

VICTIMS FIRST

Annual Report
2023

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Who We Are

VictimsFirst is a network of surviving victims of mass violence and trusted supporters who have first-hand experience of the problems and re-victimization that accompany these atrocities when there is a lack of coordinated effort and/or understanding of what survivors need.

We have been a 501(c)3 nonprofit since 2021 to better serve victims of mass casualty crime.

Our EIN is 32-0656956. Our website is <http://www.victimsfirst.org>.

Our mailing address is:

Victims First, Inc.
4195 Chino Hills Parkway #593
Chino Hills, CA 91709

Our Mission

In 2023, our Board decided to elaborate on our initial mission, providing a more detailed explanation of our activities. Our original mission statement stated:

The mission of VictimsFirst is to support, empower and protect victims of mass casualty crime through rapid response, financial assistance, community preparedness education as well as care support and advocacy for policies that help all victims/survivors.

Our revised mission states:

We empower and safeguard victims of mass violence by providing swift and comprehensive support. This is achieved through rapid response, direct financial assistance, community preparedness education, compassionate care, and advocacy for policies that benefit all victims and survivors. We aim to cultivate a society that is more empathetic, resilient, and informed, prioritizing the rights and well-being of victims in the aftermath of atrocities.

We hope that our re-written mission statement provides more clarity on what we do, as well as our vision for contributing to the greater good.

What We Do

We guide communities and foster a rapid and well-organized response to a mass casualty crime by utilizing our [Best Practices for Mass Casualty Crime](#), which has been implemented across the United States as a National Guideline Protocol for how to organize in chaos without re-victimizing those most directly impacted. Most importantly, we work to ensure that companies and communities are prepared so when a mass casualty event happens and they know how to organize; that includes setting up a Centralized Victims Fund so that 100% of what is in that fund goes Directly to victims in cash payments.

We also educate and advocate for 100% of donations to go directly to victims so that they can take back control over their lives which helps mental health. 100% of what is donated directly to victims also fulfills donor intent. We often set up our own Centralized Victims Fund (location-specific funds) to capture as many donations as possible for the victims.

We watch over funds and fundraisers to make sure that all donations collected in the name of those murdered and injured actually get directly to the victim base. We do this by launching our own fundraising through location-specific funds on GoFundMe and also by bird-dogging nonprofits/fundraisers. We have ferreted out a number of fraudulent fundraisers for the victims/survivors this way and have reported them to law enforcement.

We interact with the media to ensure that they adapt a No Notoriety policy (created by Aurora, CO mass shooting parents Tom and Caren Teves) for the sake of public safety; this means elevating the stories of the heroes and victims/survivors and downplaying the name of the perpetrator. We also ask journalists to employ ethical, humane and trauma-informed reports that respect the victims and survivors.

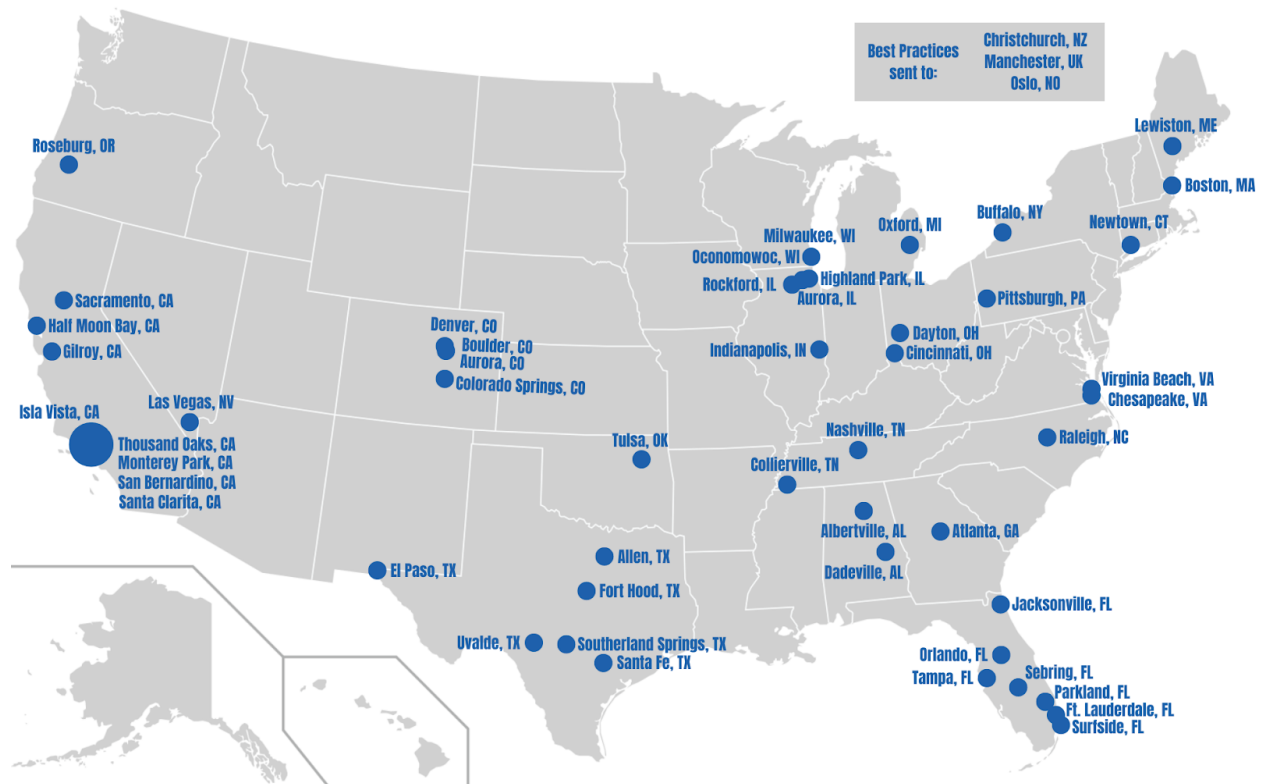
We help provide immediate, emergency financial assistance to victims/survivors and connect them with the proper resources and assistance that they need. This sometimes means partnering with other organizations (whether to end online harassment, to get much-needed resources or to ensure victims' rights). As part of this, we work continually with local, state and federal government advocates.

