Parents Of Murdered Children Endure A Different Kind of Grief
By Susan Christian Goulding | Orange County Register
July 17, 2017

Jonathan “Johnny” Dizon should be celebrating his 30th birthday July 22. Instead, his family soon will mourn a different kind of milestone — the 10-year anniversary of his death on Nov. 27, 2007.

Two years after graduating from Tustin High, where he excelled in baseball, Dizon was gunned down while hanging out with friends in Santa Ana. Police called the shooting gang-related, although Dizon himself was not affiliated with a gang. An arrest was never made, and the case remains under investigation.

Grief propelled the young man’s mother, Debra Dizon-Hernandez, to seek counsel with the national support group Parents Of Murdered Children (POMC). She now serves as leader of the group’s Orange County Chapter, which meets monthly in Anaheim.

Tustin native Brad Stetson, 53, a writer and funeral chaplain, included an interview with Hernandez and her husband in his recently published book, “Choosing to Survive: Loved Ones of Murder Victims Tell Their Stories.”

The book highlights 13 Orange County families who share that wrenching loss. Stetson, who earned a Ph.D in Social Ethics at USC, became interested in the topic while exploring urban crime as a professor at Azusa Pacific University in the early 2000s.

“People who have lost loved ones to human evil endure incredible agony and isolation,” Stetson said. “Non-survivors can’t understand their experience. They want to reassure themselves that this traumatic loss cannot touch them, so they blame the victim or the family.”

Proceeds from “Choosing to Survive” will benefit the local POMC.

“Obviously, this is not the feel-good bestseller of the year,” Stetson said. “It is written for a niche market.” He calls survivors the “heroes of civilization.” “I can’t think of anything more primal than: ‘Your tribe attacked my tribe. I’m going to kill you,’” Stetson said. “But these people forgo that most basic impulse and trust the courts to administer justice.”

Following are excerpts from the chapter featuring Jonathan’s stepfather John Hernandez, 58, and Debra Dizon-Hernandez, 60. They live in Tustin.

On the day of his death, Jonathan interviewed for a job with FedEx before heading out to a buddy’s house.

John: He had some friendships (from) the baseball team. He started going off visiting his friend that moved from here to Santa Ana.


John: When we left the hospital after we were told that he had passed, I just remember coming down the 55 Freeway, and it was like 1 a.m., and the quietness, the loneliness of what you’re going through. It was a lonely little trip. I remember walking in and we both sat down on the sofa. We just fell asleep right there on the sofa, waking up the next day to a new beginning.

Initially, Santa Ana Police officers assumed Jonathan was involved in a gang, his parents recalled.

John: One of the detectives even told us about another murder that happened and this person was truly, truly innocent. I mean, really truly, truly innocent. It was just like a slap in the face. They came over to our house to see what kind of evidence they could gather. They asked us, “Is it OK if we go up to his room?” And I said, “Yeah, come right in.” All they found were baseball trophies, pictures of sports figures.

Debra: Johnny was hanging around (gang members). But that still doesn’t take away everything he did prior to that day — his whole life. We all make mistakes. I mean, you get in a car after you have one glass of wine, you get a DUI.

[Continued on next page]
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Debra: It just takes so little of something to turn into something big. He was such a kind and loving person. He would just lend a hand to anybody. One of the things I asked (the police) is that if Jonathan’s murder is ever solved, will they depict him now as what his life was? Will he become good again?

Debra suffered hopelessness, eventually becoming self-conscious about her nonstop bereavement.

Debra: When we were getting the headstone I told my brother, “I just want to die.” And he got angry. He said, “I don’t ever want to hear you say that again!” I said, “I didn’t say I was going to kill myself. I said I want to die.” For the longest time, I would just go somewhere else and cry. God forbid my husband see me crying because (she imagined him saying), “Oh, you’re still crying? You’re still grieving?”

That December, the couple learned about Parents of Murdered Children (POMC) and attended a meeting. John and Debra responded to the support group in different ways.

John: I didn’t want to go back. The whole environment of it is really sad. We had our own tragedy. I just thought it would’ve been really, really hard to hear everybody else’s tragedy.

Debra: I don’t think I’ve taken a break (from the monthly meetings). We’re all bonded together. Truly, they’re the only ones that understand my grief. There’s tragedy in everybody’s life. But (Jonathan) didn’t die (of natural causes). He was murdered.

Debra noticed that acquaintances either dodged mention of Jonathan or simply avoided her altogether.

I was in the store one time and a lady I knew through baseball saw me and turned away. I think it’s so uncomfortable for others. They don’t know what to say so they don’t want to have any kind of contact with you. I’m not as direct as I used to be, because I was very direct. People would say, “How are you?” and I’d go, “You mean since my son was murdered?” People don’t want to hear that. They want you to make them feel better. And I can’t do that for them. I’m barely hanging on. I can’t help them because I’m the one that’s broken.

Debra continues to search for leads in her son’s murder. She maintains a website, jonathandizon.com, requesting tips.

Debra: I’ve had people say they’re gonna help me and then it is a dead end. Like other parents of murdered children, you reach for that straw and then it’s empty and there’s nothing there. You try not to let it consume you, but it consumes you. You can go deep and you can go dark. My older daughter, Christina, believes the reason I don’t have justice is because that’s what keeps me going.

The boys that murdered Jonathan are still out there. And the fact is, they were driving around that day with two guns in the car. So, if it wasn’t going to be my son, it would’ve been somebody else that they would’ve shot that day. They were just looking for trouble. I want the justice because I believe it belongs to him and it’s due to him. It’s owed to him.

The book “Choosing to Survive,” by Brad Stetson, is available on amazon.com.
Save the Date: 2018 National POMC Conference & Effective Leadership Training

Our 32nd Annual National Conference will be held in Arlington, Virginia/Washington D.C. Area from August 2 - 5, 2018.

The Conference will be held at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Washington D.C. - Crystal City located at 300 Army Navy Drive, Arlington, Virginia 22202.

This is POMC’s 32nd Annual National Conference, but it is also the 40th anniversary for the organization Parents Of Murdered Children.

The 2018 Conference location is within minutes of many popular landmarks including the Washington Monument, United States Capitol Building and the White House. You will have easy access to the nation’s capital with a complimentary shuttle service to Pentagon City Metro, Reagan National Airport (DCA), and Fashion Centre Mall.

