

Silent Witness National Initiative Newsletter

Issue: # 3

October 2014



**Remember My Story.
Remember My Name.**



October has been designated Domestic Violence Awareness Month since the first Day of Unity which was observed in October, 1981 by the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence. The initial goal was to connect battered women's advocates across the nation who were working to end violence against women and their children.

Throughout the month of October 2014, the Silent Witness (SW) board members have been hearing stories about SW events in the United States in honor of the SW victims to call attention to the need for treatment and prevention programs to end the cycle of violence in relationships.

We have also reflected on our upcoming 25th Anniversary in 2015 and the historic first March to End the Silence about Domestic violence which took place on October 17 - 18, 1997 held in Washington DC. At the March, advocates and volunteers from all 50 United States carried 1500 witnesses from the Washington Monument to the steps of the Capital and began a meaningful program honoring the memory of those who had died in acts of domestic violence and calling for programs to educate and bring healing to those caught in the cycle of violence.

I attended that March and carried the oldest victim from Minnesota, Signe Scoville, 86 who was murdered on October 23, 1990. She lived alone in a two-story farmhouse in Cook and was found dead at the bottom of a stairway in the basement. She had been strangled to death by her granddaughter's husband who was charged with her death, and with the death of Harriet Mabel Casey. He later committed suicide.

While carrying Signe Scoville, I began to feel a connection with her story. I had recently become a grandmother and understood the generational aspects of abuse in families. Each step of the March was a step into a new era in my life. At 51 years of age, I had just completed a Bachelor's degree in psychology in preparation for a second career. My heart was calling me out of my job in corporate America and into becoming a counselor for women and men caught in the cycle of abuse. At the conference the day following the march, a fire was lit in my soul to pursue a master's degree in counseling and psychological services so that I could work with those seeking healing from all forms of abuse.

As a survivor I had lived the familial patterns of abuse and was ready to begin my own personal healing journey in individual and group therapy. I found the sessions life-giving as I unraveled my frayed emotions that lingered from abuse and mental disorders in the family. Healing took place over a five year period while I completed a master's degree and prepared

myself to leave my corporate job to more important work at a counseling center in St. Paul, MN.

*Today, I've been working in the field of domestic violence for over 10 years and own a counseling center in Roseville, MN. I serve men, women and children suffering from the emotional scars of abuse by offering individual, couples, family and group counseling services. As a Christian Counselor, I've written the soon to be published treatment model titled, *Peace and Safety in Your Heart and Home*. The model is a 6-week mixed gender group education model. Future publication will be the *Facilitators Manual for Peace and Safety in Your Heart and Home* a 12-week group therapy treatment plan followed by the *Peace and Safety in Your Heart and Home* student workbook. All of these publications will be available for a fee on my website at www.peacefulandsafe.com.*

As I share my story it is with gratitude for SW and how my early involvement led to my personal healing journey and to co-direct the board for Silent Witness. This year the board has experienced significant progress toward connecting the Silent Witness projects in each state and creating a network of support for furthering the cause of domestic violence prevention. Although this project is just getting off the ground, we're hopeful that our website will be the place to go for anyone interested in creating a SW Project or becoming connected to the network of passionate volunteers in each state.

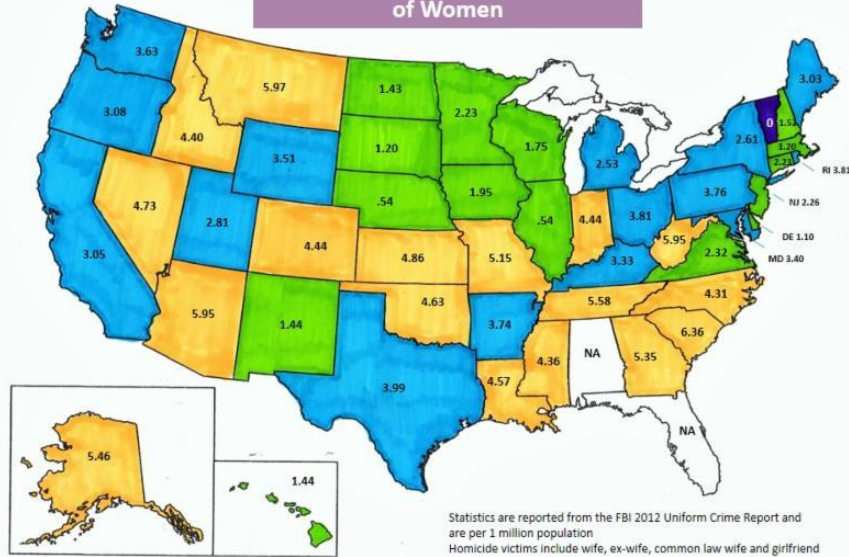
We invite you to share your stories with us since we are keenly aware of the thousands of lives that have been touched and transformed by their involvement in SW projects throughout the country. We're interested in learning about how you were impacted by SW and what activities are taking place in your area. Please send us a brief summary of your experience to be shared in future publications of the SW Newsletter. Please email your info Nancy Rafi by clicking [HERE](#).