We also fundraise for VictimsFirst's operational costs. Those expenses include our web-hosting, accounting and legal fees, digital services (i.e. ZOOM), travel associated with response and advocacy work.

Our History

Since launching in 2012, we have responded to 50 incidents of mass violence (most of which are random mass shootings) across the United States. We also sent our Best Practices to three communities outside of the U.S.

Below is an updated map of where we have helped over the course of 11.5 years:



Year-in-Review

In the past fiscal year ending Sept. 30, 2023, we responded to 8 mass shootings:

1. Colorado Springs, Colorado (Club Q nightclub continued response, which carried into 2024);
2. Chesapeake, Virginia Walmart Superstore continued response;
3. Monterey Park, California Ballroom;
4. Half Moon Bay, California farm workers;
5. Louisville, Kentucky Old National Bank;
6. Louisville, Kentucky Chickasaw Park;
7. Nashville Covenant School;
8. Allen, TX Outlet Mall

By end of 2023, the number would grow to 9, when we responded to the Lewiston, Maine bowling alley and restaurant shooting.

During the past year, we also helped survivors from the following mass shootings with resources and through our National Mass Shooting Victims' Fund.

- Tampa, Florida (Father's Day Block Party Shooting)
- Dadeville, Alabama (Sweet 16 Birthday Party Shooting)
- Aurora, Colorado (Theater Shooting)
- Boulder, Colorado (King Soopers Supermarket Shooting)
- Denver, Colorado (Sol Tribe Shooting)
- Uvalde, Texas (Robb Elementary School Shooting)
- Orlando, Florida (Pulse Nightclub Shooting)
- Buffalo, New York (Tops Supermarket Shooting)
- Santa Clarita, California (Saugus High School Shooting)
- Parkland, Florida (Marjorie Stoneman Douglas High School Shooting)
- Highland Park, Illinois (July Fourth Parade Shooting)
- Las Vegas, Nevada (Route 91 Harvest Music Festival Shooting)
- Colorado Springs, Colorado (Club Q Shooting)
- Allen, Texas (Allen Outlet Mall Shooting)
- Sacramento, California (K Street Shooting)

Organizational Changes

On Jan. 1, 2023, we renamed our General Victims Fund to the National Mass Shooting Victims Fund so that it was more easily discoverable and accessible. The Fund is still open to all victims/survivors of mass violence, whether it is a mass shooting, bombing, or some other form of attack. Through this Fund, we continue to provide emergency financial assistance to those directly impacted.

The Board voted to establish the Make New Memories Program, which is outlined below.

We also shifted our leadership structure. Vice President Dr. Zachary Blair became President, Director Tiara Parker became Vice President, and President Anita Busch became Treasurer. Melissa Holmes, an injured survivor of the Vegas mass shooting, became a board member. Tara Wyzik, whom we worked closely with in the aftermath of the Uvalde mass shooting chasing down bad actors in the nonprofit and fundraising space, joined our Board of Directors. David Bilu, who was on our Board, moved to our Leadership Council.

President Dr. Zachary Blair and Vice President Tiara Parker worked together to form an organizational chart for a more streamlined and compartmentalized system, which we implemented.

At year's end, VictimsFirst drafted a confidentiality and conflict-of-interest policy for volunteers to sign to ensure the protection of victim confidentiality and ongoing transparency by all members.

Make New Memories Program

In 2023, VictimsFirst launched a new program to help victims' families and survivors rediscover their happiness through joyful experiences. This program is overseen by Tara Wyzik, who we worked with in the aftermath of the Uvalde mass shooting.

The Make New Memories Program provides victims of mass violence with opportunities to experience the joys of life in the aftermath of atrocity. We work with organizations and individual donors to create incredible experiences for survivors. Through in-kind and monetary donations, we are able to help make new memories and cover all expenses. Each experience is funded separately and/or with in-kind donations, separate and apart from our National Mass Shooting Victims Fund.

This past year, we partnered with the Minnesota Vikings to get a family from Uvalde to the SuperBowl, helped another disabled child wounded in a mass shooting attend a Taylor Swift concert, and were able to connect a celebrity to speak on ZOOM with another family member of a wounded survivor.

VTV Care Alliance for Mass Violence Care Plan

We also continued our victim advocacy with the Virginia Tech and Virginia Beach mass shooting families in pushing forward an equitable long-term needs Mass Violence Care plan—one that does not re-victimize those already suffering. This is nationwide, state-by-state project is being spearheaded by VTVCare, whom we have worked with since its inception. This year, we introduced VTVCare to survivors so the nonprofit could pull together a video to easily explain the long-term needs of victims in support of establishing a state-level long-term needs fund.

We also introduced VTVCare to politicians across the country so that they could discuss and present their proposal for a long-term-needs fund secured through an endowment, which they proposed and were vital in establishing in the State of Virginia. Their goal is to replicate this model across in states across the country so that mass violence victims in each state receive financial support in perpetuity. According to their model, financial help would be made available to all victims' families and survivors of mass violence after the three-year mark to cover out-of-pocket medical costs and mental health costs not covered by insurance.

Mass Violence Survivors Fund (aka Survivors Fund)

We were a key partner in helping to set up the Mass Violence Survivors Fund, which is replacing the National Compassion Fund (NCF).

The Mass Violence Survivors Fund will continue the work previously done by the National Compassion Fund with the same Executive Director (Jeff Dion), all support staff, and much of the same board. As a new nonprofit, separate from the National Center for Victims of Crime (NCVC), the Mass Violence Survivors Fund board will also now include mass shooting victims' families of the deceased and survivors of mass violence.

The Mass Violence Survivors Fund evolved after the NCVC decided to dissolve the National Compassion Fund LLC. They did so without talking to our mass shooting families of the deceased who co-created, named, fully funded, marketed, and tirelessly advocated for the National Compassion Fund. These were the families of the deceased from Columbine, Virginia Tech, Northern Illinois University, Aurora, the Oak Creek Sikh Temple, and Newtown. At the time of its inception, this was a new model for charitable giving that combined and improved upon the methods and processes used by Special Master Kenneth Feinberg's Virginia Tech and Aurora, Colorado mass shooting distribution models.