If you are interested in possibly presenting a workshop for the 2018 National Conference, please reach out to Kayla McCarthy at kmccarthy@pomc.org.

If you are interested in completing POMC’s Effective Leadership Training, that will also be held at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Washington DC - Crystal City prior to the National Conference. The dates for ELT are July 29, - 31, 2018.

We will not be having Effective Leadership Training at our 2019 Conference, so please consider completing it in 2018.

Forms to register for both the Conference and ELT are available on our website: www.pomc.org.

POMC San Diego Chapter Leader Diann Diaz Bauer Recognized

Diann Diaz-Bauer lost her sister, Eva Diaz-Rondon on August 10, 1991 to murder. Since then, she has been helping herself by helping others and offering support to those who also lost a loved one to violence. Diann became a Certified Leader after she went to the Effective Leadership Training in Cincinnati in 2007. After that, in 2014, she became a Chapter Leader for the San Diego Chapter of POMC.

Since then, she has helped with Chapter support group meetings, Chapter events and has been involved with many POMC Conferences. Diann takes calls from survivors and offers support to those experiencing the tragedy of losing a loved one.

Diann is someone who will be there for you no matter the time, day or circumstances. She takes calls at all hours of the night and always makes sure those around her are taken care of. The Mayor of San Diego described Diann as “an inspiration and a symbol of strength to so many survivors.” On September 25, 2017, Diann was presented a proclamation by Shelley Zimmerman, Police Chief of San Diego Police Department on behalf of San Diego City Mayor, Kevin Faulconer, recognizing her dedication to survivors. The proclamation declared September 26, 2017 as “Diann Diaz-Bauer Day in the City of San Diego.”

We are so happy for Diann as she is so deserving of this recognition.

Above: Diann receives a proclamation from the City of San Diego.
A Message from the Board Room

With POMC National Board of Trustees
President
Howard S. Klerk, Jr.

2017 has come to a close and a busy one it was. In addition to the many administrative details we discuss and resolve, we also worked on the 2018 and 2019 annual conferences. A grief weekend was organized and accomplished. And finally, the national office was relocated to much larger quarters.

At the close of the National Board meeting on 4 November’17 the board members toured the new national office. Bev and Sherry both have a private office each, while Ratna and Kayla share a spacious office. The office also contains a small lunch area and a reception area. The office is a vast improvement over the crowded office we had before.

The grief weekend was held over the weekend of November 10-12 and was a great success. Bev and Sherry traveled to Phoenix for training with Beckie Miller who has been running grief weekends for a long time. Using the knowledge they gained, Bev and Sherry searched for a suitable location, organized and ran the weekend. Thank you, Bev and Sherry, for all you did and do.

The 2018 National Conference in the Washington D.C. area is coming together and will be great. We have Anne Seymour, The National Victim Advocate, and Darlene Hutchinson, the OVC Director, are also scheduled to be speakers at the conference. This conference will also be your chance to visit Washington D.C., with its many monuments and memorials, The Smithsonian Institute and of course the many government buildings. The 2019 conference will be held at the Denver Marriott Tech Center in Denver, Colorado on August 8-11 2019. Information for the 2018 conference will be found on our website, www.POMC.Org.

It is that time of the year again for Chapters: Time for the End of Year Reports. Please try to get yours in on time for the staff to review them. They are then reviewed by the National Board and the Chapters are graded by the board at our upcoming meeting on March 23,24th 2018.

At our meeting on November 4th 2017 we voted and approved a new national board member. We would like to welcome Carolee Hildenbrandt to the POMC National Board of Trustees as our newest member. Carolee is the current Co-Leader of the Queens, N.Y. Chapter.

Overall POMC and the National Board made great strides in 2017 and we are on stable footing. Thanks to all the efforts of the National Board, our wonderful staff, and the many survivors who belong to POMC. Thank you one and all for all you do.

Regards To All,
Howard
President
POMC National Board of Trustees

In September, 2017 the POMC National Office purchased a metal art version of the POMC logo from Westerhaus Metals which can be seen in the picture to the left with some of the members of the National Board. Pictured left to right (standing) Treasurer Connie Sheely, Vice-President – Terrie Jacoby, (sitting) Lori King, President – Howard S. Klerk, Jr., Secretary – Martha Lasher-Warner and Rachel Seldacek
Welcome to the National Board, Carolee Hildenbrandt!

My son, David, was murdered in an attempted robbery in a bar in Midtown Manhattan on August 29, 1991. Two others were shot and wounded. The murderer was an escaped prisoner who was featured on America’s Most Wanted just 3 months before. The NY police arrested him quickly that same night.

About a year later he was convicted of David’s death and sentenced - as the judge announced “your parole officer hasn’t even been born yet”. I was alerted to the Long Island POMC group and joined quickly and realized this was the place for me.

After about 10 years I moved to the Queens Chapter and became Chapter Leader for about 10 years and am now Co-Chapter Leader. I have produced the Chapters Newsletters and worked with the Queens DA Office to help sensitize new DA’s to working with Crime Victims. I am a nurse by profession and have led many groups including a Widows group. I have attended 22 National Conferences.

A Message from the Executive Director

Time sure is going fast, it’s hard to believe that it is time for another newsletter. We are settling into our new office and it is so nice to have room to be able to move around. We have many frames of pictures of loved ones that we hang on our walls, so, please feel free to send in a picture of your loved one and we will add them to our frames. If you are ever driving through Cincinnati, please stop in and see the office. We are right off I-75 outside of downtown Cincinnati. We will give you the Grand Tour and would love to see you.

The 1st Grief Weekend was held in November in Cincinnati and it went very well. It was attended by 8 survivors from all over the Midwest coming from as far as Minnesota. Others came from Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Ohio. They all said that it was a great comfort to be able to talk, cry, laugh and eat with other survivors for the whole weekend. We have already scheduled our 2nd Grief Retreat Weekend on May 4-6, 2018. There is a flyer on the website www.pomc.org if you are interested in attending.

