



In their

VOICES

*~ Honoring and remembering those who have been murdered
in acts of domestic violence around the world ~*

The Silent Witness National Initiative began in 1990 with a group of 8 women from the St.Paul/Minneapolis area who decided to address the issue of domestic violence murders in their community. What started as a small grassroots project soon spread to other states, until finally in 1997 all 50 states in the US had a Silent Witness project of their own. There are now Silent Witness projects in all the states, and in several other countries. Silent Witness also promotes 9 RESULTS projects – programs that can be implemented into communities to reduce domestic violence homicides – with the goal being ZERO domestic homicide murders by the year 2010. We'd like to hear about what you're doing in *your* part of the world to bring awareness about domestic violence homicides, the reduction programs you've implemented, and how you're using your Silent Witness projects in your cities and towns. Please submit any photos or stories to us by email at nrafi@hotmail.com. You can also snail mail them to us at 22 Calvert Street, Newport, RI 02840 USA. Let us know what you'd like to see in future postings – we want to make this handout something we can all share and learn from. Please feel free to download and print this publication as a handout to inform your community about the Silent Witness Initiative and what we do.



Silent Witness activists from 15 U.S. states and Canada march in Providence, Rhode Island

The Second National March to End the Silence in Providence, RI – May 2004

Friends and families of Silent Witnesses from 15 states and Canada gathered in the Rhode Island capitol city of Providence over the weekend of May 21-23, 2004 at The Westin Hotel for the 2nd national March to End the Silence. On Friday night we were greeted by RI Attorney General Patrick Lynch who welcomed us to RI, and commended everyone for their dedicated work to bring an end to domestic violence murders. Everyone had a chance to meet the advocates from other states and talk about how Silent Witness has impacted their lives – what a fun gathering it was! On Saturday morning we met for a welcome breakfast and watched a presentation of photos gathered from Silent Witness projects around the world – it was great to see the silhouettes with plaques in several languages! Awards were given to several people who have been instrumental in helping Silent Witness grow since we last met 7 years ago – Janet Hagberg, Nancy Rafi, Deborah Perry, Kim Wells – along with awards of special merit: Sean Brazalle & Julie Tenant-Burt from Wyoming for traveling the farthest with their Silent Witnesses to attend the weekend's events; Beverly Newby & Jennifer Soule who raised the money to come from Michigan to Rhode Island to carry their sister's/mother's Silent Witness from Ohio; Aly Morgan & Jennifer Stanley, the mother/daughter duo from Tennessee & Kentucky, Heart and Soul, who sang their moving original song *Silent Witness* on the steps of the RI statehouse; Jennifer Stanley from Rhode

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Island, who coordinates all the college participation for Silent Witness around the world; SGT William Merandi, head of the Special Victims Unit of the Providence, RI police department, for coordinating police participation at our march; and the wonderful folks from Canada, including Leslie Monaghan who wrote our closing song *I'll Stand in the Rain*. As we bundled up to start our march at the state capital (it was unseasonably chilly!), our volunteers made sure all our Silent Witnesses were gathered by state on the lawn. We were led by a bagpiper, a mounted police officer, and a color guard from the RI Brotherhood of Correctional Officers, and we carried our state banners and Silent Witnesses through the streets of Providence, and closed our afternoon with a candlelight vigil. On Sunday morning we gathered to learn about several RESULTS projects – programs that are being shown to reduce domestic violence homicide – with the hopes that everyone would go back to their own states and replicate at least one of the projects. And then it was all too soon to say goodbye to our new friends. One of the participants of the weekend wrote us this: *"I am so glad I got to be involved with the event...The breakfast was so empowering...each of the speakers were so moving...It will be an event I will remember for the rest of my life...I was lucky enough to never be a victim of domestic violence, but I realized how important the Silent Witness project is to women all over the world...and the role you play is incredible."* Take a moment to check out our website for photos and more information about the weekend's events – www.silentwitness.net



6 year - old
Lisa Steinberg's Silent
Witness from New York



RI Attorney General
Patrick Lynch speaks to
the crowd



Wayland Lindscott from
Maine listens to
speakers at the vigil



Survivor Gretchen Nelson tells
her story and honors her friend
Betty Jo who was murdered.



**October is
Domestic Violence
Awareness Month**

It's only a few short weeks before we gather in our communities to remember domestic violence victims, and many of you will be using the Silent Witnesses in candlelight vigils, memorial masses, rallies and marches around the globe. Send us your stories and photos so that we can share them with others in our next newsletter in the Spring!

New Silent Witness goals: FIVE year goals 2002-2006

- 50 States and 30 countries with multiple Silent Witness exhibits and October events.
- 75-85% drop in domestic violence homicides for women and men, to 400 per year for women and 240 for men.
- 5000 successful Results Projects in all 50 states and 15 other countries.
Court Watch, Self Mastery Treatment Model, Coordinated Community Response, DART, Mississippi Model for African American teens, Taos Model for counseling survivors, Empower for adolescents, Data Collection, Corporate Prevention Models.
- 25 states and 5 countries with zero domestic homicides for women and men for one year.
- Accurate domestic violence homicide statistics and data collection in all 50 states and 15 other countries.
- Collaboration with 10 other organizations on projects to bring hope and healing to the domestic violence movement in the world.

