Letter from Our Director

This is a very exciting time for Wiregrass Angel House. This is the first edition of our bi-monthly newsletter. We want to have a newsletter that will keep people informed about what Angel House is accomplishing in the Southeastern region of Alabama.

We want to bring focus on areas such as the new programs we are offering; laws that are not well known that affect victims; etc.

We hope you like our newsletter. If you see something in our articles that need more explanation or you don’t see an article that we failed to write about, please don’t hesitate to contact us at (334) 702-7010.

The goal of our newsletter is to be informative about areas of interest for a diverse group of citizens that are interested in Wiregrass Angel House.

Shelly Linderman
Director

4th Annual Charity Golf Classic

Our 4th Annual Golf Tournament was held April 7th at the Highland Oaks golf course. It was a gorgeous day, with 92 golfers in attendance. Lunch was served at 11 and the shot gun start began at noon.

The players started returning around 4:15 and the winners were announced around 5:30. We would like to send a special thank you to all of the wonderful sponsors of our golf tournament. Without you it would not have been such a success.

A great big thank you to Gary Maxwell, Retired Chief Assistant District Attorney, for all of his hard work putting this tournament together and all that it entails! We also thank the DA’s office and their staff for their collection of sponsorships in the amount of $26,650. Angel House received donations of $11,200, bringing our grand total to $37,850.00.
A Special Thank You to our Sponsors and Donors!

AAA Cooper
Ben Reeves - 3rd Judicial Circuit District Attorney
Benjamin Lewis - Houston County District Judge
Bevis, Eberhart, Browning, Walker and Stewart
Bojangles
Brandi Cole – VSO
Buffalo Rock
Carter Stone, LLC Jeremy Carter – Owner
Cochran, Cherry, Givens, & Smith – Attorneys at Law
Cosby’s Heating and Cooling
Doug Valeska - 20th Judicial Circuit District Attorney
Flowers Insurance
Gary Maxwell, Retired Chief Asst. District Attorney
George and Laura Flowers Foundation
Interstate Batteries
Jim Whaley Tires
Kirke Adams - 33rd Judicial Circuit District Attorney
Lewis, Brackin, Flowers, & Johnson – Attorneys at Law
Michelin Tires
Mike Schmitz Automotive Group
Mayor Mike Schmitz
Oncology Supply
Outlet Rental Car & Truck Sales
Pawn City
Piggly Wiggly
Regions Bank
Rolen’s Bakery
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Tom Brantley, Attorney at Law
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WTVY-TV
The crowd gathered at Samson Baptist Church on Thursday didn’t come to mark the rampage, but to remember the loved ones they lost. “We can focus on the loss, or we can live for those with a bigger heart and more love than we did before for each other,” said Geneva County District Judge Stephen Smith. “We were never promised a life without suffering. Jesus lived a life of suffering. It’s what makes us who we are, the day-to-day struggles, and how we cope with the suffering is what defines us.” Smith said there is no question that many at the vigil are still suffering, still on the path to restoration. “We think about the smiles on those faces as they enjoyed a beautiful spring day on the front porch, as we think of one just taking a leisurely walk down the street, as we think of someone stopping by a gas station, someone taking a drive through town,” Smith said. Candles were lit for the victims: Lisa White McLendon; James Alford White; Tracy Michelle Wise; Dean James Wise; Andrea Dawn Myers; Corinne Gracy Myers; Virginia E. White; James Irvin Starling; Sonja Lolley Smith; and Bruce Wilson Maloy. The judge said the shootings focused national attention on this Geneva County town of 2,000. “I believe that we united in this community in a way that we’ve never done before and it made us all better. The memories of those we lost will always be with us. “We should live every day in honor of their memories. And everything that we do and everything that we say let it be a tribute to them and the love that they left behind.” The judge said the last couple of nights he had trouble sleeping, knowing he was to speak at the vigil. He woke on Wednesday morning at 4 a.m. and couldn’t go back to sleep, and though as assistant district attorney for Dale and Geneva counties he has tried hundreds of cases and was never at a loss for words, he was now. “And it’s not only because I care so much for those family members and friends and the people of this community, but it’s because I wanted to find the right words to say, something I never had trouble with in the past,” he said. Smith, who serves as a major in the Alabama Army National Guard, said he remembers one of the enlisted soldiers he worked with in Iraq who had gotten in trouble with the commander. And the commander had just taken him outside to give him a chewing out. “And I asked him later, ‘Why didn’t you tell him your side of the story?’ and he said, ‘Sir, I was in receive mode. I was told that I was in receive mode,’ and that meant he wasn’t to speak, he was to accept. He was to open his arms and embrace it.” Smith said we should always be in receive mode for Christ, because “our time on this earth is so precious.”
Dedert Vigil