We have also started working on the 32nd Annual National Conference in the Washington D.C. area. It will be held August 2-5, 2018 at the Double Tree by Hilton Hotel Washington D.C. – Crystal City in Arlington, VA. This hotel is located across the Potomac River, a very close distance from many of the Monuments, the White House, Arlington Cemetery and the Pentagon. Some of these beautiful, historic sites you can see from your room or from the revolving restaurant on the top floor. Their transportation system is very close to the hotel which will take you almost anywhere you’d want to go. This Conference will have many great keynote speakers and educational workshops. It will also be a safe place for you to attend and meet other survivors that are grieving, angry or frustrated with the judicial system just like you may be. We would love to see more survivors attend and be a part of our organization. Parents Of Murdered Children is not only for parents but for any family member or friend who has lost someone to violence.

Once again, we will have the Effective Leadership Training at the hotel prior to the Conference. It will be held July 29 - 31, 2018. I know that there are a few Chapters that need someone certified on their Board, so hopefully they can attend this year, because we are not having the Effective Leadership Training in 2019.

We also have some good news to share with you. One of our staff members Kayla McCarthy is expecting her first child in May. Kayla was married in October of 2016 and has been with POMC for 4 years – 2 of them interning while she was in college. It is an exciting time for her and her husband and we wish her the best of luck during this wonderful phase of her life.

I hope everyone made it through the cold, depressing winter months and soon we will see spring arriving. Always remember to take care of yourself through the difficult days of grieving. Know that all of us at the National Office are here to help!
Victim families use their pain to help murderers change, in hopes of preventing other murders, parents of murder victims visit with convicted murderers.

Chelcey Adami, The Californian, June 23, 2017

*** Disclaimer***

Parents Of Murdered Children allows any and all Chapters or members to be involved with “impact of crime classes” in prisons as long as the prisoners do not get released early for their involvement. Many of our Chapters are involved with prevention programs similar to the one mentioned in this article but, our Chapters and/or members are NOT required to participate in these programs.

In 1993, Angie Ortega heard her youngest daughter Lorraine urgently call out to her three times in a dream. That same day, Lorraine, a 23-year-old mother of a 2-year-old boy, was fatally beaten, strangled and stabbed by a former boyfriend and his girlfriend in her Salinas apartment.

Two years earlier in the Los Angeles area, Johnny Placencia, 18, killed Manuel Ortiz, 21, in a gang-related stabbing.

Last fall, Ortega — the grieving mother — and Placencia — the convicted murderer — met for the first time. Now in an unlikely alliance, they continue to meet every other week in hopes of preventing others from losing their loved ones to murder.

Ortega is the Chapter Leader of the Monterey County Chapter of Parents Of Murdered Children, Inc., and Placencia chairs the rehabilitative program Life CYCLE for inmates at the Correctional Training Facility prison in Soledad. He has been incarcerated there for more than 25 years.

The two work together to coordinate visits from members of Parents Of Murdered Children with inmates in the Life CYCLE program so that inmates can hear how losing loved ones to murder impacts others. With recent changes to state law resulting in greater rates of "lifers" being paroled, the effort to reform convicted murderers has taken on increased urgency.

In the process, Ortega believes people like Placencia can change, and hopefully, never hurt anyone again.

“We talk about our loved ones, we share. Sometimes they will talk to us about the crimes they committed, how they feel … It has completely changed my mind of what a prison is like, because I’m seeing the work of the young men in the prison and actually talking about their crime,” Ortega said. “I’m seeing the impact of how it’s affecting them.”

It's not just talk. A study titled “The Effectiveness of Restorative Justice Practices: A Meta-Analysis” by Jeff Latimer, Craig Dowden and Danielle Muise found that use of restorative justice practices, such as victim-offender dialogue, decreases offender recidivism and increases restitution compliance.

Jennie Burciaga, executive director of the Monterey County Restorative Justice Partners, Inc., said she and her colleagues have found that juvenile offenders who voluntarily engage with victims have a recidivism rate of 13 percent, versus a control group which has a 65 percent recidivism rate.

“What we’re finding is when empathy, humanizing or connectedness is involved, children involved in these processes are significantly less likely to offend,” she said.

Jennifer Shaffer, executive officer of the California Board of Parole Hearings, said she has also seen restorative justice programs like this have "significant impact" on adult offenders.

“Most of the time, inmates who commit these crimes are not thinking about other people. They are usually very angry themselves, very upset, and when somebody is in that phase of life, they’re focused inward,” she said. "Part of the transformation we see is people actually getting to a place where they have empathy for others. If they’re in a place in their life to make that transition, those programs can really help open their eyes to what they did.”

Eye for an eye

When Ortega lost her boisterous, energetic and caring daughter, it was “the day the music died,” and a nightmare began, she said.
“The door slamming stopped, the laughter, the talking, the giggling. She’d open the door and there was nothing but just a burst of sound and noise coming in,” she continued. “So that stopped, and it’s been quiet, it’s an eerie type of quiet with her gone.”

Ortega dreaded being asked how many children she has, and she suffered two heart attacks over the years.

“The electricity around my heart is damaged from my grief … You never completely heal,” she said. “You’re always in that healing mode and you’re finding things you need to deal with to move on.”

A little over a year after Lorraine’s death, Jose Gomez was arrested and sentenced to serve 15-years-to-life in prison.

Ortega has attended three parole hearings to speak against his release. With “pure hate and anger,” she feels that he should have been given the death penalty or life in prison.

“I always would say 'eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth,'” she said.

At the last parole hearing in 2013, Gomez “still showed no remorse,” Ortega said. “I don’t think he knows how to show remorse.”

In a letter he wrote a few months before the parole hearing, he apologized for killing Lorraine and said when he killed her, he was a “child.”

It sent Ortega into a rage. He never mentioned her grandson, who was left without a mother.

And Gomez was 23 years old when he killed Lorraine so he wasn’t a child, she said.

Last fall, a local reporter who was writing a story about a reading program between CTF inmates and Palma High School students contacted Ortega to see what she thought about the program.

Ortega was leery at first and began to do research.

“I think maybe when there’s a murder in your family, you don’t trust,” she said. “You become a stalker and don’t trust. You stalk your family members to make sure they’re safe, and you don’t trust people who come to your door or try to talk to you.”

The first time she went to the prison, she was nervous about how she would react speaking to a group of men, many of whom were convicted murderers. She was also nervous about how the Parents Of Murdered Children group or even her own family would respond to her decision to meet with them.

Yet, speaking with the inmates helped.