With our support and relentless advocacy over the years with survivors joining on from other mass shootings, the National Compassion Fund (under the leadership of Jeff

Dion, the then-existing Board, and staff) successfully provided more than \$145 million directly to victims of 29 mass casualty crimes.

After a lack of transparency experienced by mass shooting families of the deceased from multiple mass shootings across the nation whom the NCVC called their “Partners,” VictimsFirst and the key families behind the creation, funding, and success of the NCF stepped away from the National Center for Victims of Crime (NCVC).

In fact, the NCVC had little interest in the NCF in its early years; it was Jeff Dion and the family “partners” and later survivors of other mass shootings who championed it. Once the National Compassion Fund became successful and NCVC saw the millions it pulled in for victims, the nonprofit suddenly wanted control over it.

The actions of the NCVC horribly triggered mass shooting families (some became physically ill after a ZOOM requested by those families with their Executive Director Renee Williams). Without any discussion with their “Partners,” NCVC decided to push out its trusted Executive Director and support staff of the National Compassion Fund. These are the people mass shooting families worked closely with for over 11 years—without interference or interruption.

Members of the NCVC board also told mass shooting families of the deceased across the nation seeking answers that they could not speak to the nonprofit’s Board at their upcoming meeting. Hence, the nonprofit that touts on its website that it “provides support and assistance to victims of crime and abuse in the U.S.” unceremoniously pushed out U.S. mass shooting families of the deceased (whom they called “Partners”) – the very victims’ families who created, named, fully funded, advocated for and nurtured the National Compassion Fund as their murdered children’s legacy. The NCVC decided behind closed doors the fate of the NCF.

The former Executive Director of the National Compassion Fund, Jeff Dion, its support staff, and most of its Board have been fully supported by the victims’ families who long pushed and advocated for a Centralized Victims Fund and actually created the National Compassion Fund. Together with mass shooting survivors in our network, we have all joined arms together to push forward the Mass Violence Survivors Fund to continue this vital, pure-intentioned work of creating Centralized Victims’ Funds where 100% of donations going DIRECTLY to mass shooting victims in cash payments in an equitable manner.

Families of the deceased from previous mass shootings have provided a significant portion of the start-up funding for the Mass Violence Survivors Fund (aka Survivors’ Fund). For these reasons, VictimsFirst agreed to become the Mass Violence Survivors Fund’s fiduciary until their own EIN comes through.

The work will continue and the unmatched experience that Jeff Dion, the Board, and support staff bring to suffering communities across the country will not be thwarted.

2023 Fundraising Snapshot

We collected a total of **\$1,043,614.20** during our fiscal year, ending 9/30/2023 and **\$1,276,465.74** during the full year 2023. 100% of the total has gone directly to victims through our location-specific shooting fundraising efforts. The breakdown:

Colorado Springs, Colorado (Club Q): \$2,431.45 (for a total of \$11,815.90)

Monterey Park, California: \$114.89 (We shut down our fund, once the AAPI community opened their own)

Half Moon Bay: \$114.88

Chesapeake, Virginia: \$1,500.86

Nashville, Tennessee: \$500,343.95 (for families of the deceased and those injured)

Louisville, Kentucky (Old National): \$15,867.17

Louisville, Kentucky (Chickasaw Park): \$5.00

Allen, Texas: \$523,236.00

NOTE: *We began collecting for the Lewiston, ME victims and survivors after the close of our fiscal year on Sept. 30, 2023. The shooting occurred on Oct. 25, 2023. 100% of what we collect will go directly into a Centralized Victims Fund at the Maine Community Fund to be distributed to the families of the deceased, those wounded, those injured and those who survived the mass shooting with help and guidance of the country's leading expert, Jeff Dion.

From 10/25/2023 to 12/31/2023, we collected:

Lewiston, Maine: \$232,851.54

\$5,400 of the full amount we have collected for Lewiston will go only to the 18 families of the deceased as so designated by Revs Bowl Bar & Grill in Oshkosh, Wisconsin where bowler Tom Fritz and Revs proprietor Eric Gialdella held a fundraiser for the 18 families, collected \$300 a piece (to symbolize the 300-point perfect game in bowling), and sent it to VictimsFirst, specifically for them.

Emergency Assistance from our National Mass Shooting Victims' Fund

In addition to our location-specific victims' funds, we also distributed a total of **\$397,385.29** in donations directly to mass shooting families of the deceased and survivors of the following specific tragedies for emergency assistance for the full year 2023. This was distributed out of our National Mass Shooting Victims' Fund.

Between Jan. 1, 2023 and Dec. 31, 2023, the amounts distributed were:

- **Allen (TX):** \$190,825.13
- **Colorado Springs (CO):** \$49,220.09
- **Uvalde (TX):** \$48,683.14
- **Orlando (FL):** \$53,934.48
- **Las Vegas (NV):** \$7,796.50
- **Buffalo (NY):** \$7,500.00
- **Sacramento (CA):** \$7,000.00
- **Santa Clarita (CA):** \$5,000.00
- **Highland Park (IL):** \$4,995.05
- **Aurora (CO):** \$2,527.00
- **Tampa (FL):** \$2,000.00
- **Parkland (FL):** \$1,000.00
- **Boulder (CO):** \$750.00
- **Tulsa (OK):** \$576.90
- **Dadeville (AL):** \$500.00
- **Denver (CO):** \$15,077.00



Mass Shooting Response Summaries

Colorado Springs, CO

In the early hours of November 20, 2022 five people were murdered, 17 shot, 5 injured, and around 20 others survived in a mass shooting at the LGBTQ+ nightclub Club Q in Colorado Springs, CO. Throughout the year, we continued mutual aid and support while collecting funds for the victim base.

On February 14, 2023, a press conference took place on the steps of the Colorado Capitol building in Denver that we helped to organize with Bread and Roses Legal Center regarding a nonprofit, the Colorado Healing Fund, that had collected donations for victims. The press conference elevated the voices of victims/survivors from Aurora, Boulder, Columbine, Club Q, and Sol Tribe mass shootings in Colorado who wanted the Colorado Healing Fund's re-victimizing method of holding back donations from victims and diverting donations to other projects and their own operational costs to end.

