Director’s Note

Summer is here! The seasons have changed so quickly. And as the seasons changed, so has the position of police chief in Dothan. We are so proud of Steve Parrish for becoming the newly selected chief. He is a highly respected and honored man in this community. He is a family man that brings humility to his position. He is respected by his fellow officers and staff. That was very clear as I looked around the courtroom at his swearing in and noticed so many people there to cheer him on and congratulate him on this much deserved promotion. We are proud of you Chief Parrish and look forward to our agency’s continued great relationship with your department.
Identity Crisis

As we grow up we develop a sense of ourselves based on who we identify with. “My parents are Mrs. Pink and Mr. Blue. My name is Violet.” As we get older our identity grows and expands to incorporate other activities and people into our lives. “I work at Coloring Book Inc. I am employee Violet. I am married to Mr. White. I am his wife, Violet. We have a daughter. I am Lavender’s Mommy, Violet.” As the transition from one area of life to the other takes place, there is the understanding that, who you were before the transition, will continue to be who you are after it. You may be employed, married, and have your own children, but you are still the child of Pink and Blue.

What about when there is an uninvited and unexpected forced transition? There is no high school prep course for “what to do when your loved one is murdered”. Some things you might be expecting; such as missing your loved one and trying to deal with grief. You may even be preparing to have difficulty on holidays and birthdays. What you may not be expecting is the identity crisis that can sneak up on you. The unexpectedness of the event can cause one to feel a loss of self and or purpose. If you aren’t Pink’s daughter or Lavender’s Mommy….who are you supposed to be? What are you supposed to do when your role changes?

This transition is more difficult to go through because you are used to having a gain; a new house, a new job, or a new family member. On the other side of this transition there is no gain, so there is a constant feeling of missing. The first and most important thing to remember in this identity crisis is your name. “My name is Violet.” Whoever you were before this happened, you will continue to be that person, even though your life will be different. Remembering this can help you to get through.

The person that was taken from you, the person you loved, you still love them. He or she may not be here now, but the summer spent by the lake happened. The one Christmas when everything went right and seemed perfect, you still have pictures. This person was laughs, smiles, a couple of late night talks and so, so much more. The day they died was the absolute worst, but that day is not who they were. This transition may be the most difficult challenge you ever face. It is not who you are.

As you adjust, remember to do so slowly. This transition will take time just like any other but you can get through it. Your role may have shifted and you may have to take on some new responsibilities, but you don’t have to do everything all at one time. If it hasn’t been your responsibility to get the mail, then doing so now may feel overwhelming. Ask a neighbor to go to the mailbox and meet them at the end of the driveway for a week or two. If you used to meet your loved one for coffee on Wednesday nights - change your night out to Tuesday and take an individual painting class; on Wednesday rent a movie and stay in.

You are going to have days when you just do not have the motivation to do anything. This is normal and you can expect it to happen-sometimes for what seems like no reason at all. You have to give yourself permission to grieve. If you try to ignore these feelings or fight them, they can come out when you aren’t expecting them and at that point you may feel like you have no control. Instead, allow yourself a designated, appropriate time to intentionally miss and remember your loved one.

Finally, joining a group can help this transition happen smoother. If you don’t have one, you need to find a place to be with other people and just be social. Join a book club, a quilting club, learn to scrapbook, go to church, or go to a grief support group. Participate in a healthy, encouraging and supportive group activity. Don’t push yourself too hard because then you are just distracting yourself from your grief. While you don’t want to let anyone make you feel like you are taking too long to grieve, you do want to be sure you are taking care of yourself and getting help as you need it.

Remember: this is something that has happened to them and to you. What happened to them is not who they were and it is not who you are.

Virginia Askew, M.S
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Memorials: Blayne Hardy Barfield
By: Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Godfrey

A special thank you to the Southeast Alabama Community Foundation for our grant to help victims in the Wiregrass area!

Thank you to Wiregrass Foundation for helping us through Wiregrass United Way with a special grant to assist our agency.

Honoring Your Loved One!

Angel house is making a remembrance quilt for homicide victims. We have squares for each family to personalize. Please stop by and get your square so you can memorialize your family member in your own way. If you live out of town we will mail it to you, just contact our office.

Deadline to have finished squares and returned is July 1st. We will unveil the finished quilt in September on National Day of Remembrance for homicide victims.

Southeast VOCAL News

If you would like information about the Southeast VOCAL support group please contact President Beckie Schuler (334) 791-3969.
Wiregrass Angel House held its 6th annual golf tournament on Thursday, April 16th at the Highland Oaks Golf Course in Dothan, Alabama. This is Angel House’s major fundraiser for the year. The attendance for the tournament was great. There were over 20 teams that played. We were able to raise over $22,000.00 to help victims’ families that have been affected by violence in the Wiregrass area. A great big thank you to Dale and Geneva County DA, Bevis-Eberhart Accounting Services, and HEDA for being our gold sponsors! Our first place winners were as followed: Cherry/Irwin law firm-1st place (gross), Dale/Geneva County DA’s office A-Team- 2nd place (gross), Jim Whaley Tires-3rd place (gross), Dale/Geneva County DA’s office B-Team-1st place (net), WTVY-TV (Dothan PD players)-2nd place (net), and The Lucky Mulligans-3rd place (net).
Thank you to our Corporate Sponsors!