**Sons and daughters**

In 1990, John Piña’s daughter, Christy, was 14 when she was kidnapped, strangled, raped and sodomized before being left naked face down in a Castroville artichoke field.

Piña was working as a truck driver at the time, on the road more than 1,000 miles away, and right before she went missing, he woke out of a dead sleep knowing something was wrong.

Piña shared his story with CTF’s Life CYCLE group during a Parents Of Murder Children’s visit there in May.

As Piña shared details of his daughter’s death, inmates silently listened. Several of them looked down and shook their heads as Piña explained that authorities were unable to use dental records to identify Christy since her teeth had been knocked out.

The mothers and fathers took turns sharing their own version of the same nightmare: having a child violently killed. Voices shaking, but steadfast, they detailed the ways murder shattered their lives.

More than 80 inmates remained pin-drop-silent listening. Some became overwhelmed with emotion as others appeared to physically wither.

Life CYCLE mostly includes men already incarcerated 10 to 31 years, many of them for murder.

Placencia said the group is about taking ownership for past choices and embracing transformation.

Hearing how parents still feel the impact of their loss 15 to 20 years later, Placencia said he’s learned that the pain never goes away. It is, he says, “insight we can’t read in a book.”

Parents shared how they often think about how old their child would be now if he or she hadn’t been killed, what school they would have gone to, how it would have been to walk them down the aisle at their wedding and other missed milestones.

[Continued on next page]
Victim families use their pain to help murderers change, in hopes of preventing other murders, parents of murder victims visit with convicted murders continued

Chelcey Adami, The Californian
June 23, 2017

Hearing how Angie Ortega’s entire life was affected by the loss of her daughter “gave me an opportunity to reflect on my victim’s mother and father and the pain that they go through,” Placencia said.

Placencia was 18-years old when he killed Ortiz, and is now in his mid-40s. He has been locked up all of his adult life. His first 17 years of incarceration were a mirror of his 18 years in society, he said, and he remained in a revolving door of solitary confinement.

It took him nearly 19 years to understand more fully the impact he had on his victim and his family, including Ortiz’s girlfriend who was pregnant when he died, Placencia said.

Several of the inmates said their feelings about their crimes have drastically changed. After Placencia killed Ortiz, he first felt “acceptance” because he was backing up a friend, he said. Now, he’s haunted by the pain he caused.

Several of the inmates not only killed someone but also have lost loved ones to violence.

In 2010, two of Placencia’s cousins, ages 25 and 28, were killed in separate gang-related murders on the very same block where Placencia killed Ortiz 20 years earlier.

“It’s a whole different perspective because I saw my family go into depression and the effect it had on my aunt and other little cousins,” he said.

Inmate Dwayne Wheeler, 32, is serving 85 years to life for aiding and abetting a gang-related murder. He said he grew up with people getting shot.

“It becomes normal,” he said.

After hearing members of Parents Of Murdered Children speak, he said he was at a loss for words. Thinking back on what he did, “it was wrong. It was a heinous act and I can’t blame anyone but myself,” he said. “We can’t blame our neighborhoods and where we grew up ... It’s no longer an excuse.”

Reginald Malone, 46, is serving 25-to-life plus two life sentences for murder. He said he did not commit the crime that he was convicted of but feels that his gang lifestyle contributed to the death regardless.

“I’m not innocent. Because I lived a negative lifestyle, I have to pay the price,” he said.

He was born cross-eyed and was teased. He “wanted to be accepted so bad that I became a crook ... By the age of 17, I had everything I wanted, all the status and false pride. Everything was there, but what I didn’t realize is I didn’t love myself, I didn’t even love my family.”

In 2002, Malone took his first victim impact awareness course and began to understand that his lifestyle hurt a lot of families.

“I know that now through all my drug trafficking and drug selling that I created unfit mothers and unfit fathers. I made youth think it was okay to sell drugs,” he said. “There’s not a day I don’t think about the things I did in my past.”

Healing

CTF Public Information Officer Lt. Roland Ramon said the partnership between Life CYCLE and Parents Of Murdered Children fits in with the prison’s view on the importance of rehabilitative efforts and restorative justice.

“We know there needs to be healing that takes place, both on the victim and perpetrator side,” he said. “We realize the incarcerated person needs to understand they have a responsibility and accountability for what they’ve done. The missing component is they’ve never seen it from a victim’s perspective.”

Rehabilitative efforts like this also make the prison an overall safer place for both inmates and staff since participants are less likely to be involved in criminal behavior such as a riot, he said.

While Angie Ortega has never spoken with the man who killed her daughter, hearing from the inmates gives her insight.
In a sense, it’s like talking directly to the criminal that took my daughter’s life in trying to understand that untold darkness and piece it together and think “Is this what he was thinking? Is this how he feels?” she said.

The healing occurring on both sides has been powerful to see, she said.

“We have something in common because they’ve been at the other side of where we’ve been at the side of losing their loved ones and maybe they’re on the side where they took the life of a loved one,” Ortega said. “I never knew that they experienced shame and pain.”

At times, the inmates tell Ortega that they’re sorry for her loss, and she hears empathy in their voices. When inmates ask if she would forgive the man who killed her daughter, she responds honestly, she said.

"I’m not there," she said. "I’m still healing but I’m not there yet. I can’t forgive him."

More so, Ortega believes these interactions will save lives.

Due to case law and legislative changes over the last decade, more inmates who previously had no chance of getting out are now qualifying for release.

Between 1990 and 2003, anywhere from five to 43 "lifers" were released from prison each year, according to data from Gov. Jerry Brown's office. That number didn't change much until 2009 when 217 “lifers” were released.

Now, the state has about 35,000 inmates serving life sentences, and in 2016, 728 "lifers" were released.

Contributing factors include a 2008 California Supreme Court decision, In re: Lawrence, which ruled that parole could not be denied solely on the severity of the crime but rather on whether the person continues to pose unreasonable risk to public safety.

Then in 2009, Marsy’s Law, or the Victim’s Bill of Rights, was enacted and amended how soon a person could get another parole board hearing after being denied. This resulted in the state parole board hearing from a pool of people deemed more eligible for parole sooner.

Legislative changes such as Assembly Bills 260 and 261, which provided parole opportunities for those who were under the ages of 18 and 23 at the time of the offense, have also contributed to more people being released.

