

# Department of Justice

United States Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr.  
Western District of New York

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
APRIL 27, 2012  
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## **NATIONAL CRIME VICTIMS' RIGHTS WEEK** **"EXTENDING THE VISION, REACHING EVERY VICTIM"**

The United States Attorney's Office for the Western District of New York commemorated National Crime Victims' Rights Week by hosting our 12th Annual Crime Victims' Rights awards ceremony today. National Crime Victims' Week is held each year to celebrate landmark federal legislation that was enacted 27 years ago on behalf of victims of crime.

In 2004, Congress passed the Crime Victims' Rights Act (CVRA). The CVRA grants victims in federal criminal proceedings certain enforceable rights, including the right to be reasonably heard at public court proceedings and to receive full and timely restitution as provided by law.

During the ceremony, U.S. Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr. presented awards in recognition of National Crime Victims' Week. This year's award recipients are:

Assistant United States Attorney - **Everardo Rodriguez**

Federal Law Enforcement Agent - **United States Secret Service Special Agent Greg Garmacini**

Federal Law Enforcement Agent - **United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement Special Agent Nelson Yera**

United States Attorney's Office Support Staff - **Kim Pettit**

Federal Probation Officer - **Lindsay Maza**

These individuals are being recognized and awarded for their hard work, dedication and commitment to the victim assistance field.

Assistant United States Attorney Everardo Rodriguez was recognized for his ongoing work in United States v. James Kendrick, et al which involves the murders of two young men. During a search for the remains of one of the victims, AUSA Rodriguez joined in the excavation which is an example of his dedication and selflessness. His compassion has been a great source of comfort to the family members of victims.

United States Secret Service Special Agent Greg Garmacini was recognized for his dedication to the Victims' Rights Act, and in particular, for his efforts in the Timothy Geidel fraud case. In many of his victim cases, but in particular the Timothy Geidel case, Special Agent Garmacini personally called the 61 victims after court appearances and went to their homes to assist them with completing their restitution request. Since most of the victims were friends of the defendant and Timothy Geidel used that position of friendship and trust to steal their retirement, Special Agent Garmacini was exceptionally compassionate in understanding the level of betrayal they felt and helping them cope with their feelings.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Special Agent Nelson Yera was recognized for his tenacity in uncovering a multiple-state human trafficking ring which specifically targeted illegal aliens for exploitation, a ring that began as a small drug case. Throughout the entire investigation, Nelson worked tirelessly to maintain a working relationship with over 25 of the illegal alien victims, overseeing their well-being and assisting them with obtaining work permits while they remained in the country as likely trial witnesses.

United States Attorney's Office Support Staff member Kim Pettit was recognized for her invaluable assistance in coordinating victims and witnesses in a complex multi-year investigation which involved two federal jury trials, United States v. Keith Gordon-Smith and United States v. Gordon-Smith Contracting, Inc. The defendant was accused of multiple violations of the Clean Air Act for exposing his workers to asbestos. Most did not speak any English which complicated all communications. However, despite these difficulties, Ms. Pettit maintained close contact with each victim, ensuring that they knew the status of the case and were able to testify at trial.

U.S. Probation Officer Lindsay Maza was recognized for her work on pre-sentence reports in child exploitation cases. Ms. Maza does an outstanding job of outlining the entire history of a defendant's victimization of children. She is new to probation and new to preparing PSRs of this nature so her efforts are therefore quite notable in such a short time frame.

"Our Office is committed to assisting victims of federal crimes and making sure that their rights are protected under the Crime Victims' Rights Act," said U.S. Attorney Hochul. "Our efforts would not be possible without the tremendous work of the people we honor. Their dedication to victims of crimes is admirable and we sincerely appreciate their commitment."