VictimsFirst and Bread and Roses followed that up by issuing a Statement of Support for all the families who have felt re-victimized by the Colorado Healing Fund.

In addition, we continued efforts to get 100% of the funds collected via GoFundMe by local business Good Judy Garage out to the entire victim base with Jeff Dion via the *Club Q Victims and Survivors Compassion Fund*.

In March, we helped to provide information to stop the release of documents/videos to the public/media for the shooter's trial through People's Motion 118 which Aurora, Colorado mass shooting victims asked the local District Attorney in their case to make happen.

On April 26, 2023, Club Q victims continued to rally against the Colorado Healing Fund. VictimsFirst's Dr. Zachary Blair tried yet again to get transparency from Jordan Finegan, the Executive Director of the Colorado Healing Fund, sent another email. Finegan responded May 2, 2023 stating that the nonprofit will continue to provide direct aid through community nonprofit partners—those being the Colorado Office of Victims Assistance (COVA) and the Community Health Partners (CHP).

On April 27, 2023, a final draft protocol was established for the Club Q Victims and Survivors Compassion Fund. A total of \$939,978.01 was disbursed with VictimsFirst VP, Dr. Zachary Blair flying in, and Aurora CO mass shooting surviving victims included on the steering committee (also comprised of trauma specialists, health experts, legal experts and other community leaders). Blair met with victims and helped with victim intake forms.

Dr. Blair would go on to advocate for victims and was able to get hospital bills absorbed by the hospitals for shooting victims. He would also represent victims in a meeting with Colorado Governor Polis while continuing to assist Club Q victims along with legal advocates at Bread and Roses Legal Center. VictimsFirst continued to keep victims' families and survivors on their feet financially with immediate, emergency funds.

VictimsFirst also continued to reach out to those in Colorado to try to shake the donations loose for the Club Q victims and survivors from the Colorado Healing Fund. We met with the new incoming director of the Colorado Office of Victim Assistance, a nonprofit separate and apart from the state's victim's compensation program that has been the main distributing partner for the Colorado Healing Fund.

At the same time, AAPI groups in Colorado whose communities have faced increased racial violence, joined together and asked VictimsFirst to send their letter of support to the Club Q victims, which we published on our website and shared with victims.

Club Q survivors ask for VictimsFirst's help so that they might be represented at Denver Pride Parade. Since this is the same scenario we experienced in Orlando when the Pulse club owner's interests were put above the victims and survivors, we helped these survivors and provided guidance.

Also in June, Club Q victims again publicly demand that donations collected for them in the aftermath of their shooting by the Colorado Healing Fund is released to them – 100% of it.

Because of the constant public pressure, Club Q was successful at getting another \$811K in funds released from the Colorado Healing Fund – but they still refused to release the 100% that was demanded. So, in August, once again, VictimsFirst asked the Colorado Healing Fund for full transparency and once again, that is ignored.

After months of hammering the Colorado Healing Fund for the remainder of its funds, along with the unwavering efforts of Bread and Roses Legal Center, the Club Q victims are finally told that they would receive the remaining balance. However, Club Q victims stood up again to say the same must happen for the victims' families and survivors that the Colorado Healing Fund has collected money for—including the victims of both the Sol Tribe and Boulder shootings. Sadly, still the Colorado Healing Fund has not answered the requests of Club Q families and survivors for transparency from the Colorado Healing Fund and all donations collected for victims were still not released.

At the beginning of November of 2023, the year came to a close with a continued lack of transparency or an audit from the Colorado Healing Fund and victims' families and survivors from Club Q, Sol Tribe, and Boulder were furious. More interviews were given by Club Q victims to try to remedy this.

In mid-November, just before the year mark when the media was expected to descend on victims' families and survivors, the Colorado Healing Fund strategically released the remaining funds to Club Q victims. The nonprofit stated that it was releasing \$120,986 in funds collected that they were holding onto. The nonprofit stated that it collected \$3,254.976 and did not, in the end, take admin fees "or other costs." It is unclear if they kept interest made on that money or how much was paid by to the Colorado Healing Fund by other nonprofits to cover administration costs. No audit is given to the Club Q victims.

On December 8, 2022, VictimsFirst helps survivors wrote an Open Letter from Club Q, Sol Tribe, and Boulder victims who demanded what the Colorado Healing Fund collected for the Sol Tribe and Boulder tragedies be given to them, that there is full transparency including an audit, that it dissolves its re-victimizing methods and that the State of Colorado employ a long-term needs protocol modeled after the State of Virginia. The letter is sent to prominent politicians in Colorado, along with the Attorney General and the Secretary of State who oversee nonprofits.

<https://www.cbsnews.com/colorado/news/one-year-later-club-q-victims-still-fighting-transparency-funds-donated/>

One of the victims of the Club Q tragedy who was shot nine times, Ashtin Gamblin, became a volunteer for VictimsFirst and helped pull together a meeting with Senator Bennet's office. Senator Bennet was one of the recipients of the Open Letter. Families from Club Q, Sol Tribe, and Boulder attended and they again told the office that they wanted answers, full funds given to them, and transparency from the Colorado Healing Fund.

VictimsFirst asked the new Executive Director of the Colorado Healing Fund, Kevin McFtridge, directly for transparency again for the five Boulder families who have gone to the public demanding full transparency for almost three years. The Boulder families demanded that all monies stop being diverted out of their fund immediately.

Once again, McFtridge responded just like the previous Executive Director and referred victims and survivors to the Colorado Healing Fund website. He was unable/unwilling to answer even the most simple of questions: What is the amount remaining in the Boulder fund?

Boulder families gave him until January 5, 2024 to answer questions and they are met with silence. The fight for transparency from the Colorado Healing Fund for the Sol Tribe and Boulder families continues into 2024. We also continued to help demand all remaining funds be distributed directly to the victims' families and survivors.

Monterey Park, CA

On January 21, 2023, a gunman walked into the Star Ballroom Dance Studio and murdered 10 patrons and injured another 10 more.

We participated in a large ZOOM meeting with roughly 50 members of the Asian American and AAPI bar associations as well as some other key organizations. VictimsFirst brings in Atlanta-based bar associations we worked with after the Atlanta Spa Shootings in March of 2021, where eight people were murdered and another injured. We also brought in the respected lawyer and advocate Dan Mayeda to get the word out to media and he brings in East/West Players to help fundraise.