A year has passed since Grace Bridges Dedert was killed inside her South Park Avenue furniture store. No one has been charged in the shooting. “I’d just like to assure everybody this case is not going to go away, and that the Dothan Police Department is not going to stop until this case is solved,” Will Glover, the department’s lead investigator in the case, told the crowd gathered at the store for a vigil on Thursday night. People listened to the speakers and later raised candles in Ms. Dedert’s honor as “Amazing Grace” played. Glover said police camped out at the store for several days as they investigated the March 17, 2010, shooting. A patron of Dedert’s Furniture and Antiques found the body that afternoon inside the store, located just off Fortner Street next to a convenience store. Ms. Dedert died from being shot. Police said Ms. Dedert was killed during a robbery gone badly. Lisa Weldon, who was a senior in high school and lived down the street from the victim when they met 35 years ago, offered words of praise for the woman she called Grace Ann. “She opened her heart and door to me every morning that I stopped by. I have always been very thankful for her time, words of care, and wisdom.” “Grace would want us to put the word ‘joy’ beside the word ‘pain’ so we can move on, with Grace, just as God wants us to do.” “I encourage each of you to be encouraged by thinking of the sweet, funny and precious moments you ever had with her. Let these memories live in you daily. Let the love of God in Grace Ann live in you and through you to others,” Weldon said. “Tears will always come unexpectedly, and that is OK. Tears are to refresh your heart and soul.”

The daughters of Ms. Dedert were very moved by the large turnout, especially from the Dothan Police Department and the DA’s office.
Counselor’s Corner
by Joyce Miller; MS, LPC

Never Say this to the family of a victim

• I know how you feel.
  o (Was your child murdered?)
• You shouldn’t feel that way.
  o (Tell me how I should feel; maybe I can make myself feel the way you think I should.)
• It was God’s Will.
  o (If you’re so in touch with what God’s will is, ask him “why?”)
• You have got to get on with your life.
  o (If I get up, I’m getting on.)
• You’ve got to be strong.
  o (Why?)
• God took him or her.
  o (No, my child was murdered by an evil person. He was not taken up from a mountain top in a cloud.)
• God needed him or her.
  o (God doesn’t need him, if so he could make another one. I can’t, I needed him; he was my life.)
• You should be over that by now.
  o (There is no getting over the loss of your loved one by violence.)
• You can have other children.
  o (Get a grip.)
• God is testing you.
  o (Well, I’m sure I failed his test and he’s failed mine, too. Does that matter?)
• Good will come from it.
  o (How could anything good ever come from such evil?)
• It’s for the best.
  o (Anyone that tells you it’s for the best that your child is murdered isn’t dealing with a full deck. Tell them to get the hell away from you.)

Justice for Christopher Woods

Christopher Woods, 28, was shot to death during a burglary at his Blackshear Street home on Nov. 13, 2008. In March of this year, a jury found Tawuan Townes guilty of capital murder and recommended the death sentence for him. Circuit Court Judge Larry Anderson was to issue a formal sentence on April 22nd. It was postponed until May by a request from the defense. We pray that justice will be served in this case.

Thank you to prosecutors: Doug Valeska, Gary Maxwell, and Andy Robinson for their hard work and dedication to see this case through without making a plea deal. The prosecution was up front with the family on this case. Although their loved one was not perfect, the DA’s office treated his case with dignity and always gave the utmost respect to the family and their feelings.

Thank you to the jury for recommending the death penalty in this case. Some citizens say that the death penalty is not a deterrent, but hopefully it will be for the offender.
National Crime Victims Rights Week

To commemorate Crime Victims Rights Week, Wiregrass Angel House set up crosses with the pictures of our “Angels” on them. Skylar Thomas, Little Miss Heart of America, is one of many who stopped by to remember our angels.