Additionally, more rehabilitative programs have become available to inmates. In years past, inmates never heard of a "lifer" being paroled out. Now, as the number of "lifers" paroled out increases, it instills a sense of hope and renewed dedication to rehabilitation for other inmates, according to authorities.

“I see this as education, prevention, where we’re giving a voice to our loved ones, the victims that they left behind and the victim survivors,” Ortega said. “If they are released someday, they will have that empathy in their heart and understand what murder does to victim survivors, to the families, and their own families, and spare a life.”

Ortega’s grief has been an ever-evolving journey, and most recently, she has started to realize the impact of this violence and loss on her grandchildren.

Her 24-year-old granddaughter Michelle Martinez, now one year older than Lorraine was when she died, also came to the prison during the May visit.

“I looked up and saw tiny Michelle talking to 80 men about what murder did to families and the healing that we needed, and they were paying attention to her. That was so powerful,” she said.

As the Monterey County Chapter of Parents Of Murdered Children continues to work with Life CYCLE, the program grows with more and more inmates hearing about victims like Lorraine and what they meant to their families.

“We’re going to honor our victims, give them a voice so I give Lorraine a voice,” Ortega said. “Through her story and the grief and aftermath of murder, hopefully somebody is really paying attention, and it changes their life.”

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Maintaining the Beauty of the Murder Wall...Honoring Their Memories

Time and much travel have put stress on the many panels of the Murder Wall... Honoring Their Memories, and scratches, nicks, and dents need to be repaired. Many of the cases that are used to transport the Wall have split or broken, handles have fallen off, and the protective material inside each case needs to be replaced.

Currently, the Wall is made up of 33 panels, displaying over 4,000 victims’ names, dates of birth and dates of death.

In order to maintain the beauty of the Wall, POMC continues to seek donations to help make some of the repairs. To help, please use the form below. Donations made in memory/honor of, will be in the next issue of Survivors.

POMC-Wall Repair
(Please Print)

Name:______________________________________
In memory/honor of:__________________________
Address:____________________________________
City, State, Zip:______________________________
Email Address:______________________________
Amount enclosed: $_________  Check:____
Money Order :____  Visa:_____   MC:______
Am. Express:______  Dis:_______
Card Number:_______________________________
Expiration date:___________________________
Security Code (back of card):________________

Return to:
Parents Of Murdered Children, Inc.
635 W. 7th Street, Suite 104
Cincinnati, Ohio 45203

WALL BOOKLETS HONOR THEIR MEMORIES

POMC’s Murder Wall...Honoring their Memories is a beautiful memorial to the more than 4,000 murder victims whose names appear on the Wall. Behind each name there is a face and a story of a person whose life was taken prematurely. It is time to tell those stories.

Memorial booklets, which travel with the Wall, are compiled as an ongoing project of National POMC. Cost is $20.00 to include one page, front and back without a photo, or $30.00 if you wish to have a photo included. The photos are non-returnable and must be no larger than 2 1/2 by 3 1/2 inches.

Forms are available on the POMC Web Site at: www.pomc.org or by calling National at (888) 818-POMC.

Donations to Maintain the Beauty of the Murder Wall...Honoring Their Memories

Thank you for your donation to maintain the Murder Wall:

- Susie & Rodney Chrisman
  in memory of Jarrod Chrisman

- Dorothy & Albert Chubb
  in memory of Dwayne Chubb

- Denise Coleman
  in memory of Timothy Staunton

- Howard & Ann Klerk
  in memory of Lisa Marie Weaver

- LC & Sherry Nolan
  in memory of Shannon Marie & Alexandra Jordan Nolan-Broe
The names that appear in this issue of *Survivors* are those that have been submitted to the National Organization of POMC, Inc., with full or partial payment before **January 1, 2018**. Names after this date will appear in the next issue.

The Wall consists of solid walnut panels with each holding 120 brass plates inscribed with the name of the victim, along with the date of birth and the date of death. A donation of $75 is required before a name will be inscribed on a plate and permanently mounted on a panel. (See order form inside this edition.) Not only is this donation a tribute to the memory of your loved one, but it is a tribute that will guarantee that the memory of those we miss so deeply will survive forever. The Wall is a powerful statement of the violence in our society and of the numbers of loved ones senselessly killed by others. Not only does it give comfort, but also hope, because every name on it cries out silently for awareness, prevention and justice.

### Murder Wall...Honoring Their Memories Order Form

Anyone interested in having their loved one’s name inscribed and permanently mounted on the Wall should fill out the order form below. Make checks payable to “POMC Wall,” or for your convenience, Discover, Visa, MasterCard, and American Express are accepted.

Send to: Parents Of Murdered Children, 635 W. 7th Street, Suite 104, Cincinnati, Ohio 45203

**LOVED ONES INFORMATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date of Birth</th>
<th>Date of Death</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Julian Gabriel Quintero</td>
<td>4/20/1996</td>
<td>1/22/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justin Ryan Jackson</td>
<td>12/05/1991</td>
<td>7/10/2008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PAYMENT INFORMATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choice of payment (check one):</th>
<th>Pay in full for $75.00</th>
<th>OR</th>
<th>3 payments of $25.00 each</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Payment type:</td>
<td>MC Visa Am. Express Discover Check</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Card Number</th>
<th>Exp. Date</th>
<th>Security Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**SUBMITTERS INFORMATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>City, State, Zip</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phone Number</th>
<th>Relationship to victim</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The name will be added to the panel upon payment in full. Once your plate has been permanently mounted on the panel, you will be notified. New panels join the Wall as they are completed.
Parole Block Program: With Bev Warnock

**Parole Block Program: With Bev Warnock**

1651 Convicted murderers have been denied parole through POMC’s Parole Block Program!

### Support for the Parole Block Program

**In memory of:**
- **Jarrod Chrisman** from Susie & Rodney Chrisman
- **Dwayne Chubb** from Albert & Dorothy Chubb
- **Michele Renae Kriezel** from Karen Kriezel
- **Timothy Staunton** from Denise Coleman
- **Lisa Marie Weaver** from Howard & Ann Klerk

### Hearing Results

**Denied Petitions:** Jeffrey Camper, Mark Dickens, Samuel Evans, Allen Jordan, Donald Lesak, Keith Lovell Nesbritt, Harold Rigsby, William Scythes, Matthew Solomon, Philip Watts

**Released:** William Griger, Samuel Jones, Matthew Pennington

### Parole Hearings to Be Held

**Hearing Date: March 2018: Daniel Hinton, ID#: EV4427**

On December 26, 2000, Aaron C. Coyle was murdered during a robbery attempt. Aaron was in a Johnstown pool hall parking lot standing outside talking to friends in a car. Two masked gunmen came into the parking lot and attempted to rob the teens. Daniel Hinton was pointing a gun at the young teens in the car demanding money while his accomplice was attempting to rob Aaron then shot him and killed him. The two then ran. The teens in the car witnessed this brutal and senseless murder.