Yours in Peace,

Jacquie Skog, Co-Chair, Silent Witness Initiative Board of Directors



2012 Domestic Violence Homicides of Women



Silent Witness Initiative releases Domestic Violence Homicide Statistics 1980-2012

On October 1st, the Silent Witness Initiative held a memorial vigil on the campus of Roger Williams University in Bristol, RI, and released domestic violence homicide statistics and charts with information from 1980 - 2012.

Statistics from every state in the US, along with national trends, were used to create powerful maps and charts, showing a downward trend in dv homicides, but still the numbers are much too high.

Despite the rain and wind, approximately 85 people gathered on October 1st on the quad outside of the library at Roger Williams University to make a powerful statement in honor of Domestic Violence Awareness month. The event included the unveiling of newly compiled domestic violence statistics, a project spearheaded by the SWI Board of Directors with the assistance and amazing diligence of Nicole Nelson, SWI spring 2014 intern.

Participants marched in solidarity carrying Silent Witnesses throughout the campus, after which the members of the Roger Williams University Women's Center led the group in a candle light vigil sharing survivor stories from the campus community. The event left a footprint on the hearts of those who bore witness to the moving experiences that were shared and inspired many to take action in their communities.

Do you have a Silent Witness success story to share? Please send us information about your events and how you are using Silent Witnesses in your campus and local communities. We would love to feature you in an upcoming newsletter.



BRINGING A VOICE TO THE SILENT WITNESSES: THE UNVEILING OF TANYA SHAND'S SILHOUETTE

by Danielle Bordage and Laun Marie Scott

Tanya Marie Shand's silhouette was unveiled and inducted as a New Brunswick Silent Witness on September 20th, 2014 at the Qplex in Quispamsis. Tanya, a resident of Rothesay, was the 25th silhouette in New Brunswick.



The Kennebecasis Regional Police, Kennebecasis Valley Domestic Violence Outreach Program and the KV Intimate Partner Violence Action Group worked closely with the Shand family to help realize their vision for this event.

The ceremony was open to the general public, as it was the family's wish for everyone to feel welcome and to have access to the education and support services that were available. The family welcomed Mayor Murray Driscoll to launch the ceremony, where he pledged to end the silence on domestic violence by reciting the Silent Witness pledge. The Assistant Deputy Minister of the Women's Equality Branch Norma Dubé shared her thoughts on domestic violence and how it impacts our families and communities. From the Women's Equality Branch and a member of the New Brunswick Silent Witness Committee, Lindsay Manuel spoke about the Silent Witness program in New Brunswick and about how much work we still have left to do to represent the voices of all women.

The silhouette was unveiled by Tanya's 7 year old daughter, Cheyenne. Cheyenne was involved with creating her mother's silhouette. On the back of the shield, Cheyenne added her handprint, which will always remain close to her mother's heart.

The ceremony and venue incorporated purple, which was not only Tanya's favourite colour, but also symbolizes the need to remember and honour loved ones who have lost their lives at the hands of a person they once loved and trusted.

The ceremony was closed with the singing of *I'll Stand in the Rain*. This song was written by Leslie Monaghan as a tribute to the women who have been killed by domestic violence in New Brunswick. After the induction ceremony, there was a country corn boil held in celebration of Tanya, as this was her favourite food. Several information booths were set up to provide educational and support information for those in attendance. A private ceremony was held for the family, where a lilac tree and marble bench, with a picture of Tanya, were dedicated in her honour on the Qplex grounds. The bench has an inscription that reads: *End the Silence on Domestic Violence*.

