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

Monthly News & Updates March 28, 2016

Greetings,

Watch for a new and improved website in the months ahead! The Board of Directors is working on a revised mission statement to better serve the families friends who have lost a loved one to domestic violence homicide. We invite you to visit our website to learn more about Silent Witness.

[Visit Our Website
http://www.silentwitness.net/](http://www.silentwitness.net/)

Upcoming Events

We invite you to send us the events taking place in your area. To report and event use the newly created email at:

SilentWitnessInternational@gmail.com



Recent Event

Service Spotlight



Remembering

The Silent Witness Board of Directors recently met for a yearly meeting in Minnesota. With 4 new board members and 3 existing members and a consultant we engaged in a meaningful time of getting to know one another and discovering a shared desire to refine the mission and message of Silent Witness.

The existing board members are; Jennifer Stanley, Leslie Monaghan and Jacquie Skog. New board members are Mary Margaret Krueger, Rose Johnson, Shelly Anderson and Natalie Niles-Arguella. Individually we are passionate about the history and work of Silent Witness to be a voice and a visible presence for those who lost their lives due to domestic violence homicide.

A key objective of the board is to locate active participants in SW projects across the USA and eventually to the projects that have been established Internationally. The purpose of locating others involved in SW is to create an up to date network of all projects so that there is a place to connect with other states to provide encouragement and to enlarge the sphere of influence of our organization to serve the families and friends of domestic violence homicide victims.

In our discussions several stories stood out that led to the renewed mission and purpose of SW,, to provide hope and healing to the people experiencing a traumatic loss of a loved one and grieving while they learn to live and go on with life.

New board member, Mary Margaret Krueger from Bowling Green University in Ohio runs a robust SW program at the University and is connected with projects and programs throughout northeast Ohio. Mary's connection with a family member of a DV homicide victim demonstrates an example of a relationship that grew to become a lasting friendship when her work on behalf of the SW mission became a compassionate relationship that goes beyond what we could envision. I encourage you to read the article and consider the meaningful relationship that brings hope and healing into the life of both persons.

Mary's Story

Since its founding in 2001, the Northwest Ohio Silent Witness Project chapter has made outreach to surviving family members a priority. When there is a new domestic violence homicide in our community, we wait 2-3 months, then contact as many of the victim's families as possible, to offer our support, introduce Silent Witness and seek their input on plaque language for their loved one's silhouette. At our annual Unveiling Ceremony, we staff a table for friends and family members who want to share their contact information--which we then use to ensure that they receive personalized invitations to future events. We are as thorough as possible in these efforts, but the process is imperfect: information from police reports, newspaper obituaries, funeral homes and social media sites is not always complete, and sometimes people "fall through the cracks."

That happened in 2013. After media coverage of our Unveiling Ceremony, I received a call from the very distressed aunt of a recent victim, who was upset and hurt that no one in the family had known about the event or received an invitation. She and I soon realized that all coverage of the case had referenced only Katie's married name, which meant that our staff had had no way of knowing whom to contact in her family.

The aunt, who had helped raise Katie, spoke at great length about the family's collective trauma, their frustration at her husband having fled the country just ahead of law enforcement, and-most of all, of course-their deep grief. Could I tell her more about the ceremony they had missed, she asked. And would she and Katie's other family member have to wait until the following year to view her silhouette?

Two phone conversations later, I had accepted an invitation to dinner the following month, on what would have been Katie's 31st birthday. As more than a dozen wet-eyed family members gathered in Katie's aunt's living room, I carefully unveiled the Katie's figure and read the words they had missed hearing a month earlier:

My name is KATIE WALTON.
I am 29 years old.
I live in Toledo and am a graduate of
Sylvania Northview High School.
I attend nursing school and work for a dry cleaning company.
My friends describe me as an outgoing person with a bubbly personality.
I have a dog, Pixie, whom I adore.

On November 2, 2012 I did not show up for work.
My co-workers asked police to check on my well-being when I did not answer their phone calls, but before the police
arrived, my uncle found my body under a blanket on the front porch of my home.
I had been strangled to death.

My husband, Kyle Sheppard, left for Quebec on the morning I was killed.
He turned himself into Canadian authorities two days later and was arrested and charged with my murder.
My friends and family are still waiting for him to be extradited back to the United States.

My name WAS Katie Walton.

Remember my name.

Hundreds of people from Northwest Ohio-family, friends, service providers, concerned citizens-attend our annual
Unveiling Ceremony every year. I am stunned each time by the size of the audience, and horrified anew by the extent of
DV's reach. The depth of loss and pain in those rooms never fails to move me.