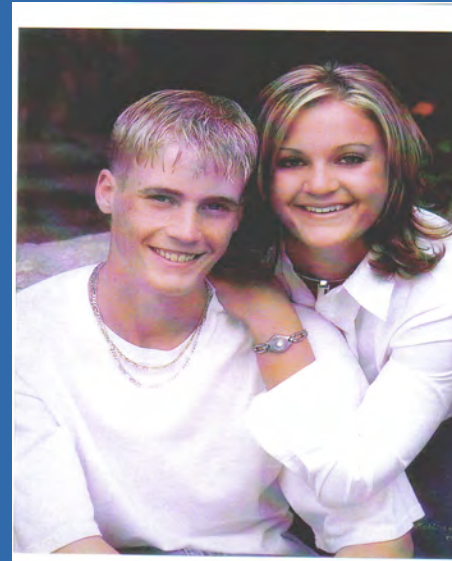


Moms living with Murder

Wendy Cohen
and
Karen Berryhill



Garry Mac & Lacy Jo



Friends in crisis

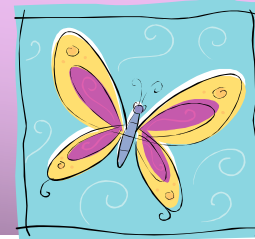
- *Wendy and Karen met in June of 2003.
- *Their children were murdered within 5 months of one another.
- *They emailed and phoned each other often
- *They do their own separate work to fight the societal issues surrounding their children's deaths but they support one another and speak together to draw attention to their stories and to honor their children who they miss desperately
- *Their friendship provides the kind of understanding they don't receive in other places or with other people
- *They are each other's life line on dark days and each other's joy on good days

Lacy's Story

- Lacy was pulled over at night in front of her home and tricked by a man posing as a police officer
- She was kidnapped, drugged, sexually assaulted and killed with a blunt object
- Her body was burned and buried in a shallow grave in the mountains
- It took 10 days for police to find her body
- Her killer plead guilty and is serving a life sentence without the possibility of parole
- He has filed an appeal and is waiting to re-plead his case



Lacy's Killer



Lacy's killer has not expressed any remorse but he did plead guilty and spare everyone the long drawn out trial process

His family has established a relationship with Wendy from the beginning and have expressed sorrow on many occasions

The killer's family is strongly encouraging him to take responsibility and meet with Wendy to answer her questions

The killer's big brother has agreed to speak with her at churches, jails, probation departments and schools to fight the use of violence, meth and pornography

The killer's mother still writes Wendy and sends her cards and prays for her
Wendy has a sincere love for the killer's brother and his mother

Wendy is waiting for the day when she can meet the killer face to face and show him pictures of her daughter so he will know who he killed

Two Broken hearts to repair

A man from Chicago sent me this picture with Lacy superimposed and he wrote that he keeps this on his screen saver as a daily reminder of forgiveness



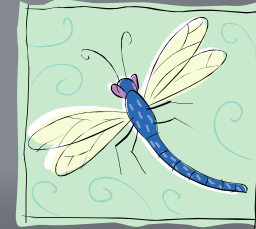
Love One Another

Garry's Story

- Gary was at his graduation party in his own home when Asian gang members crashed the party
- He and five other high school friends escorted them to the driveway to make sure they left
- As the gang members pulled away in their car, one man shot a ray of bullets at the 6 kids in the driveway as they yelled, "Asian pride."
- Gary was shot in the heart and died in his big sister's arms
- The driver (Kazuhiro Hashimoto) received
- The shooter (Patrick Suchaiya) was convicted of second degree murder, attempted murder and tampering with physical evidence he was given 73 and a half years for his crime.