Hinton pled guilty to criminal conspiracy robbery and criminal attempted theft and was sentenced to 17 ½ to 35 years. He will have only served 16 years when he is considered for parole.

**To protest, please write to:**

Office of Victim Advocate
1101 South Front Street, Suite 5200
Harrisburg, PA 17104

### Parole Hearings to Be Held

**Hearing Date: May 1, 2018: Jose Javier Gomez, ID#: J60999**

On February 6, 1993, Jose Gomez entered the apartment of Lorraine Ortega with his girlfriend and beat Lorraine and inflicted brutal torture, they stabbed, and strangled her. Jose then put her in the bathtub and stabbed both sides of her neck including the jugular vein, letting her bleed to death in the tub. Waiting until she died, Gomez and his girlfriend carried her into the living room placing her badly beaten body on the love seat. He then tried to destroy evidence by starting a fire on top of the stove, placed aerosol cans inside the microwave, and puncturing a gas line in an attempt to blow up the apartment, but was unsuccessful. Not only did he murder the victim, he potentially could’ve caused great bodily harm to other families including children if the apartment house had exploded.

Gomez was convicted of second degree murder and was sentenced to 15 years to life in prison. He will have only served twenty three years when he is considered for parole.

**To protest, please write to:**

California Board of Parole Hearings
PO Box 4036
Sacramento, CA 95812
Ohio Issue 1 (Marsy's Law) wins big. What comes next?
By: Jessie Belmert
Cincinnati Enquire, USA TODAY NETWORK

COLUMBUS - Ohio voters overwhelmingly approved a ballot initiative to protect the rights of crime victims.

Issue 1 – which will add a list of rights for crime victims to the state constitution – passed with 82.6 percent of the vote, according to unofficial results. It's a massive victory that proponents hope to repeat in other places, including Kentucky and at the federal level.

So, what comes next for the constitutional amendment that started with a Cincinnati native's desire to protect his mother from a run-in with his sister's murderer?

Who started Marsy's Law?
Issue 1 was called Marsy's Law for Marsy Nicholas, a 21-year-old California woman killed by her ex-boyfriend in 1983. Shortly after her murder, her ex-boyfriend ran into Marsy's mother in the grocery store while he was out on bail.

Marsy's brother, the billionaire co-founder of the Broadcom Corporation Henry Nicholas, crafted a proposal to prevent similar unwelcome surprises.

Both Henry and his younger sister, Marsy, were born in Cincinnati and lived in Glendale when they were young. Their father was an attorney with the IRS and their mother was a teacher and later administrator at Princeton City School District. They moved to Los Angeles when Henry was four years old.

When will Issue 1 take effect?
Language in Issue 1 says the changes will take effect 90 days after the secretary of state certifies the final results. Typically, these initiatives take effect after 30 days, but proponents wanted the extra time to educate residents about the rights.

The effects are not retroactive, so victims only could protest violations going forward.

How will Issue 1 affect crime victims?
Victims of crimes in Ohio will have a list of their rights enumerated in the state constitution. That includes the right to:
- timely notification of all court proceedings.
- be present and heard in all court proceedings.
- refuse an interview or other requests made by the accused in most cases.
- notice when the accused is released or escapes.

One big difference from current law is crime victims will have the right to a hearing before a judge if they feel their rights have been violated.

Will Issue 1 be challenged in court?
ACLU of Ohio is one of several groups watching Marsy's Law to see if it will violate the rights of the accused. Will victims refuse to provide documents or information about crimes? Will they require attorneys for court challenges? Who will pay for that?

Any problems could warrant a legal challenge, ACLU of Ohio's chief lobbyist Gary Daniels told The Enquirer. Similar initiatives in other states have been challenged in court.

Why did Issue 1 win by such a large margin?
Ohioans ultimately sympathized with victims of heinous crimes. The same thing happened in 1994, when Ohio passed a constitutional amendment on victims' rights with 77.6 percent of the vote.

Nicholas also chipped in about $8.7 million to promote the constitutional amendment, according to campaign finance records. Nicholas was a rich benefactor from another state, but he didn't face the attacks that dinged Issue 2's backer, AIDS Healthcare Foundation president Michael Weinstein.

And those who opposed Issue 1 – defense attorneys and prosecutors alike – didn't mount an organized "No on Issue 1" campaign. Issue 1 was also fairly straightforward, especially when compared with Issue 2's effort to reduce drug prices.

Pictured: Marsalee (Marsy) Nicholas
Donations

Thank You

Thanks to all those who have chosen POMC as their charity of choice. Your donation has helped thousands of surviving family members; stopped the early release of 1,651 convicted murderers; assisted in POMC’s Second Opinion Services; provided the National newsletter, Survivors, to those who cannot afford it and so much more. POMC’s outreach would not be able to exist without your continued support.

In Loving Memory of

Marc Randall Bell
from Randall & Nancy Bell

Bryan E. Bensfield
from Regina M. Hardin

Francesca Bosca
from Beryl Singleton Bissell

Robert Bosley
from Debra & Roger Webb

Tyrone M. Brown
from Eleanor Brown

William Brown
from Evelyn Brown

Jarrod Chrisman from
Rodney & Susie Chrisman

Dwayne Chubb
from Albert & Dorothy Chubb

Keith R. Ciszewski
from Jacqueline Ciszewski

Ken Czillinger
from Charlotte & Robert Hullinger

Brian Deneke
from Betty & Mike Deneke

Dalton Dobkins
from Robert Dobkins

Deborah Eisenberg from Phyllis Eisenberg

Elizabeth Foster
from Helen E. Foster

C. Fuller
from Fred & Nancy Fuller

Bryan Glick
from Barbara Glick, Stephen Glick

Rebecca Gordon and father
Chris Gordon
from Amanda Hunt

Sara Louis Gruber
from Barbara Brady

Ben Harvey
from Susan Webb

Margaret Ann Hoyt
from Helve Ekstrom

Sandy Hoyt
from Tedi Weitekamp

Paul James Kapitz
from Kenneth & Carolyn Kapitz

Isaac R. Keels
from Tina Echard, Diane Bader Lewis

Gordon Lightsey
from Elizabeth & Charles Schuck

Jack Neil Lowrey
from Patricia Belmonte

Michelle Matteucci
from Dante & Gwen Matteucci

Stewart David Mendelson
from Jack Mendelson

Jennifer Mullin
from John P. Mullin Jr.