During the meeting, VictimsFirst's Anita Busch told those on the call this response really should be led by the AAPI community who actually know the area. It would be best for the victims themselves for that to happen, she advised. We suggested that Jeff Dion could help them and lawyers and executives from Atlanta agreed. They brought him in as a consultant.

We told them we were available for any consultations with the Asian Americans Advancing Justice and the head of the Asian American Bar Association and sent them our Best Practices for Mass Casualty Crime. We received positive feedback on that. Members of the group of 50 said it would help them.

A Centralized Victim's Fund where 100% goes directly to the victims was set up, but the wording was not clear on where the funds were going. We urged the Asian Americans Advancing Justice (AAAJ) and Asian Americans Advancing Justice SoCal (AJ SOCAL) to change the wording of their GoFundMe. They said they would but no changes were made. We called again and told them they needed to change the language for transparency for the sake of the victims. It was still not done.

VictimsFirst was asked for both Chinese and Vietnamese translations for our victim intake forms and we got that accomplished so they could use them to do their own victim intake.

A year later, the lack of transparency to the victims and the surviving victims being left out of the funds was noted by the *Los Angeles Times*:

<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2023-11-13/more-than-1-million-was-collected-for-monterey-park-shooting-victims-some-survivors-feel-left-behind>

We agreed with the victims and did everything we could to advocate for transparency, but our advice was ultimately not taken.

Half Moon Bay, CA

On January 23, 2023, only two days after the shooting in the Monterey Park Star Ballroom Dance Studio, a gunman opened fire and murdered seven and left one woman critically wounded.

We reached out to the community, and sent our Best Practices for Mass Casualty Crime and also spoke to them about starting a Centralized Victims Fund. We were bolstered by those from Thousand Oaks who talked to them about how important we are to listen to when it comes to making sure victims are not re-victimized.

We gave them English, Chinese, and Spanish translations of our victim intake form for their victim base to utilize as they needed. Victims were from China and Mexico. We introduced them to Jeff Dion so that he could help them if they had questions.

We began also trying to help them fundraise as we knew that the Monterey Park Star Ballroom Dance Studio was overshadowing Half Moon Bay in the news. We know that the grief and trauma are the same.

VictimFirst's Paola Bautista joined their oversight committee for donations and advised them not to use donations collected for victims for those who did not survive a mass shooting, but instead were displaced from nearby housing. This discussion goes on for some time.

The Community Fund needed help with public relations so we introduced them to Jasmine Madatian on our Leadership Council who agreed to help pro bono with press releases.

We continued to try to help them raise funds for the victim base and helped with celebrity outreach. We reach out to the national AAPI organizations and begged them to help these families.

Paola Bautista finished up with Half Moon Bay, who decided to give donations only to the families of the deceased and the one woman who is catastrophically injured. They decided, rightly, to find help elsewhere for those displaced from their homes after the mass shooting.

We applaud the Mavericks Community Foundation and local community leaders who worked tirelessly with very little resources to help the victims and survivors of the shooting. Everyone tried their very best to help the victim base.

Nashville, TN

On March 27, 2023, three children and three adults are murdered in a Presbyterian school in Nashville; we hear that there are a small amount injured. On the urging of one of our volunteers who was raised in Christian schools and was a teacher, and after much discussion because we are spread so thin, we decided to open a GoFundMe for Nashville victims' families of the deceased and any injured given the re-victimization that occurred previously at the hand of a local nonprofit. We decided that we don't want this to happen again and that the Church can help their flock of those present as will VictimsFirst through our National Mass Shooting Victims Fund.

We called the Middle Tennessee Community Foundation (MTCF) which began to collect funds, similar to what the community foundation did following the Route 91 mass shooting in Las Vegas. There was new leadership now at the MTCF and we were hopeful. We asked them not to do the same that they did to Vegas victims this time around and made sure a Centralized Victims Fund is opened.

We launched the GoFundMe for Nashville Covenant School and worked hard to bring in someone that victims and survivors across the United States can trust: Jeff Dion. The Community Fund decided to do so after speaking to Mr. Dion and they created a Centralized Victims Fund. At this point, several funds created in the aftermath of the shooting were only going to the Church and School and not to the centralized victims' fund.

The School/Church set up multiple funds to help the causes it felt strongly about as we learned that it wanted to utilize only the VictimsFirst fund for victims and not add any funds to what we collected. The Church and School expected our GoFundMe to serve the entire victim base, but we were only collecting for families of the murdered and those injured and there was no way that small amount of money would cover the entire victim base. They deemed it should go to everyone in the school who was present that day, regardless of where they were in the building. VictimsFirst considers a mass shooting survivor to be someone who witnessed or experienced the shooting first-hand or were in the direct line of fire.

We then learned that one of the Vegas Resiliency Center associates was whispering in the ear of a Church elder about a "long-term needs" plan that should be reserved from donations—a plan that mass shooting families across America, from VirginiaTech to Club Q, have been fighting against for decades.

We sent information to the Church and to the Middle Tennessee Community Foundation about all the millions of dollars in state and federal grants that can be tapped, and explained that the donations collected in the direct aftermath of the shooting would be all the families of the deceased, injured, and actually present would receive. Victims are not nonprofits that can apply for millions in grant money.

We also suggested to the Middle Tennessee Community Foundation to bring in VictimsFirst's volunteer Melissa Holmes, given that she was brought up in Christian schools, used to teach elementary school kids in Christian schools, and was a Las Vegas survivor. As someone who has a lot in common with the victim base and the Church/School, she also had the experience of being a survivor and could help guide the process. Holmes was brought in.

Melissa Holmes went to Nashville with Paola Bautista, who also worked on Half Moon Bay and in Uvalde for VictimsFirst. To save funds, they drove together to Nashville from Texas where they, along with Anita Busch, was still helping assist the Uvalde mass shooting victim base.

VictimsFirst's Tiara Parker and Melissa Holmes worked together to look for possible large donors for the Nashville families, while Anita Busch began talking to Nashville families who called to inquire about the location-specific GoFundMe VictimsFirst had launched.

