



# Wiregrass Angel House

(334) 702-7010

[www.wiregrassangelhouse.org](http://www.wiregrassangelhouse.org)

Facebook: [wiregrass angel house](https://www.facebook.com/wiregrassangelhouse)

(866) 318-6225

24-hour crisis line

email: [wiregrassangelhouse@gmail.com](mailto:wiregrassangelhouse@gmail.com)

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## Director's Note

Summer is almost over.

It has been a very busy summer around Angel House. We have hired our new counselor, Ms. Virginia Askew. We are glad to have her as part of our team to assist victims in the Wiregrass area. She is a Wiregrass native and is eager to work with victims. She has a heart for those who have suffered such devastation as losing a loved one to homicide.

Another area Angel House has recently included in our mission statement is working with victims of robbery in the Wiregrass area. With our new counselor we will be able to assist victims on the scene after a robbery has occurred. We are hoping this will reduce some of the PTSD effects to the victims.

All victims should be aware there is a State Prison Taskforce that has been established by Governor Bentley and is being overseen by Senator Cam Ward. The taskforce was established to bring all agencies and interested parties, such as inmates, victims, corrections, pardons and paroles, the sheriffs association, police chiefs, and district attorneys together to find a resolution to the ever growing problem of Alabama prisons being at 120-150% capacity. Governor Bentley felt this was necessary to avoid the federal government stepping in and releasing prisoners. Their next meeting is set for October.

We do have victims that have been appointed to the board and will be keeping us apprised of the developments for steps that will be taken.

Angel House will be sure to keep you informed.

Shelly Linderman

## Counselor's Corner

### Reflection and the "If Only's"

It doesn't matter where you are in your search for your new normal, at some point you are going to run into the "if only's". They come in all shapes and sizes, but most can be compared to small pebbles or rocks. When so much seems to be out of your control, these "if only's" feel as if they are solid and sure. The tiny, harmless looking "if only's" bring to mind thoughts like: if only I had said I love you one more time, if only I had stopped by that day, if only I hadn't been running late for work then I could have said good bye. They feel heavy and weighted like the truth-but they are deceptive.

There are bigger ones that are a bit heavier: if only he had waited five more minutes then he would still be alive. If only she had just listened to me then this never would have happened. If only the police and ambulance could have arrived faster....If only they had been able to catch the monster that did this. If only the jury had the chance to hear me-then justice would be served!

Some are almost too heavy to carry. If only there weren't so many memories, if only I couldn't still hear their laugh, if only people would stop looking at me like that, if only I could sleep, if only I could cry, if only I could stop crying, if only.... These "if only's" provide a place to lay blame and a way to direct the anger which comes from the underserved hurt and pain you have been burdened with.

What you may not realize is even though you can't avoid them, you don't have to carry them around with you. Face them. Deal with them. Then leave them where you found them. These thoughts will weigh you down until you can't move forward and this is **not** what reflection is about. Reflection is about looking back with a clear view of what was and growing and learning- not a distorted version of what could have been. Don't let these "what if's" keep you from taking one more step forward in your new normal.

Virginia Askew, M.S  
Victim's Assistant  
Wiregrass Angel House

## United Way Kickoff

The Wiregrass Area United Way has started their kickoff for this year. Their goal is \$2,626,000.00. We are so grateful to the United Way as they have helped make the dream of a fulltime counselor a reality for our agency.



## National Night Out

August 9<sup>th</sup> was National Night Out in Dothan for all the Wiregrass area to enjoy. There were many booths and give a-ways, as well as S.W.A.T. and K-9 demonstrations. There was something for everyone to see and participate in. The afternoon shower cooled things off to make it a more enjoyable event as participants ventured outside to see the fire truck, bouncy houses, and such. A special thank you to our Miss Angel queens as they worked our booth and were great about giving out our information. Good job ladies!



## Donations

Debby Tuck  
Henry County Pre-Trial  
Houston County Pre-Trial  
IBM Employees  
Target Employees  
United Way of Greater Philadelphia & SNJ  
UPS Employees  
Wiregrass United Way



A special thank you to Debby Tuck for her donation of flowers for the memorial garden and her work in tending the garden.

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## Southeast VOCAL News

The Southeast VOCAL Chapter will hold their next support group meeting Tuesday, September 16<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m. at Wiregrass Angel House.

Last month we introduced the new counselor for Wiregrass Angel House, Virginia Askew. Virginia is looking forward to meeting each of you and taking the time to get to know you.

For questions about VOCAL or their support groups please contact the leader of the Southeast Chapter, Beckie Schuler, at 334-791-3969.

## New Parole Notification System For Victims

Alabama victims now have a simple, automated system that allows them to register to receive information about the offender who harmed them or their loved ones.

**Victims.alabama.gov** is the new website for victims in Alabama which enables them to sign up for parole notifications. Another service to registered participants is to have the Department of Corrections contact them regarding the status of an inmate.

Just go to: **victims.alabama.gov** and register. This will insure you will be notified for an upcoming parole. By registering with Alabama Crime Victim Automated Notification system, you can assert your rights and will stay informed. Any interested party can log on and register to be notified of an upcoming parole for one or multiple cases.

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## Making a difference

I had the privilege and honor of being with Mr. Paul Eubanks, father of Cameron Eubanks, who was murdered in 2012. We teamed together to represent a victim's point of view to the young men and women at the Diversion Center. Mr. Stanley Davis of the Southeast Alabama Youth Services requested our agency to speak to the inmates in hopes it would make a difference. I believe Mr. Eubanks was a success in that department. Paul's story was professional, sincere, and heartfelt. Several attending expressed how moving his story was to them. Good job Paul!

### **Dothan Police Memorial Day**



Shelly Linderman, our director, addresses law enforcement officers and their supporters during the City of Dothan's Law Enforcement Memorial Service at the Dothan Opera House on Tuesday May 13<sup>th</sup>. Speaking in regard to how a victim views law enforcement. Special guest speaker for the event was Retired Lt. Ray Owens, whose father, Sgt. Shelby Owens, was killed in the line of duty.

### **Changes at the Dothan Police Department**

We would like to say a fond farewell to Captain David Jay over patrol division at the Dothan Police Department, who has served faithfully for over 26 years. He has been an asset to the department and to the community. He has been a good friend to victims and has always tried to support them. You will be missed!

Congratulations to Sgt. Jason Atkins, for his new position as Sergeant over violent crimes in CID. We are excited to be working with you and know you will do a great job for victims and their families.

Congratulations to Will Glover for his promotion from sergeant to lieutenant to patrol division. You will be missed in CID.

## **Dale and Geneva County News**

We have recently had two murders in Dale and Geneva Counties.

Anthony Roberts was murdered July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend at his home. Please keep his wife, Lisa, and his parents, Buford (retired Enterprise police officer) and Doris Roberts, in your prayers.

Congratulations to Tony Helms in his new position as sheriff in Geneva County.

In Geneva County Matthew Tice was murdered June 4<sup>th</sup> in Malvern. Please remember his grandparents, Robert and Pam Floyd, as well as his son, Braylen, during this difficult time.



## **Barbour County News**

We would like to extend our sympathy to the DA's office for the loss of their ADA, Terry Hall, who passed away unexpectedly last month. It has been a terrible loss to their office.

There have also been several hearings in the case against Noah Bunnell who is accused of murdering his step mother, Jackie.

There have been various motion hearings in the case of Willie Dickerson who is charged with the murder of Willie David Pugh. In this case there have been several outside instigators attempting to sensationalize this case by throwing unsubstantiated accusations around regarding defense attorney and police corruption, etc. This defendant has now been granted two new attorneys which will delay the process of a trial longer than expected.

DA Ben Reeves is preparing for several murder trials before the end of the year.

**Houston and Henry County News**

It has been extremely busy for those in the Houston and Henry County DA's offices this summer!

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome Ms. Brooke Ethridge, a new victim service officer with the Houston County DA's office. We believe she will be an asset to the great team of VSO's who already work with victims.

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A capital murder trial and conviction was held in Henry County for Charles Turner, who murdered Darren Minniefield of Headland. The DA's office decided not to seek the death penalty to honor the wishes of the family of Mr. Minniefield. Turner received life without parole.

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The family of Patrick Dixon had to once again sit through three days of grueling testimony as the Houston County DA made sure Marcus Rivers, one of three offenders who murdered Patrick, was convicted of capital murder. The judge has deemed Rivers mentally retarded. Alabama law states a mentally retarded offender cannot be sentenced to death. Therefore he will only receive life without parole. The family was very pleased with how the case was handled and grateful to the DA for personally trying the case.

Everett Morton's case, one of the other murderers of Patrick, was reversed on appeal this summer and will be retried sometime at the first of next year.

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A preliminary hearing was held for Willie Toney, who is accused of murdering his ex-wife Rebecca Jackson. Circuit Court Judge Butch Binford formally denied a request by attorney David Hogg to dismiss the two capital murder charges against his client, 44-year-old Willie Toney. Hogg asked Binford for the dismissal, arguing in court that Toney never received a fair preliminary hearing on capital murder robbery and capital murder kidnapping charges involving the March killing of his former wife, 39-year-old Rebecca Jackson. Hogg argued that Circuit Court Judge Michael Conaway, who oversaw the hearing, didn't have jurisdiction to conduct a district court preliminary hearing. Binford responded that Conaway was acting as a district judge after an order was made allowing him to fill in for District Judge Benjamin Lewis due to a death in Lewis' family.

Good job Judge Binford!

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Please remember the family of Daniel Dawsey. He was murdered at the beginning of the summer. He left behind a wife and four children.



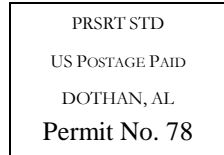
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*Congratulations*

- Donald Valenza on becoming Houston County's new sheriff.
- Capt. Bill Rafferty for receiving the FBI Medal for Merit for his extraordinary and exceptional service in the line of duty during the Midland City Hostage Crisis.

September 1, 2014

Wiregrass Angel House  
P.O. Box 7133  
Dothan, AL 36302



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

## 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](http://www.ago.state.al.us)

Department of Corrections  
Kim T. Thomas, Commissioner  
P.O. Box 301501  
301 South Ripley St.  
Montgomery, AL 36310  
(334).353.3871  
[www.doc.state.al.us](http://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](http://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.pardoles.state.al.us](http://www.pardoles.state.al.us)