Garry's Killers



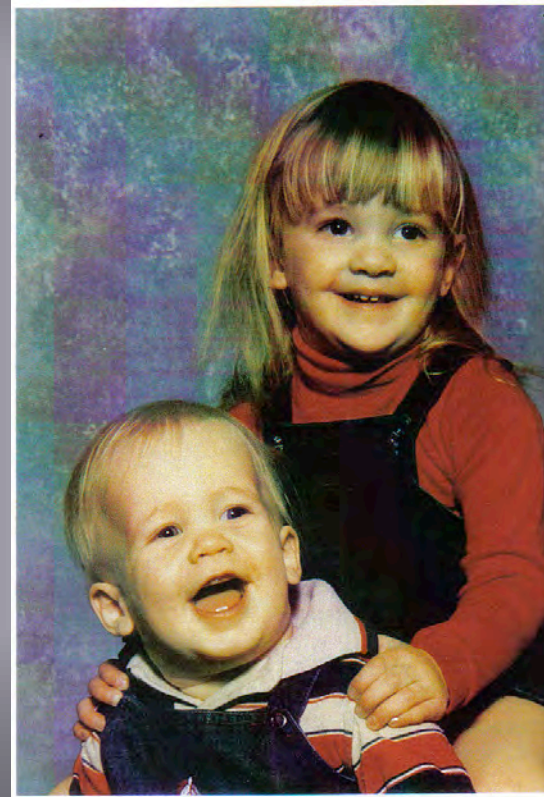
- The driver of the get away car expressed remorse in person to Karen's family at the trial
- His family expressed remorse
- Karen forgave them but is not satisfied with his sentencing because she feels that if he was truly remorseful he would speak with her at area high schools and denounce gang activity
- The Killer has never expressed remorse. In fact, he has written letters expressing his love for the gang and bragged about his crime. His family was nasty to Karen's family in the courtroom and has never expressed sorrow to her family

Garry's family

- Sheena, Karen, Garry, Jack



- Garry and Sheena



Basic Principals for handling survivors

- Realize that survivors are unable to think clearly and make major decisions without support from close friends and family
- They will be scattered, forgetful, emotional, moody, depressed, anything can trigger their pain
- They don't need to be told to get over it or move on
- They need to connect with other survivors who understand what it is like to lose a child or family member to violence

Advice for those who work with survivors

- They will need to celebrate anniversaries in ways that honor the lost family member
- I.e. Memorial services that may or may not be soon after the fact. Balloons, flowers, writings, journals, talking over and over again about their loved one is critical.
- Keep in mind they do NOT want this person to be gone in the first place so don't tell them it all happened for a reason
- They do not want the memory to fade or the loved one to be forgotten
- So they will need to find a cause or a purpose to give themselves to in order to prevent another parent or person from having to live through the kind of pain they are feeling
- And will always be feeling on some level

- i.e. moms against drunk drivers began with moms who lost children in a senseless act
- bringing up the murderer in some sort of sympathetic way is harmful at first to the survivors they are still coping with the loss and the terrible reality of how their loved one died
- Allow them to bring up the details of the case when they can handle it.
- Encourage them to keep all the things that people send them so they can read them later



The judicial system

- Court system wants us to be stoic
- Victims advocates.. serve a purpose for the courtroom information but there is a long term need for support
- After a child has been killed, waiting to see the loved one is torture
- Not being able to touch them because they are evidence is cruel. A parent needs to touch their child to know that this is really happening
- We have to put the humanity back into this process for survivors
- The dead body is a loved and cherished human being we have to make concessions for these grieving families and friends
- We are put on hold we can't grieve because we are in court we are waiting for phone calls and hearings that are delayed all the while our pain is being delayed
- Waiting is torture for survivors.. it is more time to think
- It often feels like they are waiting for their mind to come back
- The world isn't safe anymore

Changing a rigid system

- Lock them up and throw away the key
- Department of punishment/ not corrections
- How do you change the average person's mind about justice for families of survivors?
- The dividing wall between sides in a courtroom
- Educating young people about jury duty
- How can we better include survivors in the solution to these questions?
- How about a summit on healing?



Other survivors

- More than just parents are affected
- Siblings have different needs than adults
- What support is available for the brothers and sisters and best friends who are surviving this monumental life event?
- Children process death according to their developmental ages
- How can we make their worlds safe again?
- How can educators be trained to deal with these children more effectively at school?
- Friends and extended family are often left out in the cold because their pain doesn't seem as "important" as the nuclear family

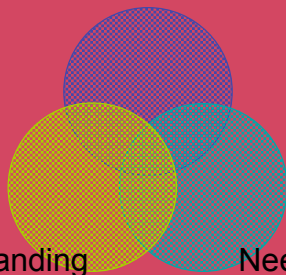
Friends & Family



Moms living with Murder



Need for closure



Need for understanding

Need for ceremony