The 14th Annual Memorial Service was held, during National Crime Victims Week, by Southeast Alabama VOCAL in conjunction with Wiregrass Angel House on Sunday, April 10th. A special thank you to all who put this wonderful memorial together. If you did not get a memorial booklet/program, and would like one, there are extra copies available at Wiregrass Angel House.

Victim Contacts

Governor Robert Bentley
State Capitol
Montgomery, AL 35130
Taylor Vice, Director
Constituent Services
(334).242.7100
1.800.591.4217

Attorney General’s Office
of Victim Assistance
501 Washington Avenue
Montgomery, AL 36130
Patricia S. DeBortoli
Victim Services Director
(334).242.7300
1.800.626.7676
www.ago.state.al.us

Department of Corrections
Kim T. Thomas, Commissioner
P.O. Box 301501
301 South Ripley St.
Montgomery, AL 36310
VSO Janet Findley LeJeune
(334).353.3871
www.doc.state.al.us
State inmate parole info.
1.888.726.9799, Option 4

Alabama Crime Victims Compensation Commission
Dr. Cassie Jones, Director
P.O. Box 231267
Montgomery, AL 36123
1.800.541.9388
www.acvcc.state.al.us

State of Alabama Board of Pardons and Paroles
Cynthia Dillard, Director
P.O. Box 302405
Montgomery, AL 36130
VSO Debra Bonds
(334).242.8050
Fax (334).353.7701
www.paroles.state.al.us
A Note from Joyce

Thank you to each and everyone that continues to lift me up in prayer. They are working! Monday was a very bad day. The doctor called and said the cancer had spread to the bone. Tuesday afternoon doctor called back and said made a mistake reading scan. It is not in my bones and what they are seeing in the liver could be scar tissue and not cancer. I know it’s from God. I hold on to the knowledge this is and will continue to be a miracle. I ask for your continued prayers as this is what has brought me this far. I should be back to work on Monday.

DONATIONS

Wiregrass Angel House appreciates the faithful contributors who support our efforts in assisting crime victims in the Southeast. Your donations make it possible for us to provide more services and support to victims and is tax deductible.

Mrs. Diane Collier
Mr. and Mrs. Marc Coskrey
Henry County Circuit Clerk’s Office
Henry County DA’s Office
Houston County Commission
Houston County DA’s Office
Houston County Circuit Clerk’s Office
Law Office of Jere Segrest and Kevin Walding
Mr. Michael Manring
Wiregrass Area United Way
Wiregrass Foundation
Congratulations to Dale County’s newest prosecutor:
Lacey Valeska
She passed the bar in April

Good Time Law

Alabama law allows a 15 year sentence under the Good Time Law to be served in 4 years, 7 months, and 22 days and be totally finished, no parole or probation. This is less than 1/3 of the 15 year sentence. Is that enough time spent for a murder if the victim was your loved one? In reality, a prisoner would spend about 6 to 9 months and get paroled after a successful hearing.

Prisoners are Separated into 4 Classes:

Class IV - is for prisoners not yet classified and those who are able to work and refuse, those who commit disciplinary infractions, those who don’t abide by the rules. There is no good time for those in Class IV. All inmates coming into the system must remain in Class IV for 30 days before moving to another classification.

Class III - is for prisoners with special assignments. All prisoners must remain in this classifications for 3 months.

Class II - all inmate jobs in this class will be under the supervision of a correctional employee. They must remain in Class II for 6 months.

Class I - is for inmates considered to be trustworthy in every respect and whose work habits, conduct etc. have proven their trustworthiness.

Class I - receives 75 days for each 30 days
Class II - receives 40 free days for each 30 days
Class III - receives 20 free days for each 30 days
Class IV - No good time - known as flat time

CREP = Court Referral Education Program

We are fully underway with the Court Referral Education Program. As of the first of the year, Angel House has been running this program for Houston County. Since being awarded this program, we have served many clients by offering educational classes for them both on the weekend and weekdays.
Don’t be alarmed, or think that this will interfere with any of our current services. With the addition of this program, we hired a part time employee. This gives us someone at Angel House during our business hours, allowing us to meet victims’ needs at Angel House, in court, and in counseling throughout the community.

