Victims must remain vigilant!

It takes a very strong individual to sustain their sanity when trying to deal with the criminal justice system. So many motions, hearings, delays, etc. Each time court is held all you hear about is the offender. Hurry up and wait... that is the motto of the justice system. It is understandable why the courts ALWAYS acquiesce to the defense attorney or the offender, as no judge wants to be overturned by the higher court. Sometimes victims just want to run away from the pain each court proceeding brings. While the prosecutors are preparing their best case, and the defense attorney is working to put on the best defense, folks seem to forget about the ones in the system who DIDN’T choose to be a part of this insane process—the VICTIM!

Unfortunately, every victim or their family must be vigilant in their quest for justice. As a victim it falls on you to reach out to the establishment and find out what is going on with your case. If you are not post trial, then call your district attorney’s office and request the status of your case. Make sure they have your up to date contact information, so they can keep you informed. If you are post trial, then contact the Department of Corrections and the Parole Board to make sure they have your contact information and they know to contact you if something happens to the inmate. If your offender is on death row, it is imperative you call the Attorney General’s office and give them your information, so they can inform you of appeals, etc. I know it’s not fair that another burden must be placed on you. But unfortunately, that is the reality. If we can be of assistance with any of this please don’t hesitate to call.

Shelly Linderman
Director
It is hard to believe last year now, we were just starting the Angel Paws Program. What a fantastic journey this past year has been. For many years, I saw children hurting who had been abused, raped and even murdered. I have watched the forensic interviews of these children at the Child Advocacy Center and I have even put the perpetrators in jail. I have had to go tell the wife, mother, husband, or father that their love one had been murdered. I have seen their hurt, their tears and their pain. But now, I get to see something magical happen as they interact with our therapy dogs. I see empowerment, I see the big smile on their faces and I see the comfort that the dogs bring them. I am fortunate to see these miracles happen every, as our therapy dogs interact with people who are hurting.

I am reminded of the story of the many thousand starfish that had washed onto the beach. A little boy bent down, picked up a single starfish and tossed it back into the ocean. He would walk a little farther and toss another starfish into the ocean. An older gentleman saw the little boy was not making much progress and told the little boy, “Son I don’t think you making much of difference.” The little boy smiled as he bent down and picked up one starfish. He tossed it back into the ocean and said, “Made a difference to that one!”

Hopefully, Angel Paws, can make a difference to that one adult or that one child, to help them find their way, to find a new norm for their life, to go from a victim, to a survivor, to a thriver.

Tony Luker, Program Manager
The family of Pete Reaves was finally able to see justice in the death of their loved one which occurred over ten years ago. The defendant in the case Kharon Davis was found guilty after a week-long trial and was sentenced to life in prison. Although justice has been served, please remember to keep this family in your prayers.

The family of James Gillard received justice in the murder of their loved one. The defendant in the case Andrea Flagg represented himself during trial and was found guilty and sentenced to twenty-five years in prison. Please continue to pray for this family as they continue to work through the loss of their loved one.

Remember to keep the family of Brandon Frazier in your prayers as they begin the process of waiting to receive justice for their loved one. Brandon was assaulted in August 2017 by Marcus Hill of Dothan and sadly succumbed to his injuries. The defendant has been charged with murder and the case has been bound over to grand jury, please keep this family in your prayers as the defendant had a bond hearing in October 2017 in which his bond was reduced to $50,000.

Please keep the family of Marcell Airline in your prayers, Marcell was murdered in August 2017. The defendant in the case Dejarvous Walker Glenn (21) was arrested for Marcell’s murder. Please keep this family in your prayers as they begin the process for justice for their loved one.

Please keep the family of Dwayne Holloman in your prayers the victim was hit during a hit and run accident late October 2017, sadly he succumbed to his injuries. The defendant in the case 40-year-old Latasha Rene Williams of Dothan turned herself in and was charged with a felony; please remember to keep this family in your prayers.

The family of Darren Minniefield has received justice in the death of their loved one, although there are four defendants involved in the case one was tried and sentenced, and another has finally been found guilty. After a week-long trial the jury returned with a guilty verdict of a lesser charge of reckless manslaughter for the defendant in the case Jarvis Jackson. Sentencing is scheduled for December 8, 2017. Please remember to keep the family in your prayers.

Coffee county

Please keep the family of Carl Sewell in your prayers as they begin the process for justice in the case of their loved one. Sewell was murdered in August 2017, the defendant in the case Jareece Edward Blackmon of Enterprise, AL has been charged with murder. The defendant in this case was on probation which was revoked; he was sentenced to finish serving time for a prior change and will remain in the Alabama Department corrections until trial, please keep this family in your prayers.
Please remember to keep the family of Ayanna Smith in your prayers. The family is not only waiting for justice in the case of their loved one, but they have still not been able to locate Ayanna Smith who has been missing since January 2017. The defendant in the case Malcom Theotis Hunter (29) has been arrested and charged with murder. Please keep this family in your prayers as she leaves two young children behind.

**Dale County**

The family of Laramie Cline need your prayers as they begin the process of waiting for justice in the case of their loved one. Laramie was murdered in Arkansas; police have arrested and charged David Houston-Harvey, 23, of Jacksonville with murder, please keep this family in your prayers. All criminal proceedings for this case will be handled in Arkansas.

Lisa Griffin lost her life during a drive-by shooting in May 2017, no arrest has been made in the case, your continued prayers and support is needed at this time as the family deals with their lost.

**Pike County**

The family of Xzavier Thomas needs your continued prayers as they begin the process of waiting for justice for their loved one. Xzavier was killed in May 2017. Two suspects have been charged with his murder Demarcus Flowers and Jacory Townsend; please keep this family in your prayers. A bond hearing is set for November 20, 2017 for Damarcus Flowers.

**Barbour County**

Please remember to keep the family of James Smith in your prayers as they wait for justice in the case of their loved one. Trial was scheduled to begin in late August of 2017 however; a mistrial was declared. The family patiently waits to begin trail.
8th Annual Golf Tournament

What a successful golf tournament for Wiregrass Angel House! A special thank you to Gary Maxwell, project chairman, who worked tirelessly to assure our tournament would be one of the best. Thank you each of our corporate and hole sponsors! Without your support we would not be able to assist the victims of violent crime in our service area.

Thank you to our Corporate Sponsors!

The Cochran Firm, Davis Oil, Dale and Geneva County DA’s Office, Houston County DA’s Office, H.E.D.A., Buffalo Rock, and WTVY-TV

for being our Gold Sponsors!

Thank you to our hole sponsors!

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Utility Trailers
Ward-Wilson Funeral Home
A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR DOOR PRIZE SPONSORS!

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NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

National Day of Remembrance was celebrated on Monday, September 25th, to remember those loved ones that have been taken. As over 250 victims’ family members stood in attendance to commemorate this special day, special music was performed by Alyssa Glover. Families watched for their loved ones as the picture presentation scrolled with each victim who has been murdered in the Wiregrass.

Attorney General Steve Marshall delivered a speech to assure the victims that although those that have not lost a loved one to murder can’t possibly understand their pain, they still want to be there to support those who have. There were new quilt squares that were added to our memory quilt. As the bag pipes played “Amazing Grace” by Mr. Chuck Arney, the families released balloons to their loved ones. A special thank you to Ken Curtis from the local media, which took time out to ensure the event was covered. There were in attendance to commemorate this special day.
Honoring Our Loved one through Memorials

In 2012, we began a memorial garden to honor those loved ones that had been taken by the hands of another. At the back of the garden is a waterfall with the words by our late counselor... Remember, Reflect, Rebuild.

The garden at Wiregrass Angel House was opened so families would have a place to honor their loved ones. This past year we have held 8 memorial tree/bush plantings to honor and remember some of those that have been taken too soon. If you are interested in holding a plant dedication for your loved one, please call our office to set it up.
Counselor’s Corner

Picture the living room, full of life and loved ones. There’s lots of festive food, decorations, presents under the tree, egg nog, smiles, excitement and laughter. But you feel isolated and alone, like no one understands. The holidays will be difficult as time does not heal the wounds caused by homicide. The holidays magnify your trauma. How do you celebrate being together when someone special isn’t there? How do you even begin to want to celebrate again? The need for support is greatest at this time. You can get through the holidays by facing the feelings of grief, rather than hiding from them. You’re not trying to avoid the grief, it’s the pain that seems to never go away. Handling that grief is your way to get through the pain. The holidays also urge people to forgive, in honor of holiday spirit. Forgive in your own time. That comes from a place inside of you, not an “I should” area or mindset.