Susanne Mullen
from J.D. Mullen

Peter Dodd Nichols
from Lee & Terry Freeman

Rita Nodelman
from Lawrence Preville, Amy Comen Sherman

Shannon Marie & Alexandra Jordan Nolan-Broe
from LC & Sherry Nolan

Christina & Jeanne Oyer
from Clarence Oyer

Ginger Paul
from Joseph & Ann Amendolare, Margaret Dunn, Robin McIntyre, Libby Saifity

Virginia Paul
from Maria Paul, Kathleen Roglan

Jeffrey Adam Phillips
from Diane Bader Lewis

Donald V. Pierce Jr.
from William & Joan Flamm

David Michael Pottinger
from Carolee Brooks

Michael Ralston
from Margaret & John Sullivan

Martina Daniella Randall
from Georgiana E. Randall

Allen Record
from Traci Rose

Jim Roback
from Joan Roback

Estee’ Sawyer
from William Sawyer
On April 12, 2018, during the upcoming National Crime Victims’ Rights Week, Fathom Events, Blue Forest Entertainment LLC and Engage Media Partners announce they will release the movie THE AMENDMENT in theaters nationwide for a one night event.

THE AMENDMENT is the inspiring true story of Brooks Douglass who survived, along with his sister, an unthinkable attack in his youth that claimed the lives of his parents and eventually found triumph over tragedy through faith and forgiveness. After the attack, Douglass went on to become the youngest state senator in Oklahoma history, and authored fifteen pieces of legislation protecting victims’ rights.

THE AMENDMENT features Mike Vogel and Taryn Manning, and in his film debut, Brooks Douglass plays his own father, Richard—a pastor, missionary, and shining example of the life-changing power of forgiveness.

THE AMENDMENT tells the story of Brooks’ journey in gaining legal recompense for the unjust acts his family suffered. Throughout the film, audiences experience flashbacks to happier times for the Douglass family. Baptist missionaries to Brazil, Brooks’ mother and father were models of the Christian virtues of laying down one’s life for others and forgiving those who wrong us. In a dramatic recreation of a true encounter, Brooks has the opportunity to meet face-to-face with the man who destroyed his family. What he finds is a man with a broken spirit, a contrite heart and someone seeking forgiveness instead of release from prison—forcing Brooks to make the most difficult decision of his life. Written by Brooks Douglass and veteran screenwriter Paul Brown, who also directed the film.

THE AMENDMENT is a bold and inspiring true story that reveals how the power of forgiveness can triumph over injustice, tragedy and loss.
Contact Person/Chapter Leaders/State Coordinator

With Sherry Nolan

We want to take this opportunity to thank the following volunteers for the valuable services that they provide to other survivors on behalf of POMC, Inc. If you would like more information about our volunteer opportunities, please contact Sherry Nolan, National Volunteer Coordinator, at: 888-818-7662 OR snolan@pomc.org

There are hundreds of survivors across the U.S. who volunteer for the National Organization of POMC as Chapter Leaders, Co-Leaders, Contact Persons and State Coordinators. If you are at a point in your life where you are ready to reach out to others who have suffered the loss of a loved one due to violence, please contact me.

The following states need someone to offer support services through phone, email, support group meetings, & court accompaniment, etc.:

- Alabama
- District of Columbia
- Delaware
- Hawaii
- Mississippi
- Montana
- Nebraska
- North Dakota
- Oklahoma
- Rhode Island
- Tennessee
- Utah
- Vermont
- Wyoming

We would also like to extend our thanks to the 87 Contact Persons and State Coordinators throughout the U.S. who also offer invaluable services to those survivors in their state who reach out to them for additional support, especially when there is not a POMC Chapter nearby. These volunteers are willing to spend time talking, and especially listening, to others about their loss.

Thank you to the following Chapters for dedication, compassion and selflessness shown through their continued efforts to provide on-going emotional support to others through phone calls, email, support group meetings, court accompaniment, local events bringing about awareness, education, and advocacy to victims of crime, and remembrance programs for the survivors family members whose loved ones lives were taken from them.

In this 2018 anniversary, POMC acknowledges those Chapters with Articles of Association that were signed between January 1 and April 30 of the year they became a probationary POMC Chapter:

- Metro Detroit Chapter/MI- 36 years
  - Los Angeles Chapter /CA- 6 years
  - Valley of the Sun Chapter/AZ- 32 years
  - Central Minnesota Chapter/MN-18 years
  - Greater Cincinnati Area Chapter/OH-17 years
  - DuPage County (and Beyond) Chapter/IL-13 years
    - Queens Chapter/NY- 15 years
    - Sumter Chapter/SC- 4 years
  - Southeast Minnesota Chapter/MN-20 years
  - Sacramento California Area Chapter/CA- 10 years
  - Southeastern Massachusetts Chapter/MA-10 years
    - Maine Chapter/ME-28 years
  - St. Louis Area Wide Chapter/IL&MO-33 years
    - Delaware County Chapter/PA- 23 years
  - Durham North Carolina Chapter/NC- 21 years
    - Southwest Florida Chapter/FL-19 years
    - Miami-Dade County Chapter/FL- 35 years
  - Kansas City Area Wide Chapter/MO&KS-28 years
    - Greater Portland Area Chapter/OR-36 years
    - Central Ohio Chapter/OH- 28 years
  - Central Missouri Area Wide Chapter/MO-10 years

CP/SC/CL UPDATES

If you have a message of interest, a great fundraising idea, upcoming Chapter events, special awards or recognitions received or ideas that you would like to share with our “POMC family”, please mail them to my attention: Sherry Nolan at National POMC or email them to snolan@pomc.org. The deadline for receipt of the next newsletter articles is April 27, 2018. Please note: due to deadlines or overflow of articles, etc., we may not be able to include all of those received in the next SNL, but may keep them for future newsletters.
In Loving Memory of:

Brian Zubel 10/02/2017: Brian was known for his service as a trial prosecutor, his tenacious litigation style, his pursuit of truth, and as a brilliant artist and author. He served as a volunteer expert for the National Organization of Parents Of Murdered Children “Ask the Experts” Program as well as donating all proceeds made by selling a piece of his artwork (pictured right) to POMC. Brian joined the “Ask the Experts” volunteer panel many years ago after working with the Metro Detroit Chapter of Parents Of Murdered Children.