The Police Will Not Give Up

It’s been almost 4 years since Perry Griffin, husband of Ginger and father of 3 small children- Georgia, Tripp, and Lucille; was gunned down in the parking lot of Panhandle Salvage and Scrap Metal, June 26, 2007; on Beverlye Road in Dothan, Alabama. Birthdays, holidays, and new school years have all come and gone for almost four years and most people have forgotten that no one has been caught for this murder, except Lt. Tony Luker and the CID division of the Dothan Police Department. For almost four years, Lt. Luker and the CID detectives have processed evidence, interviewed 100’s of people, and continued to remember that the Griffin family still has no justice because the killers are still out there. Even with a reward amount of $35,705.00; no one has been arrested. Lt. Tony Luker is the kind of officer you hope and pray that if you are a victim, he will be on your case.

He realizes the murderer is still out there and this family can’t move on until the bad guy is caught. Lt. Luker has made contact with the VIDOCQ Society, a group of retired experts in the field of forensics, investigations, profilers, etc. that have been very successful in closing cold case homicides across America. The group has agreed to look at the case and hopefully give renewed light on this homicide.

A special thanks to the CID Division for continuing their hard work to try and close this case. It means more to the families than you will ever know.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>VICTIM</th>
<th>02/24/1996</th>
<th>Flora Pullin Thomas</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>04/20/1976</td>
<td>Nathan Bussey, Jr.</td>
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<td>01/31/1978</td>
<td>Sergeant Robert Jackson</td>
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<tr>
<td>07/07/1978</td>
<td>Sidney G. Grubbs</td>
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<tr>
<td>09/19/1979</td>
<td>Milledge Griffin</td>
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<tr>
<td>09/29/1981</td>
<td>Russell Earnest Douglas</td>
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<tr>
<td>07/10/1989</td>
<td>Gussie Mae Moody</td>
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<tr>
<td>09/08/1989</td>
<td>Jernathan Chambers</td>
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<tr>
<td>03/13/1994</td>
<td>John Robert McCord III</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/13/1994</td>
<td>Johnny Smith</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10/18/1995</td>
<td>Berry McGlon</td>
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These are currently the unsolved homicides in Dothan. The Dothan Police Department is working on these cases daily. They are investigating new leads on many of these cases. Hopefully, some will be solved soon. We will keep you updated.

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<th>DATE</th>
<th>VICTIM</th>
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<th>VICTIM</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>04/07/1996</td>
<td>Ruthie Mae Jackson</td>
<td>09/23/2006</td>
<td>Mark Brammeier</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/16/1996</td>
<td>Rudolph Holston</td>
<td>06/26/2007</td>
<td>Perry Griffin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/14/1996</td>
<td>Milbon Floyd</td>
<td>10/07/2007</td>
<td>Robert Lee Moore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06/09/1997</td>
<td>Vernon Stuart North</td>
<td>06/27/2008</td>
<td>Curley Cliatt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/07/1999</td>
<td>Cynthia Gail Wilson</td>
<td>03/17/2010</td>
<td>Grace B. Bridges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05/17/2003</td>
<td>Debra H. Wilson</td>
<td></td>
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Appearing before the Alabama Parole Board Makes a Difference

Ezra Carter was convicted of robbery in 1996. Ms. Long, the victim of the robbery, still has many emotional scars from this traumatic event in her life. She requested the Houston County DA to accompany her to the parole hearing, as she felt it was important for the board to hear her and the communities’ feelings on this matter. After Ms. Long spoke to the board then DA Doug Valeska was very persuasive in his appeal to the board. The board agreed this inmate was not ready and set the next hearing for 5 years. This should let victims know, prosecutors, and all those involved in the system, that speaking at parole hearings does make a difference.

Ms. Debra Rae Shelley who was convicted of murder in 1999 and given a Life sentence also came up for parole. She too, was denied for five more years.

Welcome Back to an Old Friend in C.I.D.

For a few years now we have seen Lt. Luker at trials, but he was promoted out to patrol when he became lieutenant. Although we were proud for him and his promotion, we were so sad to see him leave C.I.D. He is an officer who truly cares for victims! We welcome you back to C.I.D. and we are so glad to once again be working with you!

What an asset to the criminal investigations division with Major Parrish, Captain Jay, Lt. Luker, and Sgt. Glover in commanding positions, victims will know they are being well cared for. Good job Chief Benton!