The trauma of homicide is more difficult because it leaves the question, “why”. It is important for others to understand that we have a criminal justice system. However, as too many of you have experienced it can be more of a legal system, than a “justice” system. The only justice is to have your loved one back. Acceptance is an ongoing process and not a destination. Many of you have called me late in the evenings saying, “I should be able to not cry as much now.” Or, “I shouldn’t miss her this much.” Sometimes it sounds like “I should be over it by now.” I caution you on this terminology. Your grief is yours alone, in the sense that your relationship with your loved one was like unlike anyone else’s. There is no destination at the end of a map. There are only personal goals, sometimes suggested by those who have been where you are. So, my suggestion is to take those “should be’s” and make them “want to be’s”.

By this simple language change you also remove the added pressure that you’re not where you “should” be and are doing it wrong. By saying “I want to be” you change the entire tone and perspective into a feat less daunting and defeating; from surviving to thriving. So, try something small each day. For example, “I want to be able to visit with friends once this week.” By doing this small change you begin to allow yourself to grieve. Homicide is complex. Give yourself permission to grieve, rest and then recover at night. This is especially important as the holidays approach.

New Years is a reflection on a year gone by. One that is especially painful for our new families. It seems almost impossible to remember your loved one’s life when the lack of their physical presence reminds you of how they left it. So here are a few ideas to grieve during the holidays, while still celebrating:

- Say a prayer before dinner.
- Light a candle for your loved one.
- Have everyone write a fun memory of your loved one and put it in a box. Have someone wrap the box and place it under the tree to be opened and read together.
- Participate in our Christmas Card Exchange
- At your place of worship remember them in a prayer at mass/services.
- Include one of your loved one’s favorite dishes in your holiday meal.
- If leaving an empty seat is too depressing, invite someone who doesn’t have family to spend the holiday with.
- Remember, it is okay to be happy – this doesn’t diminish how much you love and miss the person who isn’t there this holiday. Don’t feel guilty for the joy you do find this holiday season.

It’s okay to be happy. Don’t feel guilty for joy or happiness you may feel during the holidays. It does not diminish the love you have for your loved one, whom you miss. It’s the start to your new normal. Remember. Reflect. Rebuild.
Donations

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Wiregrass United Way
DA Kirke Adams
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DA Patrick Jones
Ms. Addie McKinzie
Mr. Paul Mayne, II
Mr. and Mrs. Jack Murphy
Sheriff Wally Olson
Mr. Chester Pelt
Wiregrass Foundation
Wiregrass United Way

Thank you to all our financial supporters! Without your support we could not continue our mission of helping victims of violent crime in the Wiregrass!

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Court Referral Program

In October is our Annual In-Service for the Court Referral Program. Each year nominations are accepted across the State of Alabama for instructors outstanding in their field. Wiregrass Angel House was honored to have the recipient of the 2017-18 Instructor of the Year be a part of their staff.

Congratulations Don Salt on your award.

It was well deserved.

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Christmas
Open House
Thursday
December 7th
10 a.m.- 2 p.m.
**Homicide Support Group**

For a year we have been having unique support group meetings. They are different than most others in the area.

We have hosted a couponing seminar, Thanksgiving feast, Movie night, Christmas open House, Yoga, Art Therapy with Tipsy Easel, Extreme Couponing class with Angela Glover, Harvest Festival, etc. Each month our participation grows. If you haven’t been in a while you should come back. It is a great way to meet others that have become a part of the Angel House family. You will realize there is strength in numbers and you ARE Not alone!
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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
(334).242.7300
1.800.626.7676
www.ago.state.al.us

Victim Contacts

Department of Corrections
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

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