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Thank you to all our supporters!
The 12th Annual Conference for Law Enforcement Training

Sponsored by:
Alabama Sheriff’s Association and Verizon Wireless

Angel House and VOCAL held their 12th Annual Governor’s Conference Tuesday, April 21st in Montgomery, AL. With nearly 200 in attendance law enforcement officers, victims service officers, judges, court referral officers, and prosecutors all listened as Glenn Bard, a retired state trooper from Pennsylvania, spoke about cell phone technology and how law enforcement can use it to collect evidence for prosecution. Almost every attendee stated they were in awe of the knowledge that could be collected from cell phones. Some even stated they would be ridding themselves of their smartphones, as they were “too smart”. The afternoon session featured Saleh Awadallah and Andy Harasimchuk. Together they presented “The Cleveland Three” and what the Cleveland Police Department along with the District Attorney’s office, learned from ordeal. This case was beyond mind boggling. Both our classes received the highest evaluations in twelve years.

An awards luncheon was held at noon where Attorney General Luther Strange presented the following awards.

Victim Service Officer of the Year – Arnetta Davis of the Barbour/Bullock County DA’s Office
Prosecutor of the Year- DA Pamela Casey of Blount County
Law Enforcement Officer of the Year – Lt. Will Glover of the Dothan Police Department
The Miriam Shehane Award – DA Ben Reeves of the 3rd Judicial Circuit

Special thanks to everyone who participated in the nomination process, all attendees, speakers, and workers. Together we had a very successful and educational event.
Playing Ball with some special people

Wiregrass Angel House was honored to be able to buddy with the Cardinal’s team at Miracle Field to play their last softball game. The volunteers and board members had a blast!

Will Glover Honored During National Police Week

Lt. Will Glover was honored by the Dothan Police Department during National Police week, as the supervisor of the year. He was recognized during the Dothan City Commission meeting.
Dale and Geneva County News

Congratulations to Kimberly Clark for being appointed to the circuit judgeship left vacant by Judge Kenneth Quattlebaum’s retirement. Judge Clark is a welcome addition to the bench in Dale and Geneva counties and victims look forward to working with her.

A plea deal was reached in one of the defendants who murdered Christian Markoff. Joseph Rodgers, who was 15 years old at the time, pled guilty to murder and received a 25 year sentence from Circuit Judge Bill Filmore.

Barbour and Bullock County News

Congratulations to the Barbour County district attorney for being selected the 2015-2016 Miriam Shehane award recipient as well as Arnetta Davis as the victim service officer of the year.

The case for Willie Dickerson has been postponed yet again by the defense. Hopefully with a new judge the trial will begin as scheduled in June.

The trial of Noah Bunnell is scheduled in Clayton for June. Please be thinking of Hillary Franks and her family as they begin the journey to seek justice for her mother, Jackie Bunnell.

National Crime Victim’s Rights Week 2015

National Crime Victim’s Rights Week was observed April 19-25th. During this week the Houston County Commission recognized Wiregrass Angel House with a proclamation. Chairman Mark Culver personally recognized our agency and the good work we do in the community.
Houston and Henry County News

It’s been kind of quiet with murder trials the last couple of months in Houston and Henry counties. Mary Louise Partridge pleaded guilty to felony first-degree hindering prosecution in front of Henry County Judge Derek Peterson. Partridge received a sentence of 10 years, which was suspended for five years of probation. Partridge was one of four people arrested by investigators and charged with capital murder-kidnapping in the beating death of Darren Minniefield.

A Houston County jury convicted a Dothan woman of manslaughter for the fatal stabbing death of her boyfriend in 2013. Jurors deliberated for about two and a half hours before deciding to convict 37-year-old Tareka Green Stoddart of manslaughter. She had been on trial for murdering Chad Thomas Clayton but jurors decided to convict her of the lesser charge. Judge Larry Anderson made sure justice was served by sentencing Stoddard to 16 years in prison, where she will receive no good time and have to serve out her sentence unless paroled. Doug Valeska did an outstanding job in his prosecution of the case.

Justice Knight was found competent to stand trial by Judge Larry Anderson in March. He is accused of murdering Jarvis Daffin in 2012. Hopefully the defense’s stall tactics have worn thin and Mr. Valeska will be able to prosecute this alleged murderer soon so the family can begin their healing process.

We would like to extend our condolences to the families of Mary Hill Joiner and Brett Swisher who were murdered in March.

We would like for the family of Norman Battle to also be remembered. Norman was murdered in April. He was from the Gordon community.
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

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
State inmate parole info.
1.888.726.9799, Option 4

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

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