As fundraisers came up, we worked behind the scenes to get those donations designated for victims' families and those injured and those who survived the mass shooting so the victims would have a financial safety net. Besides, not a penny would have been collected if not for the murder of six people.

On June 20, 2023, Melissa Holmes and Anita Busch headed into Nashville to attend the Town Hall, ensure that victims were heard, and to help the steering committee decide the final disbursement plan. By June, VictimsFirst had collected \$493,784.36, but continued diligently to try to raise money for the fund.

We were dismayed that the Town Hall was not open to the public. There seemed to be less and less transparency from the Church and the School.

During the Town Hall, we heard from parents who wanted the third-grade classroom given special consideration, which made sense to us since the room was shot into. We did our best to represent the voices of the families of the deceased and those parents from the third-grade classroom.

On July 25, we wired the \$500,094.33 we collected to Jeff Dion at the National Compassion Fund for Nashville families of the deceased and those injured. Those funds included all interest. VictimsFirst, once again, took no admin fee.

After the wire was sent, we received smaller donations and interest on the account we used exclusively for our Nashville Covenant Victims' Fund totaling **\$249.62**. On August 23, 2023, we sent this amount via our final check to the National Compassion Fund for the Covenant School Survivors Fund.

The total collected by VictimsFirst and granted to the National Compassion Fund for direct distribution to Nashville victims/survivors is **\$500,343.95**.

By September, the Church and School continued to try to figure out what to do after families of the mass shooting behind the scenes raised their concerns about where the donations were going. The behind-the-scenes questions and push by family members of the deceased to the Church and the Community Foundation brought forth more donations from the Church for them. A disastrous start with a better than expected finish. But, still little to no transparency, except for from VictimsFirst and Jeff Dion's work.

Trickling in after that were small donations through matching gift programs that, by year's end tallies \$6 in funds designated for Nashville. We added in our own funds and sent checks out to families of the deceased and injured to make sure donor intent was fully realized at the beginning of 2024.

Louisville, KY

On, April 10, 2023, five are murdered and eight injured at the Old National Bank in a mass shooting. That is followed only three days later by another mass shooting where two are murdered and four are wounded in Chickasaw Park.

We launched a GoFundMe location-specific fund for Louisville Old National Bank for 100% to go directly to victims and all victim categories. Jeff Dion's own relationships through previous mass shootings reached out to him and he was brought in to help establish a centralized victims fund through the National Compassion Fund.

We ended up collecting \$15,867.17 and sent it to the National Compassion Fund for direct-to-victim distribution.

We found ourselves, at that point, collecting for three different mass shootings.

With the Chickasaw Park shooting happening days later in the same city, Jeff Dion also collaborated with the Louisville Community Foundation to create a Centralized Victims' Fund for the victims of the Chickasaw Park shooting. VictimsFirst continued to fill every ask from the Louisville Community Foundation, including one for trauma specialists.

We drafted a letter and press release and sent it out to celebrities and other organizations and companies to try to raise funds for Chickasaw Park victims who had little to no fundraising help and were overshadowed by media coverage of the Old National Bank shooting.

Unfortunately, being situated in a black historical district, the Chickasaw Park Survivors' Fund received significantly fewer donations compared to the Old National Bank Survivors' Fund. Despite the Community Fund and VictimsFirst's collaborative and extensive outreach efforts to raise funds for the Chickasaw Park shooting victims, media attention remained disproportionately focused on the bank shooting.

As a result, the funds allocated to the park shooting victims are meager, despite economic disparities and the comparable levels of grief, injury, and agony experienced by both sets of Louisville mass shooting victims.

We applaud all the incredible efforts of the pure-intentioned, hard-working people that comprise the Louisville Community Foundation.

Allen, TX

On May 6, 2023, a mass shooting took place at the Allen Outlet Mall, resulting in the murder of eight people, including three from one family and two little girls from another. Another 6 are injured, including those catastrophically wounded.

Two members of our team, Melissa Holmes and Paola Bautista, were on their way to Nashville when the shooting occurred.

We immediately sent the City of Allen our Best Practices for Mass Casualty Crime and launched a location-specific GoFundMe Victims Fund. We also let the media know. We decided to use the same model we used in Nashville, but for different reasons. The victim base in Allen was significantly large, so we collected for families of the deceased and injured while our National Mass Shooting Victims Fund was to be used for the immediate, emergency needs for all victims and survivors, including those present in the line of fire.

Anita Busch and Dr. Zachary Blair immediately called the Community Foundation of Dallas and were pleasantly surprised at the professionalism of its Executive Director and staff. We learned that they have responded to disasters in the past and they were very happy we were setting up the Centralized Victims Fund and would handle that victim intake, verification, and distribution work.

They said they would work with those donors who wanted to help through other nonprofits and would ensure that before they grant even a dime, they would verify that the nonprofits are, indeed, working with victims' families and/or survivors of the shooting. They would send donors to us who wanted to give directly to victims/survivors and we would send donors to them who wanted to help the broader community.

Anita Busch, Paola Bautista and Melissa Holmes met with the City of Allen and the Allen PD victim advocates. We notified the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), worked with

the Department of Public Safety (DPS), and asked the Community Foundation of Dallas when needed for other resources that might be available (like rental payments and found there was nothing in the area). We also brought in and collected from large donors.

We started immediately providing immediate financial assistance to the victim base after a verification process.

With many of Allen shooting victims being part of the AAPI community, we joined with local and national AAPI groups to help them organize behind the scenes. Uvalde families reached out and said they would like to help in Allen. We joined their hands.

But our work continued into verifying victims, doing intake, finding resources, and getting donations out the door for those who needed it. On their way back from Nashville, Melissa and Paola pick up a survivor of the Orlando shooting to help boost our team's effectiveness for Allen. They even worked a concert to raise funds for Allen victims.

We asked and received help from our Oak Creek Sikh Temple family for translations of our victim intake form into Hindi.

We also found ourselves having to turn in a possible fraudster to the FBI who was trying to prey on one of the families of the deceased.

The biggest challenge was for a murdered victim whose family lived in Venezuela, a country with no embassy and no delegates from the United States. But with Paola Bautista and Anita Busch, we ended up figuring out the best way to transport his remains to his father (in Venezuela) and his mother (in Colombia). We sorted everything out for the family and helped them as they were grieving.

