Director’s Note

The holidays are over. Some say they hate the season is over while others are thankful they were able to just get through them.

Now it’s the beginning of the New Year—2015. A new year brings new beginnings. New beginnings such as the new legislative session for the Alabama State House which will convene March 3, 2015. This year will be especially proven difficult as the general budget will be the first item that has to be resolved. You can go online and listen to the legislature when they are in session. You can hear the introduction of bills to the Senate and House floors. It is important to stay informed of the new bills that will be introduced. As victims, victim advocates, and survivors it is imperative you stay apprised of any new possible bills which could hurt victims of crime in our state. Wiregrass Angel House will continue to seek out any bill that affects crime victims and will post them on our Facebook page. I do believe we have excellent representation in our area from Senator Harri Anne Smith, Senator Jimmy Holley, Senator Billy Beasley, Representative Steve Clouse, Representative Barry Moore, Representative Paul Lee, and Representative Dexter Grimsley. All of these elected officials understand the constant battle victims of crime have endured for equal representation in the criminal justice system and are sympathetic to the cause. If you feel there is a bill that needs a closer look or you want to express your opinion to the above mentioned members of the state house, contact them. Each and every one of them is open to their constituents and wants to hear from you.

Shelly Linderman
Counselor’s Corner

Rebuild- Just breathe

If you open your grief manual and turn to chapter three, about half way down the page the guidelines start on where you should be in your progress. It’s very easy to follow. Just line up your finger with the year and month and every goal up to that point should be accomplished. What? You didn’t get a standard issued grief manual? Of course you didn’t. There is no such thing. Well, how are you supposed to know if you’re normal? How are you supposed to know if you’re okay?

You could just listen to what everyone else tells you, but you might end up in a nice padded room wearing the latest in medical fashion that assists in helping you give yourself a hug too. You want to know if you are okay. How do you feel? Does it feel like someone you love was taken from you? Then you are probably having a normal response to when someone you love has been taken from you. There are NO rules to follow. This is not a normal expected life event! Paying taxes, forgetting to take out the garbage and being stuck in traffic are unfortunate expected life events. Not this.

So how can there be a “normal” reaction? The answer is that there isn’t one. We all grieve in our own way. We all hurt, and feel the pain of our loss, in our own way. No one can tell you when it is time to move on, or let go, or start over. Grief is not just emotional- it is physical, and it is exhausting. Trying to pretend that you are okay when you are not, trying not to cry because you don’t want to bother other people, and pushing yourself to take on more than you are ready for, can be even more exhausting.

What is the answer? Give yourself permission to grieve. If you have to be strong for others, find a counselor that you trust and fall apart in a safe environment. If financially you have to go back to work, then give yourself a few minutes during the first part of your lunch break to have an all-out cry fest every day. Trust yourself. If you think you need help, then you do. Grieving is NOT an easy task. Don’t forget to give yourself credit for your accomplishments, no matter how small they may be.

If you got out of bed, brushed your teeth, got dressed and went to work, then today you were a super star. If you called in to work, laid in the bed, cried until your eyes were nearly swollen shut and blew your nose on the sheet when you ran out of tissue- congratulations. You made it through another day. Some days you just have to give yourself credit for doing the best that you can do- even if the only thing you can do today is just breathe.

Virginia Askew, M.S
Victim’s Assistant
Wiregrass Angel House
HONORING THOSE WHO BRING HONOR TO VICTIMS IN ALABAMA

National Crime Victims’ Rights Week Awards

Angel House annually recognizes individuals and organizations that demonstrate outstanding service in supporting victims and victim services. As the discipline of crime victim services has grown over the years, so has the number of remarkable individuals that significantly contribute to its success. Today, the field includes countless people who through vision, action and leadership have improved the lives of victims in the aftermath of crime. We invite you to submit a nomination for one or more of seven awards. In making your nominations, we encourage you to recognize individuals who have made significant contributions to the crime victims’ field and/or to crime victims. Recipients of the awards will be honored in Montgomery as part of the national commemoration of National Crime Victims’ Rights Week (NCVRW), which is scheduled for April 19–25th, 2015.

