy-to-share resource that promotes clear communication, reduces barriers for victims and survivors, and strengthens collaboration across the victim services community. At this time, interested persons may sign up by emailing [crimevictims@oag.texas.gov](mailto:crimevictims@oag.texas.gov) and requesting to be included in the email list.

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## Training Opportunities

### **SASTF April Webinar: Child Sexual Abuse Trials – Intersection of Dynamics and Law**

April 9, 2026, from 11:30am - 1:00pm

[SASTF Webinar Registration](#)

### **End Violence Against Women International (EVAWI) Conference: Empowering Change: Innovative Response Strategies for Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence**

New Orleans, Louisiana

April 7 - 9, 2026

[EVAWI Registration](#)

### **Every Victim, Every Time Conference**

Brazos County Expo Center - Bryan, Texas

April 28 - 29, 2026

[Every Victim, Every Time Registration](#)

### **2026 TAASA Conference: Weaving the Tapestry of Texas**

Hyatt Regency - Conroe, Texas

May 4 - 6, 2026

[TAASA Registration](#)

**Conference on Crimes Against Women**

Sheraton Hotel - Dallas, Texas

May 18 - 21, 2026

[CCAW Registration](#)

**NOVA's 52nd Annual Training Event - NOVA52: Why We Advocate:  
Stronger Together**

Westgate Hotel - Las Vegas, Nevada

July 21 - 23, 2026

[NOVA Registration](#)

**Texas Department of Public Safety - Interdiction for the Protection of  
Children (IPC) Training**

[IPC Registration Link](#)

**Sexual Assault Family Violence Investigator Course (SAFVIC) Trainings**

[SAFVIC Registration Link](#)

**AEquitas Trainings**

[Upcoming Trainings](#)

This email furnished by Sexual Assault Survivors' Task Force,  
a division of the Office of the Texas Governor.

Visit us online at [gov.texas.gov/sastf](http://gov.texas.gov/sastf).