We also collected from large donors, such as the Credit Union of Texas, which was a significant and compassionate partner.

We also helped find trauma specialists for those outside of Allen, TX, find car repair places as cars were riddled with bullets, get short-term insurance quotes for those who came in from out of the country, get hospital bills covered for reconstruction surgery for one of the most catastrophically injured victims, and paid for special medical equipment not covered by insurance, as well as nursing and wound care.

In addition, we tapped a U.S. Senator's office to get a letter from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) that Allen victims will need at year's end for tax purposes.

We would eventually distribute over \$704,193.18 to the Allen victims' families and survivors with \$523,236.00 going equitably to the 8 families of the deceased and 6

wounded and another \$180,957.18 in emergency, immediate financial needs to the entire victim base.

Allen was a model response of how VictimsFirst works with victims' families, survivors, community leaders, community nonprofits, law enforcement (Allen PD, Dept. of Public Safety, FBI), and fundraisers—bringing them together for the benefit of victims' families and survivors.

And, we responded to Allen while also continuing to work behind the scenes to get those fundraising for Nashville to make sure they designated donations to go to victims' families, those wounded/injured, and those who survived the mass shooting, as well as helping Jeff Dion with Nashville victim intake and distribution.

We responded to Allen while also advocating strongly for Boulder families and Club Q families and ongoing victim advocacy in Orlando (See **Other Activities** section below), in addition to keeping other mass shooting victims from multiple mass shootings over the years on their feet with financial help and other critical resources.

Lewiston, Maine

On October 25, 2023, a gunman walked into Just-in-Time Recreation Bowling Alley during a youth league and opened fire. He then went into Schemengees Bar & Grille Restaurant in Lewiston, Maine and shot more people. In all, 18 were killed and 13 more were injured. Four of the victims were from the deaf and hard-of-hearing community, which was heavily impacted by this shooting.

We opened a location-specific GoFundMe and immediately let the Maine Community Foundation and politicians know what we were doing. GoFundMe, which we have a good relationship with now after collecting for so many mass shootings, featured the Lewiston Fund prominently so all victim categories could be assisted – families of the deceased, wounded/injured survivors, and those present.

We did celebrity outreach to try to raise donations for the victim base.

Tiara Parker, Tara Wyzik, and Anita Busch sent the Community Foundation and politicians our Best Practices for Mass Casualty Crime and urged them to bring in Jeff Dion, the most experienced and trusted expert in the world for mass violence fund administration.

We also mobilized Joe Samaha, whose daughter Reema was murdered in Virginia Tech as she sat in her French class during the mass shooting at the Blacksburg school on April 16, 2007. We joined his hands with the Governor's office to share how the State of Virginia established their own long-term needs fund called the Mass Violence Care Fund to help mass shooting victims in their state. Joe Samaha led the efforts along with

the Virginia Tech and Virginia Beach mass shooting families to establish the first of its kind in the nation long-term needs fund.

We also asked Joe to represent VictimsFirst around the steering committee table with Jeff Dion who was winding down the LLC of the National Compassion Fund, but starting a new replacement nonprofit, the Mass Violence Survivors Fund (aka Survivors Fund), which is fully endorsed by mass shooting victims/survivors across the country.

In addition, VictimsFirst's Director Melissa Holmes was tapped because of her American Sign Language (ASL) skills and her experience in victim intake.

We began collecting for the Lewiston victims and survivors after the close of our fiscal year on September 30, 2023, but before the end of the 2023 calendar year. Again, 100% of what we collect will go directly into a Centralized Victims Fund at the Maine Community Fund to be distributed to the families of the deceased, those wounded, those injured, and those who survived the mass shooting with help and guidance of national Victims Fund distribution expert Jeff Dion.

From October 25, 2023 to December 31, 2023, we collected: \$232,851.54. This amount will continue to rise in 2024. We plan to stop collecting at the end of January 2024 and send those donations to Jeff Dion and the Maine Community Fund for 100% direct distribution to the victim base.

Other Activities

- We met with the White House to talk about victim and survivor aftercare and emphasized the need for a nationwide mutual aid model. Greg Jackson, a victim of gun violence himself, was on that call and he truly understood the model we were implementing. He is now the Deputy Director of the White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention.
- We helped an Oak Creek Sikh Temple family member connect with other victims across the country to join to assist U.S. law enforcement learn from the good and the mistakes made by first responders in the aftermath of hate crime mass shootings.
- We lobbied with victims' families/survivors in Colorado Springs not to have crime scene photos published.
- VictimsFirst began working with a PR/Marketing firm to help raise the profile of the nonprofit so we would be able to fundraise easier.
- In May, we joined with a television producer and director to highlight the work of VictimsFirst in order to help other victims and survivors of mass shootings

- Also in May, we spoke to two major Hollywood studios to help get gifts to Uvalde victims and stop others from re-victimizing survivors.
- We rallied against a third-party marketing firm using victim's emails without permission to send out surveys. The survey's letterhead showed the Las Vegas Resiliency Center. We spoke to the lawyer on behalf of victims only to hear that he knew nothing about it. Apparently, the source was a third-party marketer working on behalf of a group of academics at National Mass Violence Victimization Resource Center (NMMVRC) at the Medical University of South Carolina. As best we could tell, they culled the lists of victims together from those who applied for federal and state victims' compensation programs. No victim we had spoken to who had received the email had given permission for them to hand over their private email address to a third-party marketer.
- We learned that a man we reported to law enforcement who had sexually harassed a number of shooting victims from Orlando was convicted and sent to prison.
- Caren and Tom Teves and Anita Busch were recognized by Law Enforcement across the nation in Detroit at the North American Active Assailant Conference for the creation of the No Notoriety campaign, which launched in 2012 for the sake of public safety to elevate the heroes and the victims and survivor stories while denying the shooters the publicity they crave.
- We were also happy to learn that one of the fundraisers/nonprofits we turned into the Texas Attorney General who was exploiting victims of the Uvalde shooting shut down.
- VictimsFirst was invited to the NASDAQ bell ringing for Giving Tuesday. Dr. Zachary Blair and Tiara Parker attend the proceedings with GoFundMe and Classy Executives, joined by other notable nonprofits from around the country.