Sheila's Shawl Extravaganza

Wednesday, June 16th, The Weisman Art Museum of the University of Minnesota was the place to be for the first *Sheila's Shawl Extravaganza* – honoring the late Sheila Wellstone, activist, humanitarian, and wife of the late Senator Paul Wellstone. The Sheila's Shawl project was started by Janet Hagberg, Co-Executive Director of the Silent Witness Initiative, to honor Sheila Wellstone for the amazing work she did for women affected by domestic violence. The Silent Witness Initiative was one of the beneficiaries of over \$50,000 raised by this auction of designer shawls, created by fiber artists and knitters from around the state of Minnesota. Sheila's Shawls are created by people all over the world, and are given to the mothers, sisters and daughters of domestic violence homicide victims at no cost. There is also a Paul's Scarves project for the fathers, brothers & sons left behind. More information is available at our website. This is a wonderful way for communities to reach out and help the families and friends of our Silent Witnesses, and we hope to recreate this project throughout the world.



Father and mother, wearing a Sheila's Shawl, march in a candlelight remembrance vigil

Heart & Soul

Mother and daughter duo Aly Morgan and Jennifer Stanley have written & performed an original song for the Silent Witness Initiative called "Silent Witness" – a moving tribute that was sung live at the national march and candlelight vigil in Rhode Island in May 2004. This song is available on the CD entitled "God Are You Listening?" for only \$10, along with ten other songs and can be shipped around the United States. To order your copy, please make sure to check out their website at <http://www.womensfaithforceministry.org/silentwitness.pdf> or visit the Silent Witness website at www.silentwitness.net. Also available is the CD with the original song by Leslie Monaghan from Canada, entitled "I'll Stand in the Rain" – available for only \$5. These songs are wonderful to use at candlelight vigils, rallies & marches. Buy one today and support the work of these talented women.

Never Too Young To Get Involved!



Hats off to mother/daughter team of Susan & Brianna Gustatis of Rhode Island! Susan is the Vice President of Silent Witnesses of RI, and her 10 year old daughter Brianna has been an integral part of the projects around the state. Brianna creates purple ribbons to sell, sets up information tables at community events, registers people at conferences & talks about Silent Witness to everyone she knows. This is what a young and upcoming activist looks like! Keep up the great work Brianna – we can't wait to hear about what you're doing next.





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How to Create a Silent Witness Project in YOUR Community

This is wonderful! Thank you for getting involved and helping us to end domestic violence homicides. I promise this will be one of the most amazing things you will ever do with your life. First, check out our website (www.silentwitness.net) to see if there's a Silent Witness project already created in your state. If you click on the link to "ABOUT US" you can see each of the state coordinators listed, with phone numbers and email addresses so that you can contact them. Why re-create the wheel when you don't have to? If there's no Silent Witness project in your area, and you're a college student, contact Jennifer Stanley, our College Coordinator at jstanley@rwu.edu for more help. If you're a community member, contact nrafi@hotmail.com for more information.



Once you've decided you'd like to start a new Silent Witness project, email nrafi@hotmail.com to get the password to the website section where you can download the patterns for the Silent Witnesses. You'll need to enlarge them at a local Kinko's to the actual size to use them as patterns for your plywood silhouettes. There are also a few places listed on the website where you can buy the silhouettes pre-made, but you'll still need to write the stories for the shields yourselves.



Now, gather a group of friends and colleagues you think might be interested in helping with this project. You don't have to have prior organizing experience – put your passion into action! Gather for dinner or drinks one evening and talk about how you'd like to proceed. Make subcommittees – who would be willing to work on creating a database of all the domestic violence murder victims in your area (check with your state's Attorney General's office for this, they can usually help out) – these will be your Silent Witnesses. Who will get materials donated to create the silhouettes? Who will write a letter to contact the Witness' family members to help write the stories on the shields? Who will work with the media? How will you unveil your project when it's completed? How can you raise money or get donations to help pay for things that aren't donated? Once you've all taken on a task, set a date for the completion of your project, and at a time and place that's convenient for everyone, gather once a week to give progress reports and celebrate what you've accomplished so far. Remember, when you divide the work, it gets done much quicker, but if you can only find one or two people to start, don't get discouraged. It's amazing how just a few people who are committed to this project can make such a big impact in their communities. You're never alone – the Silent Witness projects are all connected by our bi-monthly newsletter that we'll sign you up for once you register your project online at our website! Just remember what Gandhi said – "We may never know what comes of our results, but if we do *nothing*, there will be *no* results."



More photos of the national MARCH TO END THE SILENCE in Providence, RI



Bagpiper leads the march



Tying our UNITY ribbon at the Saturday morning breakfast



Fern Brown & quilt



Bowling Green University group from Ohio



Jennifer Soule & her mom's SW



Tee shirt backs with state names



Young participants



Julie & Sean accept their award at the Westin



Lined up at the RI Statehouse



Kim Wells of CAEPV speaks



Attorney General Lynch & RI State PD