Director’s Note

Summer is over. It has been one of the longest and hottest summers I can remember! This summer we have heard a great deal about the Alabama general fund budget and all the problems facing our state. Everyone says they don't want to cut any agency. But for every proposed solution there is someone else who has a problem with it. I pray the leaders in our legislature will be able to come together for a compromise for the budget to be passed so no one loses their job. I can tell you victims will suffer if the budget is not passed or if the budget is cut by the proposed 22%. Angel House receives money from the pretrial diversion program in Houston and Henry Counties. Without the circuit clerk's office in each county we would not be able to continue to run Angel House. I do not know nor claim to know what the right answer is. I'm not in the legislature for good reason. But I've been taught my whole life that the word compromise means no one is happy. Each side must give up something. There are many good legislators in the Statehouse. Unfortunately they are in the minority and can only do so much without the others voting alongside them. As a citizen you need to stay informed and know how your representative and senator votes for each bill that is important to you. The only way citizens can make a change is to vote. Continue to keep voting for the ones that represent you and vote against those who do not.

Shelly Linderman
Counselor’s Corner

Justice

Since that moment when your heart skipped a beat, your life, your very existence, has been on standby. You waited for someone to tell you there was a misunderstanding. You waited for someone to explain. You waited for reality to hit. You waited for the funeral. You waited for the marker. You waited for the looks to stop. You waited for the first big day to come and go. The birthday. The holiday. The anniversary. Then you waited for justice.

I recently tried to describe what this "job" is similar to. The best I could come up with is a few of us puny kids get together on the playground and take on a bully. Each time the crowd gathers I hope for the best, but if you get beat up then I'll get beat up with you.

There are moments during a trial when the uncertainty is so heavy it's hard to breathe. Then the District Attorney makes a point and I want to clap, cheer, or pass out high fives. I am so thankful my families have had these DAs to represent them. It's like a big kid stepped up and joined us little puny guys. Over the last few months I've watched the bullies get knocked down. One after the other.

There is no way for us to make sense out of a senseless act, but I serve a great big God and He can do ALL things. There is a myth that when the trial is over everything will get better. Justice doesn't even up the score. It doesn't even make the fight fair. If anything, Justice represents a cleansing of the wounds, so at the very least, the beginnings of healing can start. I look around and I'm kind of sad because my group on the playground keeps getting bigger. On the other hand- there's strength in numbers and us puny kids gotta stick together.

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

Donations

Angel Queens – Bake Sale
Anonymous
Miss Angel Pageant
Henry County Pre-Trial
Houston County Pre-Trial
IBM Employees
Mikie Walding Company
Paula Lindenmuth
Target Employees
United Way
of Coaster Fairfield County
United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey
UPS Employees
Wiregrass Foundation
Wiregrass United Way

Southeast VOCAL News

If you would like information about the Southeast VOCAL support group please contact President Beckie Schuler (334) 791-3969.
Honoring Your Loved One!

National Day of Remembrance is held each year on September 25th. It's one day set aside for all citizens to remember individuals who have been taken from us through homicide. It is a time where we remember our loved ones and reflect on their memory. It’s not a time to reflect on justice or the trial or the offender who took our loved one. This September 25 Angel House wants to memorialize many victims who have been murdered in the Wiregrass by unveiling a memorial quilt where several family members have taken time to prepare a square in memory of their loved one. This quilt is another way to remember and honor each loved one so no one will ever forget who they were and how much they were loved.

Chief Steve Parrish has graciously accepted our invitation to be the keynote speaker. Please join us at 5:30 PM on Friday, September 25 in the Gardens at Wiregrass Angel House to remember our loved ones.

Group

For the month of August, I sought out the help of Tipsy Easel’s co-owners, Kathy Kowolsky and Jacque Stovall. These ladies were generous enough to donate not only their time, but were also willing to share some of their own personal experiences as family members of homicide victims. Having a session at Tipsy Easel allowed us to explore an activity that was creatively therapeutic, a little bit messy, and a whole lot of fun!

- Virginia Askew
National Night Out

August 1st was National Night Out in Dothan and August 4th in Daleville, for all the Wiregrass area to enjoy. There were many booths and give-aways, 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!

There will be a day of service workday

Sunday, September 20th
2:00-4:30
Projects around Angel House

A great big thank you to board member, Tony Luker, for his hard work over a three-week period building a closet for much-needed storage space at Angel house. As you can tell it was a labor of love!