Submission Guidelines for Awards

- A nomination letter must accompany each nomination form. No anonymous nominations will be accepted.
- Each form must include the nominee’s name, title, organization, address, and telephone number.
- Nominations should not exceed two single sided, double spaced pages and should be typed and should reflect as much as you know about your nominee’s accomplishments and services in supporting victims.
- Please review the award categories carefully and select the category that most accurately reflects your nominee’s accomplishments and services in supporting crime victims. You can only nominate one individual to one category.
- Please provide additional information about the nominated individual that should be considered in the review process. Supporting documentation such as newspaper articles can also be attached.

Deadline for submitting Nominations

Nomination forms and supporting materials must be received no later than Friday, March 20, 2015 and can be mailed to: (Selection Committee, P.O. Box 7133, Dothan, Alabama 36302) or faxed to (334) 702-7014. If you have any questions about the award nominations or selection process, please call Shelly Linderman at (866) 31-VOCAL. The nomination form is also on the Website at www.angelhouseofalabama.org.

Eligibility Guidelines

- You may nominate one or more worthy individuals.
- Candidates nominated but not selected in previous years are eligible for consideration. Previous award winners, however, are not eligible to be nominated and will not be considered for the same award.

Significance of the Awards

- Each year, through the prestigious Miriam Shehane Award, our organization, honors extraordinary individuals who exemplify the long-term commitment that characterizes individuals who work with victims with the same caliber of dogmatic passion and concern as the one who this award was named in honor of. This is awarded also with a cash scholarship of $250.00
- The State King Solomon Award was instituted in 2004 to recognize a jurist that through their leadership, vision, and innovation have led to changes in the criminal justice system. This is awarded also with a cash scholarship of $500.00.
- The State Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award honors those in the field of law enforcement who go beyond the call of duty to assist victims in their time of need. The individual will be one that shows respect and dignity above all else to crime victims and their families.
- The State Prosecutor of the Year Award recognizes those in the field that exhibit exceptional perseverance and determination to get the job done and work with the victim and/or their family. To show respect and dignity and, above all else, does what the victim wants and listens to the victim.
- The State Victim Service Officer of the Year Award recognizes those in the field that exhibit exceptional compassion and empathy for the victim and/or their family. An individual who treats the victim with kindness and care and who keeps the victims informed of their case.
# NOMINATION FORM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your Name:</th>
<th>Nominee’s Full Name:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your Title/Position (if any):</td>
<td>Name for Award Plaque</td>
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<tr>
<td>Your Organization (if any):</td>
<td>Nominee’s Title:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Your Mailing Address: :</td>
<td>Nominee”s Organization</td>
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## Type of Award (Circle One)

- Miriam Shehane Award
- State Procecutor Award
- Victim Serice Officer of the Year Award
- King Solomon Award
- Law Enforcement Office of the Year Award

Tell us what makes them special for this award:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

May attach extra paper if needed.

**Signature of Nominator:**

Anonymous nominations will not be accepted. A nomination letter must accompany each nomination form. Nominations should not exceed two single sided, double spaced typed pages and should reflect as much as you know about your nominee’s accomplishments and service in supporting victims. Please provide additional information about the nominated individual that should be considered in the review process. Supporting documentation such as newspaper articles can all be attached.
Southeast VOCAL News

The memorial Christmas tree looked beautiful as it was on display at the Houston County Court House. Thanks to all the volunteers who worked to set it up and take it down. This year we had to add six new pictures. Please be praying for their families as they start a new year.

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

4th Annual Day of Service

Sunday, February 22, 2015
3:00-5:00 p.m.

We will be weeding and mulching the flower beds, clearing the walkways, cleaning the memorial pond, and trimming the shrubbery. Please bring work gloves and tools to work on these projects. See you there!

Come and Join Us!

6th Annual Golf Tournament

Wiregrass Angel House will be having their 2015 Charity Golf Tournament which will be held Thursday, April 16th at Highland Oaks Golf Course

This is our major annual fund raiser.

If you are interested in sponsoring a team or hole sponsorship please call Gary Maxwell or Angel House at (334) 702-7010.

Donations

Myra Edmonson
Henry County Pre-Trial
IBM Employees
Gary & Carol Maxwell
Target Employees
United Way
United Way of Greater Philadelphia & SNJ
UPS Employees
Wiregrass United Way

Honorariums for:
Randy & Teresa May
Sue & Herb Reitmeyer
The 6th annual law enforcement summit was held in Geneva sponsored by Dale County DA Kirke Adams as well as Houston County DA Doug Valeska.

This summit is an excellent training time for area law enforcement to work with outstanding speakers to learn more about criminal investigations as well as new techniques in the crime solving world. Each year the summit has approximately 200 in attendance.

Christopher Findley was arrested in connection with the murder of, Debbie Ayers, who was found in the woods near Wicksburg. A bond and preliminary hearing is scheduled for February 13th in front of Judge Stephen Smith.

We would like to offer our heartfelt condolences to District Attorney, Ben Reeves on the passing of his father, Ben Reeves, Sr. His father also served as District Attorney of Barbour & Bullock Counties from 1963-1981 and was President of the Alabama District Attorney's Association.

A preliminary hearing was held on December 15th for Kelvin Moore, who was charged with the murder of Alfonza Gachett. The judge bound the case over to the January grand jury.

In Remembrance

We would like to take time to remember two officers of the Dothan Police Department who have died in the last couple of months.

Sgt. Jeff Garrett and K-9 Officer Brandon Thompson

Please pray for their personal families as well as their brothers in blue.
Houston and Henry County News

A bond reduction hearing was held for Emmanuel Bryant who has been charged with murdering Daniel Dawsey in July. The defense attorney explained to the judge how the defendant was a great guy and how he was an upstanding citizen and would promise to come back when the trial started. He forgot to mention this defendant has two previously failure to appear arrests for other unrelated charges. Assistant District Attorney, Banks Smith, did an outstanding job bringing to light the entire picture of this inmate’s criminal activity. Judge Binford saw through the smoke screen of the defense and denied a bond reduction. Good job Judge Binford and ADA Smith. The twelve family members that were able to attend the hearing were so pleased with the results.

Pamela Kelly, convicted murderer of Bunard Reynolds, was sentenced in November to only 12 years when convicted of manslaughter. Friday, December 12th, was a probation hearing where Judge Anderson would make the decision of granting her probation so she could be free without serving another day. Judge Anderson listened to both, the defense attorney, as well as ADA Sam Clenney. Judge Anderson denied her probation.

An Atkins Hearing for Gregory Lawton, accused killer of Milton Jones, was held in front of Judge Butch Binford. An Atkins hearing is when the judge hears evidence in capital murder cases to determine if the defendant is mentally retarded. If the defendant is deemed mentally retarded the state is not allowed to seek the death penalty. Judge Binford listened to the case for several hours; listening to expert witnesses on both sides. The defense attorneys made sure they hired everyone they could to try and ensure this accused murderer was found mentally retarded. Judge Binford ruled this defendant was competent to stand trial and the prosecution will be allowed to pursue the death penalty in this case.

I was pleased to attend the status hearing regarding Antwain Wingard, on December 17th, one of the co-defendants involved in Jarvis Daffin’s murder case. Currently, Wingard is scheduled to have all of his mental evaluation processes taken care of in the final weeks of December. Both Wingard’s attorneys and District Attorney Doug Valeska agreed that a trial date would be best scheduled after the other co-defendant, Justice Knight, completes his trial (currently scheduled for April 2015.) Judge Anderson did not appear to be willing to wait any longer than necessary to proceed with scheduling a date for Wingard’s trial and encouraged the attorney’s to prepare for a trial for this summer. Another status hearing regarding the outcome of Wingard’s mental evaluation is expected in the new year.

The Kowalskys celebrate Krista and Zachary Stones’ birthdays (November 17th) with a now annual balloon release; sending balloons as a message of love and remembrance towards the heavens to honor Krista and Zach.
Wiregrass Angel House
P.O. Box 7133
Dothan, AL  36302

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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

Demartment 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
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

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

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).353.7710
www.paroles.state.al.us

Victim Contacts