Orlando

Beyond the specific victim advocacy and response described above, we have continued to advocate for Orlando victims throughout the year. That has included:

- Continuing to dig up public records, presenting the findings from those public records to victims all over the world (flying them in), and continuing to push for justice. Over 30 survivors filed police reports. This includes listening to even more Body Cam footage from first responders and reading over autopsy reports.
- Dr. Blair also dug into records from Orange County (Florida) only to discover that the onePulse Foundation was in possible violation of its Tourism Grant. It was, and that led to an investigation.

- We also spoke to various members of law enforcement in order to get justice for the Pulse families and survivors.
- The advocacy from the Pulse survivors, with help from VictimsFirst, has led to the abandonment of the onePulse Foundation's ill-conceived idea for a museum based on a mass shooting and an inquiry into the onePulse Foundation's finances and agreements they entered into without the permission of Orange County, which eventually led to the dissolution of the onePulse Foundation. Roughly 200 survivors have felt re-victimized by the nonprofit and another open letter was published calling for justice.
- Survivors of Pulse continue to push for a public memorial, which is still no where to be seen after 7 ½ years, full transparency, a criminal investigation, and an audit of the onePulse Foundation, which also has yet to come.
- In addition, they are continuing to fiercely push for an inspection of the Pulse Club for illegal renovations and code violations that resulted in hindrances in both escape and rescue. To that end, Dr. Zachary Blair helped launch a new website under the direction of Pulse shooting families and survivors.

For a complete timeline, please see: <https://www.pulsefamilies.com/post/pulse-a-timeline-for-accountability>

Boulder

We have continued to seek transparency and an audit from the Colorado Healing Fund, as well as helped Boulder families push for the remainder of the donations collected for them by the nonprofit. To date, the Colorado Healing Fund has not yet not released the remaining donations to them years after the shooting occurred.

We made a 5th attempt to get the financials from the Museum in Boulder about where and how donations for Boulder families were actually spent.

At the close of 2023, we were in the midst of another attempt to get transparency, an audit, and funds released from the Colorado Healing Fund to the Boulder families, while Bread and Roses Legal Center pushed behind the scenes for the same for the Sol Tribe families. An open letter was published.

More Victims Services VictimsFirst Provided

- Kept survivors from going homeless across the country with both resources and finances, including a survivor of the Vegas shooting who was waiting for months for help from VOC (just too slow moving), Orlando survivors, and a Sacramento survivor who had been shot multiple times and was now disabled.

- Disability needs and health insurance help. We replaced flooring so that a victims' walker could glide more easily over his floor when he returned home from the hospital; we found help for those shot in the face so the rebuilding of teeth and gum could proceed; replaced an old and worn out wheelchair for a catastrophically disabled survivor; and found health insurance for someone visiting from another country when his wife was catastrophically wounded.
- Found trauma and medical specialists for multiple survivors. Kept survivors from committing suicide and got them help with professionals.
- Drafted multiple resumes and found jobs for those who needed it.
- Bought food and paid utility bills for victims' families and survivors.
- Worked to find lawyers to represent victims' families and survivors.
- Joined estate lawyers together with other lawyers who worked with victims to answer all questions for the benefit of a victims' family.
- Enlisted Lenny Pozner's the Honr Network when survivors' social media accounts were hacked and to report websites to law enforcement that posted unreleased and graphic photos from multiple mass shootings.
- Advocated to keep crime scenes photos from being published by a major newspaper.
- Handled requests from D.A.'s, DPS and State Attorney victim advocates to help victims (in one case when there was no help anywhere else).
- Have been the only point of help for many people in low-income areas who have suffered through mass shootings.
- Helped acquire and/or train service dogs for people disabled from mass shootings.
- Facilitated connections between international journalists and families/survivors of mass shootings, actively collaborating with the media to bring attention to issues impacting victims/survivors nationwide, thereby integrating these concerns into the public discourse and strengthen public awareness.
- Worked with funeral homes to get the cremated remains of a murdered victims back to family overseas; Worked with other transporters to get another murdered victims' belongings back to family overseas.

In Memoriam

Monterey Park, CA (Jan. 21, 2023)

Chia Yau, 76
Ming Ma, 72
Yu Kao, 72
Diana Tom, 70
Valentino Marcos Alvero, 68
Muoi Ung, 67
My Nahn, 65
Wen Yu, 64
Lilian Li, 63
Hong Jian, 62
Xiujuan Yu, 57

Half Moon Bay, CA (Jan. 22, 2023)

Aixiang Zhang, 74
Zhishen Liu, 73
Qizhong Cheng, 66
Jingzhi Lu, 64
Marciano Martinez Jimenez, 50
Yetao Bing, 43
Jose Romero Perez, 38

Nashville, TN (March 27, 2023)

Mike Hill, 61
Cynthia Peak, 61
Katherine Koonce, 60
Evelyn Dieckhaus, 9
Hallie Scruggs, 9
William Kinney, 9

Louisville, (April 10, 2023)

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James "Jim" Tutt, Jr., 64
Thomas "Tommy" Elliot, 63
Deana Eckert, 57
Juliana Farmer, 45
Joshua Barrick, 40

Chickasaw Park (April 15, 2023)

Deaji Goodman, 28
David Huff, 17

Allen, TX (May 6, 2023)

Kyu Song Cho, 37
Cindy Cho, 35
James Cho, 3
Elio Cumana-Rivas, 32
Aishwarya Thatikonda, 26
Christian LaCour, 20
Daniela Mendoza, 11
Sophia Mendoza, 8

Lewiston, ME (Oct. 25, 2023)

Robert Violette, 76
Lucille Violette, 73
Keith Macneir, 64
Joseph Lawrence Walker, 57
Ronadl Morin, 55
Tricia Asselin, 53
Jason Adam Walker, 51
Michael Deslauriers II, 51
William Frank Brackett, 48
Stephen Vozzella, 45
William Young, 44
Arthur Strout, 42
Bryan MacFarlane, 41
Peyton Brewer-Ross, 40
Joshua Seal, 36
Maxx Hathaway, 35
Thomas Ryan Conrad, 34
Aaron Young, 14