A great big thank you to United Way and Wiregrass Foundation for the grant monies to be able to paint and repair the outside of Angel House.
Dale and Geneva County News

It has been extremely busy in the Circuit Court system in Dale and Geneva counties this summer. A trial was held for one of the murderers of Debbie Ayres.

A week-long trial with David Emery as the lead prosecutor explained the case in such great detail the jury had no problem returning a guilty verdict for Shawn Adkison within 15 minutes of deliberation. Sentencing is September 1st in front of (Ret) Judge P.B. McLauchlin.

Another trial was also held for the murderer of Matthew Tice. It was a long and grueling week of testimony from various witnesses. Most of the witnesses were VERY reluctant to testify against, William Robert Williamson, because of his extensive felony convictions and felt intimidated by his presence. It took a seasoned district attorney, like Kirke Adams, to walk each witness through their testimony, in order for the truth to be revealed. We would also like to mention assistant district attorney, Jordan Davis, who did an outstanding job as well with several witnesses, but what made her so special were her closing arguments and the way she brought Matthew as the focus of the case and that his life mattered. She was remarkable. This jury also came back with the just verdict-GUILTY! Sentencing is scheduled September 9th in front of Judge William Filmore.

A bond reduction hearing was held in the case of Starlea Knight. She was charged with murder for the death of her 4-year-old daughter, Zyrioh Tucker, and felony assault for injuries caused to two other children in the crash. Good job Judge Kimberley Clark for not lowering her bond.

Barbour and Bullock County News

A murderer has been brought to justice in the eyes of one family with ties to Barbour County.

Noah Bunnell, 26, of Clayton, received a sentence of life in prison without the possibility of parole on Thursday, July 9, in the Barbour County courtroom of Circuit Court Judge Burt Smithart. A plea bargain was accepted by Bunnell on Tuesday, July 7, Bunnell plead guilty to the charge of capital murder arson in the slaying of his stepmother, Jacqueline “Jackie” Bunnell, during a robbery committed on Oct. 13, 2013. He also pled guilty to setting the house on fire. “Justice was served for Jacqueline Bunnell’s family; especially her mother, daughter and son. And that is what we strive for…justice for the victim and their family.”- said district attorney, Ben Reeves.

Unfortunately, justice is still on hold for the family of Willie Pugh. His accused murderer has received so much publicity from bloggers it is hard to find a jury who hasn’t heard something about the case. It was moved to Russell County, but unfortunately, the jury was deadlocked. He will be tried again sometime at the end of this year.
Houston and Henry County News

Houston and Henry Counties have been busy with several trials this summer. Judge Butch Binford presided over the trial of Emmanuel Bryant who was accused of murdering Daniel Dawsey. The trial lasted approximately 4 days. Banks Smith was the prosecuting attorney. Mr. Smith did an outstanding job with this case. He put all of his efforts into trying it. Unfortunately the jury decided a lesser included charge of manslaughter was the appropriate conviction. This offender is a three time convicted felon and the judge could sentence him from 20 years to life. Judge Binford knew justice needed to be served for this murderer. He sentenced him to 35 years. Banks Smith and Raynor Clifton did an outstanding job! The family was very pleased with the prosecution and sentencing. Now they can begin the process of healing.

Judge Binford not only held trial in a Houston case, but also in Henry County. Gregory Spann, one of the accused murderers of Tyric Brown, was tried by Assistant District Attorney, Sam Clenney. Mr. Clenney did an outstanding job throughout the week bringing to light how Gregory Spann had for years resented Tyric and waited for the right moment to exact his revenge. It took the jury 42 minutes to come back with a guilty verdict! Sentencing for this murderer is Friday, September 4th.

A Cottonwood man was arrested for murder after the passenger in his vehicle was killed due to drunk driving.

A motion hearing was held in the case of Willie Toney, accused murderer of his estranged wife, Rebecca Jackson. The defense requested more documents for their case. The DA assured the judge all documents had been turned over and would always be an open door policy in capital cases.

Please remember the family of Norman Battles who was killed in Gordon this year.

The Alabama Board of Pardons and Paroles denied the parole of Pamela Kelley. Kelley murdered Burnard Reynolds in December 2011. She was convicted of manslaughter last December. But because of the good time law in Alabama she will end her sentence in July 2017. The family of Burnard wanted the parole board to know how grateful they were this inmate will have to serve every day for the next two years.
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED