

## **Discussion Forum Panelists**

### Experience of Victims

Judy Williams, Victim's Advocate

Sandra Adams, Victim

Mandy Self, Victim

Steve Monger, Victim

### Neighborhood Advocates

Rev. Dennis Williams, Faith Memorial Baptist Church

William Mustafa, Hidden Valley Neighborhood Association

John Wall, Hidden Valley Neighborhood Association

Kelly Alexander, University Research Park Neighborhood Association

### Organizational Support for Offenders or Potential Offenders

Myra Clark, Energy Committed to Offenders (ECO)

Madeline McClenney-Sadler, Exodus Foundation.org

Norman Butler, Defense attorney for violent offenders

### Victim Support Services

Annette Morrison, United Family Services

Yvonne Moore, United Family Services

Lisa Crawford, Mothers of Murdered Offspring

**Judy Williams** is one of three co-founders of Mothers of Murdered Offspring (MOM-O) which was established in 1993. She is also a member of the Board of Directors for MOM-O, Footprints Ministries, Our Children's Memorial Walkway and The Charlotte Apartment Association. Her community involvement started with MOM-O when her goddaughter Shawna Hawk was murdered by Henry Louis Wallace in 1993.

**Saundra Adams** is an active member of the Board of Directors for Mothers of Murdered Offspring (MOM-O) and an advocate for peace. Her involvement with MOM-O began after the murder of her 7 month pregnant daughter Cherica Adams. Saundra has shared her daughter's story and message of peace with national media figures including Oprah, John Walsh and *People* magazine. She is raising her grandson Chancellor.

**Mandy Self** is a victim of homicide.

**Steve Monger** became an active supporter of the goals of Mothers of Murdered Offspring after the murder of his daughter Elaine on August 24, 2005. Elaine was a rising junior at North Mecklenburg High School.

**Rev. Dennis Williams** serves as the pastor of Faith Memorial Baptist Church and Moderator of the Mount Peach Missionary Baptist Church Association. The Reverend has received numerous honors including the Winston-Salem University Alumni Achiever Award for Excellence in Education and the First Union Ben Craig Award for Outstanding Educators. His heart's desire is to love much and serve well.

**William Mustafa** is President of the Hidden Valley Neighborhood Association. The Association seeks to increase the standard of living by raising community awareness and through cleaning up the neighborhood. Currently, Mr. Mustafa is in the process of planning and developing after school programs and activities for neighborhood youth.

**John Wall** is a member and former President of the Hidden Valley Neighborhood Association. Mr. Wall is an active community member participating as President of the Metrolina Minority Contractors Association. In addition, he is a business owner concentrating in semi-trailer rentals and leasing.

**Kelly Alexander** serves as President of the University Park Neighborhood Association and as Chairperson of Mothers of Murdered Offspring. In addition to his role of neighborhood and community advocate, Mr. Alexander participates actively in the United States Youth Council which seeks to support education and leadership through international study programs

**Myra Clark** is the Executive Director of Energy Committed to Offenders (ECO) which serves offenders, ex-offenders and their families by providing assistance with 'reentry' into the community. 'Reentry' includes pre-release planning, transitional assistance and family support. In addition, Ms. Clark works collaboratively on 'reentry' issues with other non-profits and governmental organizations in the community.

**Madeline McClenney-Sadler** is the President and Founder of Exodus Foundation.org which is a faith based charity dedicated to stopping the flow of African-Americans to prison. The foundation participates actively in the Charlotte Prisoner Reentry Network and operates the Red Sea Crossings Mentoring Program and an educational scholarship program. In 2005, the foundation awarded its first scholarship to a formerly incarcerated person who is completing a degree in business administration.

**Norman Butler** has ten (10) years experience practicing criminal defense law in State Superior and District Courts. Mr. Butler represents defendants in homicide cases and capital murder cases. In addition, he is a member of the North Carolina Bar Association, the North Carolina Association of Black Lawyers and the National Bar Association.

**Annette Morrison** is the Director of Crisis Intervention & Advocacy for United Family Services where she supervises Victim Assistance and Rape Crisis in Mecklenburg County and the Rape Crisis programs in Union and Cabarrus counties. She is trained in Crime Victim Services, certified as a NC Victim Service Practitioner by the NC Victim Assistance Network and is a licensed professional counselor. Ms. Morrison has counseled victims of rape, child sexual abuse, domestic violence, and families of homicide victims. She has also co-facilitated a support group for families affected by homicide.

**Yvonne Moore** is a Victim Compensation Specialist and Case Advocate for United Family Services Victim Assistance Program. Yvonne has also attended workshops offered by NC Crime Victims Assistance Network. She is a homicide survivor and co-facilitator for a Homicide Survivors Support Group, sponsored by Victim Assistance.

**Lisa Crawford** works for Mothers of Murdered Offspring which seeks to provide support for families of murder victims and education to youth on violence and substance abuse prevention. In addition, Ms. Crawford participates actively in the community through her involvement on the Charlotte Chamber Board, the City of Charlotte Homicide Task Force and the Cities and Schools Mentor Program.

Raising Awareness Discussion Forum  
Homicide Task Force  
January 26, 2006

**Judy Williams, Mothers of Murdered Offspring (MOMO)**

Ms. Williams provided an overview of the services that MOMO offers to families of homicide victims. She also talked about ways that MOMO helps families to honor victims, including the balloon launch on New Year's Day.

**Recommendation(s):**

- Provide Sensitivity training for police officers and
- Designate an officer(s) whose sole task is to work with the families of victims.

**Sandra Adams, Mothers of Murdered Offspring**

Ms. Adams shared her personal story of the murder of her daughter and what it is like to raise her grandson. She stressed that the suspects give no thought to the families of their victims. She believes that people need to be educated on their purpose in life; if they are not, they will abuse someone else. People must learn to love themselves.

**Recommendation(s):**

- Provide mentoring programs for young boys with single mothers so that they can be taught how to become men;
- Provide education programs for young girls on self esteem issues and verbal/ physical abuse; and
- Offer facilities that give young people alternatives to a lifestyle of criminal activity.

**Mandy Self, Victim**

Ms. Self shared her personal experiences since the murder of her husband. She described not feeling safe and her difficulty with making decisions. Her advice is to stop young people early and help them turn their lives around.

**Recommendation(s):**

- Early childhood intervention

**Steve Monger, Victim**

Mr. Monger shared his family's experience since the murder of his daughter and stated his family has "been sentenced to life." He stated that Victim Assistance and its group therapy programs have been invaluable.

**Recommendation(s):**

- Provide a CMPD liaison to victims' families explaining the court system, what happened, what will happen, what they can anticipate, and what agency is doing what.

### **Rev. Dennis Williams, Faith Memorial Baptist Church**

Rev. Williams talked about how all of the community is impacted by the fear factor associated by homicide. He also felt that the fear is fueled by the media with “false evidence appearing real.” He thinks more of an effort should be made to get the correct information in front of the public. He thinks we must get the message out that people engaged in high risk lifestyles are more likely to be victims, yet we must also be sensitive to the exceptions to that.

#### **Recommendation(s):**

- Share homicide demographics from other cities. Statistics are a litmus test for the health of the community.
- Provide resources for youth to become productive citizens.
- Encourage churches to help families learn how to access services they need.
- Continue community policing especially in helping communities to think through their own plight.

### **William Mustafa, Hidden Valley Neighborhood Association**

Mr. Mustafa talked about the negative impact that publicity about crime has had on Hidden Valley. He said there was only one homicide there in the past year but the public perception is much worse. The negative publicity is affecting property values in the neighborhood. Neighborhood stability is affected because residents who want to sell their homes cannot; consequently, they rent their homes and the renters do not have a stake in the neighborhood. New businesses do not come to the neighborhood and those that do are non-productive for the neighborhood.

#### **Recommendation(s):**

- Recommends Hidden Valley needs good representation on City Council, thoughtful planning for the area, and more resources including programs for youth.

### **John Wall, Hidden Valley Neighborhood Association**

Mr. Wall reinforced the remarks of Mr. Mustafa and showed one of the headlines about crime in Hidden Valley.

#### **Recommendation(s):**

- Create a coalition of service providers for the Hidden Valley neighborhood and have that group select community problems to work on.

## **Kelly Alexander, University Research Park Neighborhood Association**

Mr. Alexander feels that homicide is a symptom of the problem, not the disease itself. He quoted authors Steven Levitt and Stephen Dubner who identify poverty, teenage single parent homes, and low maternal education as predictors of criminality in children. He feels that to reduce the homicide rate, the community must address the needs of children living in poverty. Mr. Alexander reminded the task force that gangs recruit 24/7. Should we do any less?

### **Recommendation(s):**

- Change public school curriculum to require parenting education and non-violent conflict resolution programs;
- Counsel teenage mothers during pregnancy and after delivery on educational opportunities and job skills;
- Provide educational opportunities all year round by linking the public schools with community colleges, technical schools, colleges and universities;
- Support an increase in the state mandated minimum wage;
- Coordinate after school and summer employment opportunities through a well-advertised clearinghouse;
- Provide summer recreational activities such as cart racing that are organized and supervised by Parks and Recreation;
- Support more police officers and community policing as both a deterrent to crime and a way to build bridges between the community and the police department; and
- Create a cadet program similar to ROTC as a way of encouraging young people to consider careers in criminal justice.

## **Myra Clark, Energy Committed to Offenders (ECO)**

Homicide affects the community which makes citizens feel less safe. The offender's family is also a victim. They feel a sense of loss and loss of potential. ECO offers them a support group called 'Families Doing Time.' Offenders are often under the influence; some are mentally ill. Some kill as a result of a domestic situation; some kill from pure greed. Many offenders had bad childhoods. She notes 98% of offenders come back to the community where they lived prior to being incarcerated. Ms. Clark presented a handout on the phases of reentry into the community.

### **Recommendation(s):**

- Support community anti-violence programs, Project Safe Neighborhoods, Weed and Seed and drug treatment in jails;
- Collaborate with neighborhoods on after school and summer programs for youth; and
- Communication between government entities and non-profit support services.

### **Madeline McClenney-Sadler, Exodus Foundation**

Ms. Sadler relayed the purpose of the Exodus Foundation.org and promoted its scholarship and education program for formerly incarcerated individuals. Ms. Sadler sees lethal violence as a way of defining masculinity in the black community.

#### **Recommendation(s):**

- Create summer jobs for youth;
- Support conflict resolution programs for young black males;
- Support abuse and neglect intervention;
- Pay attention to issues surrounding mental health and incest.

### **Norman Butler, Defense Attorney**

One of the best indicators that a juvenile will become an offender is in his school records. School records can help us identify risk factors through such entries as chronic suspensions, personality disorders, fights, dropouts, etc. He believes that we must teach people how not to kill each other. He is an advocate for earlier intervention.

#### **Recommendation(s):**

- Study school records and academic performance as a variable for identifying early at risk youth.

### **Annette Morrison, United Family Services**

Ms. Morrison stated that the conventional wisdom is that every homicide affects at least 10 people. She said the Victim Assistance used to have a counselor housed in the Police Department's Felony Investigations Division but funding for that position ran out. Victim Assistance works with victims and their families on the compensation process, referrals to other agencies, counseling, support groups, and guidance through the criminal justice system. They work with 80% of the families of homicide victims.

#### **Recommendation(s):**

- CMPD should provide a more coordinated notification process, sensitivity training and enhanced communication to families of victims; and
- Offer a family-friendly room at the Medical Examiner's Office for family members who must identify a body.

### **Yvonne Moore, United Family Services**

She advocates a more strategic approach to helping families deal with life after a homicide.

United Family Services will hold a public forum on February 23 from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m. at Little Rock AME Zion Church. The forum will focus on strengthening the community's response to homicide with an emphasis on working with the families of homicide victims.

#### **Recommendation(s):**

- Approach prevention in a more deliberate way; and
- Study mental health resources provided by the school system.

## **Lisa Crawford, MOMO**

Ms. Crawford talked about several programs that MOMO had offered to youth such as Positive Voices and a violence prevention program but funding is no longer available.

### **Recommendation(s):**

- Reactivate the SAVE (Students Against Violence Everywhere) program in schools.

At the conclusion of the forum, Task Force Chairman, Dianne English invited participants to share any further recommendations with the task force in writing.

### **Next Steps:**

- Invite someone from the County to talk about the prevention and mental health programs offered by the County particularly in schools. <Syfert>
- Invite individual from United Agenda for Children to provide an overview of the prevention programs available to youth. <Stephens>
- Organize recommendations into short and long term initiatives. <Syfert>