The Shand family has released the following statement:
This past year has been a difficult year for our family, and the next few years will be the same. There is an empty seat at our table that is a steady reminder of what we lost. This brings out a desire to have Tanya's voice heard, to make sure other families stay whole. Tanya is remembered by the community as someone who was caring and loving, she would want to reach out and do what she could to prevent this tragedy from happening again.

<http://www.kvoutreach.ca/tanya-shand/>

<http://www.silentwitness.ca/main-e.asp>

<http://bit.ly/1yzIA03>

Sheila's Shawls & Paul's Scarves Projects

Sheila's shawls and Paul's scarves has continued to remember the loved ones of those who lost their lives to domestic violence. The hope of this project is to bring comfort to the families of the victims and to help keep alive the memory of those who lost their lives. This program has contributed approximately 6500 shawls and scarves across the USA and internationally. Shawls and scarves have been sent when requests are received. At times there has been a surplus of shawls and scarves allowing us to donate them to local shelters. This year the shawl/scarf project donated items to several shelters and three events; two in Louisiana and one in Rhode Island.



There are three coordinators for the Sheila's Shawls and Paul's Scarves program; Terry who lives in Illinois, Danada who lives in New Hampshire and Renee, who lives in Minnesota. For the past two years, Terry and Danada have been very strong supporters of this group by communicating through Ravelry (a knitting social media site) and Facebook to keep everyone informed about the groups and the needs in the shelters. Renee has most recently joined the Silent Witness Initiative Board of Directors and is volunteering weekly at the women's prison in Minnesota. At the prison, Renee is teaching the inmates about social justice and giving back to the community. Although the women in prison have made some poor decisions, they're trying hard to change their lives for a better future and no longer live as a victim. The women knitters enjoy supporting the families of those who have been silenced by domestic violence homicide.

If you are interested in receiving a shawl or scarf for someone you know who has lost a loved one or is in a difficult situation, please contact:

*Sheila's Shawls & Paul's Scarves
1381 Rocky Creek Court
Belleville, IL 62220*

or

*Sheila's Shawls and Paul's Scarves
9820 Pierce St. NE.
Blaine, MN 55434*

If you would like to start a group of volunteer knitters at a prison, we suggest that you contact a local prison to inquire about hosting a project with the inmates. It's best to work with someone within the prison system such as a Sargent in charge of social justice or a Chaplin to determine if there is any interest in a project for Silent Witness as a means for inmates to give back to the community.

Renee has found that knitting is a relaxing and calming experience for women in prison and that learning to knit makes a wonderful impact on them and improves their self-confidence. Once a shawl or scarf is finished the women experience the satisfaction of doing something positive for another person and giving back to the community. As the women knit and crochet, they talk, share and help each other in a variety of ways.

In one of the knitting groups there was a counselor from a domestic violence shelter who said that when she taught the clients to knit in the shelter they didn't want to attend their support group, but they always looked forward to knitting group. It was later discovered that as the women became more confident in their knitting they tended to share more, and the result was that they also received more support in the knitting group. The knitting group provided a focus on what their hands were doing and less focused on their fears about sharing with one another.

Starting a prison shawl/scarf project requires careful consideration. There are things about prison programs that must be learned and respected. The prison staff will give the guidelines for what can and can't be done within their facility. The staff may also be able to identify some of the positive characteristics of the women participating in the knitting program.

Prison usually have donated materials, they may require the facilitator of the project to go through a training program before setting things up. It's important to gratefully acknowledge the time and effort given by the prison staff to help facilitate a shawl/scarf project.

*Questions or concerns can be directed to Renee Youngberg at
falkum23@gmail.com*



How Can You Help?

There are many ways to get involved.

The Silent Witness National Initiative is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Unlike many other non-profits, we have no paid staff members, no office building (we're completely virtual!) and are run by generous volunteers around the globe- all working towards a common goal - to end domestic violence homicides.

Any funds that we receive are used directly to reach our goal, and pay for things like printed materials, website design and maintenance, to offset costs for meetings and to support Silent Witness projects and programs around the globe - no funds are used for paid staff, we are completely volunteer run!

If you'd like to help us reach our goal by making a donation, please click [HERE](#).

Thank you.

