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on

VICTIM NOTIFICATION

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OCTOBER 1,
2026



CROWNE PLAZA
DESMOND HOTEL

660 Albany Shaker Rd.,
Albany, NY



HOSTED BY
THE NEW YORK STATE
SHERIFFS' INSTITUTE

KEYNOTE PRESENTERS



**STEFANIE
THOMAS**

*What Happens After:
A Survivor's
Perspective*



**RIKKI
SHAW**

*The First Response:
How Law Enforcement
Shapes a Survivor's
Path*

SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER

KAYLIN DAWSON

*Beyond the Exam: Sexual Assault Kits,
Victim Options, and Notification*

JOIN US

*for a day of learning,
connection, and purpose.*

*Together, we can make a meaningful
difference for survivors.*

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STEFANIE THOMAS

What Happens After: A Survivor's Perspective

Please join us for a powerful and personal presentation, What Happens After: A Survivor's Perspective, featuring survivor advocate Stefanie Thomas. Through her personal journey, Stefanie will share the realities of surviving abuse, the lasting impact of trauma, and the complex path of rebuilding a life after victimization. Her presentation offers a candid look at the challenges survivors face, the different ways individuals respond to trauma, and the importance of compassion, understanding, and victim-centered support. This session will provide attendees with valuable insight into the survivor experience while reinforcing the critical role that law enforcement, victim advocates, prosecutors, and community partners play in the moments that follow and throughout a journey. Stefanie's story is one of resilience, courage, and perseverance - an unforgettable reminder of why the work we do matters.

Stefanie Thomas – Bio

Stefanie Thomas serves as the Director of Justice Coordination and Strategic Initiatives within the Albany County Executive's Office, where she coordinates initiatives across criminal justice, public safety, victim services, and youth-serving systems. In this role, she works with multiple County departments and community partners to strengthen collaboration, improve outcomes, and advance programs focused on prevention, intervention, accountability, and support for individuals impacted by the justice system.

Prior to joining the County Executive's Office, Stefanie built a diverse background in the criminal justice field, including experience in private investigations and as an adjunct professor at Hudson Valley Community College, where she taught criminal justice courses and helped educate the next generation of professionals entering the field.

Stefanie's commitment to this work extends beyond her professional experience. As a survivor, she brings a deeply personal understanding of the importance of victim-centered systems, communication, compassion, and ensuring individuals impacted by crime feel informed, supported, and heard throughout the justice process. Her lived experience continues to shape her approach to policy, collaboration, and creating systems that recognize the people behind each case.

Stefanie holds a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice from SUNY Delhi and a Master of Science in Criminal Justice from Boston University. She is also a proud mother of four children: her 19-year-old son, 16-year-old daughter, and 11-year-old twin sons.



RIKKI SHAW

The First Response: How Law Enforcement Shapes a Survivor's Path

The presentation draws on two experiences twenty years apart — as a rape survivor and later as a domestic violence survivor — and examines Rikki's interactions with law enforcement and the justice system when the perpetrators were politically connected. Rikki will walk through what the system got right, where the gaps remain, and why the first response is often the moment that determines everything that follows for a survivor.

Rikki Shaw – Bio

Rikki Shaw is a survivor, policy architect, and national speaker whose work sits at the intersection of law enforcement response, institutional accountability, and survivor-led systems change.

In the aftermath of her 2003 rape by the chief counsel to the New York State Assembly Speaker, Shaw did not just survive — she changed policy. Her advocacy resulted in a \$507,500 civil settlement — \$500,000 from the New York State Assembly and \$7,500 personally from her assailant — and the adoption of seven Assembly policies on sexual harassment and assault — policies she wrote herself. She broke two decades of anonymity in October 2025 and has since been featured in the New York Post and on CBS6 Power & Politics.

Shaw is the founder of Roses from Ashes; a communications and advocacy platform focused on public policy and public perception around violence against women. She has delivered keynote addresses and presentations to audiences across the country, including the NNEDV National Economic Justice Summit, the NYS Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence, and the Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence. She serves as Board Secretary and Governance Chair for the Albany County Coalition on Homelessness and works as a Grants and Contracts Administrator at a multimillion-dollar human services nonprofit in the Capital Region.

She holds a Master of Business Administration and a bachelor's degree in political science and is the mother of four sons.



KAYLIN DAWSON

Beyond the Exam: Sexual Assault Kits, Victim Options, and Notification

What happens after a sexual assault forensic examination is just as important as the examination itself. This presentation will provide an overview of the sexual assault kit process, including evidence preservation, chain of custody, law enforcement reporting, and options available to victims following the examination. Participants will explore how victims can maintain control over decisions regarding their evidence and reporting, including situations in which they are undecided about reporting.

The presentation will also highlight the importance of timely, clear, and trauma-informed victim notification regarding evidence status, available options, and next steps. Through practical examples, attendees will gain a better understanding of the post-examination process and how agencies can support informed decision-making while promoting victim autonomy, dignity, and safety.

Kaylin Dawson – Bio

Kaylin Dawson is the Program Manager for Albany Medical Center Division of Forensic Medicine. Kaylin has been with Albany Med for 22 years, in which she has been an ER nurse, and 17 years as a sexual assault examiner. She is nationally certified in the Adult and Pediatric Sexual Assault Patient and is NYSDOH certified in the Adult/Adolescent SA patient. She received her Associates degree from Hudson Valley Community College, and obtained a Bachelors in Nursing and Masters in Clinical Nursing Education from Excelsior College. Kaylin currently manages The Division of Forensic Medicine and has a team of 20 examiners that see all victims of violence including sexual assault, child abuse/maltreatment, human trafficking, adult victims of violence and workplace violence.

Kaylin is a member of the Albany County SART, Albany County Child Fatality Review Team, the Albany County Multi-Disciplinary Team, Multi-Disciplinary Policy and Planning Committee and the Albany County Safe Harbor Task Force. In 2017, Albany Med was awarded a SAFE Center of Excellence by DOH and in 2018 became a designated training center for the Adult/Adolescent Sexual Assault patient. She has attended specialized training for the care of the forensic patient including the adult and pediatric sexual assault, human trafficking, child abuse, forensic investigations, and trial preparation courses. Recently, Kaylin assisted with providing medical input on the redesign of the NYS Sexual Assault Kit. Kaylin's passion is to provide education across disciplines to allow the opportunity for better care for victims of violence. When Kaylin is not working, she enjoys spending time with her family, which is usually on some type of sports field.