Nellie Faye Taylor Jones 11/17/2017: Nellie Taylor Jones died after a prolonged illness and the Durham community lost an irreplaceable advocate and gentle protector of families of homicide victims. Nellie was a local funeral director whose intimate knowledge of the effects of violence on victims, survivors, families, and neighborhoods compelled her to organize a Durham Chapter of POMC in 1993. Nellie recognized the needs of families surviving the injustice of homicide to share their common grief and she acted on our behalf.

In 2005, Nellie insisted that new leadership from the membership was ready and able to manage and care for the Chapter. In her words, “This Chapter is for you all. I just did the groundwork. Now it is time for you to run this, because who can speak better for your loved one than you?” Since retiring from the leadership Nellie continued to support the Chapter. Thanks to Nellie’s guidance and service, in May 2016 our POMC Chapter received the Durham Police Department’s Community Service Award for 23 years as Liaison between the Police Department and family members of murder victims.

We will always be grateful to Nellie for starting the Durham Chapter of POMC. Her insight and leadership helped us believe in our ability to make a difference in the lives of survivors here in North Carolina, with POMC Durham Chapter being the only chapter in NC. We are also thankful for Nellie’s loving family who generously shared her with hundreds of families of homicide victims.

The Courage to Grieve, Grief Retreat Weekend

The National Organization of Parents Of Murdered Children's first Grief Retreat Weekend was held in Cincinnati, Ohio, November 10 - 12, 2017. There were 8 attendees from all over the Midwest. One of the attendees wrote “The best weekend I have had since my loved one was murdered and it was nice being around people with similar losses.” Another attendee wrote “It was very helpful, informative, comforting and compassionate. It was very therapeutic to express my feelings with others who really understood.”

The National Office of Parents Of Murdered Children will host the next Grief Retreat Weekend May 4 - 6, 2018.

Beckie Miller, Chapter Leader of the Valley of the Sun Chapter in Phoenix, Arizona also hosts a Grief Retreat Weekend twice a year. Once in the spring and once in the fall, both located in Pine, Arizona. For more information on these retreats, contact Beckie Miller at 602-254-8818 or beckierose@aol.com.
**POMC Catalog Available**

POMC’s “Journey Through Grief” catalog is available by contacting POMC at: (888) 818-POMC. The catalog can also be downloaded from our website at: [www.pomc.org](http://www.pomc.org).

The catalog provides color photos and a listing for all POMC items: books, bumper stickers, brochures, clothing, magnets, music, etc.

Information on items for POMC’s National Day of Remembrance for Murder Victims, special gifts, memorials, and tributes are also included in the catalog.

Contact POMC today for your free copy.

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**Dedication Page Information**

Dedication Pages are included in each publication of the Survivors Newsletters. Not only is this a way to memorialize our loved ones, it also helps to defray the cost of publishing the newsletter. We offer this opportunity to pay tribute with poems, photos (black and white only), letters/loving thoughts or special requests.

A donation of $25.00 is requested for each 3 1/2 x 4 inch square used, 2 squares for $50.00, 3 squares for $75.00, whole page $100.00.

Send item and appropriate donation to “Dedication Page,” POMC, 635 W. 7th Street, Suite 104, Cincinnati, OH 45203. Please include your name and daytime phone number in case we have to contact you for clarification.

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**Our future depends on you!**

Please remember the National Organization of Parents Of Murdered Children in your will and estate planning.

Thank you for keeping us in mind.

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**Did you know Amazon.com is a POMC sponsor?**

POMC receives 4-13% depending on item of all Amazon.com purchases made through the amazon link on our webpage. The use of this link does not increase the cost of your purchase.

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**“Grief is NOT a disorder, a disease or a sign of weakness. It is an emotional, physical and spiritual necessity; the price you pay for love. The only cure of grief is to grieve.” - Rabbi Earl Grollman**
Survivors Newsletter Subscription

Please find enclosed $10.00 for my annual subscription (three issues) for the Survivors Newsletter ($25.00 outside the United States). Please consider adding an extra subscription fee to help defray the cost for someone who cannot afford to subscribe.

(Please Print)

Name: _______________________________________
Address: _______________________________________
City, State, Zip: ________________________________
Email Address: __________________________________
Phone number: (_____) __________________________
Amount enclosed: $__________ for _______ year (s)
Payment method: ___Check   __Visa   __MasterCard
     __American Express   __Discover
Card number: _________________________________
Expiration date: ______________________________
Enclosed is an extra $__________ donation for someone in need and is given in:

Memory of: ___________________________________
Honor of: _____________________________________

All those donating an extra gift ‘in loving memory of’, or ‘in honor of’ will be listed in the next issue of the Survivors newsletter. To have POMC send a letter acknowledging your gift to the family, please provide family’s name, address, city, state, and zip code.

Return to:
Parents Of Murdered Children, Inc.
635 W. 7th Street, Suite 104
Cincinnati, Ohio 45203
Table of Contents:

Parents Of Murdered Children Endure A Different Kind of Grief ........................................ Pages 1 - 2
2018 National Conference & ELT ................................................................. Page 3
POMC San Diego Chapter Leader Recognized .................................................. Page 3
A Message from the Board Room ................................................................. Page 4
Carolee Hildenbrandt joins the National Board of Trustees ............................. Page 5
A Message from the Executive Director ........................................................ Page 5
Victim families use their pain to help murderers change .............................. Page 6 - 9
Murder Wall .................................................................................................. Pages 10 - 11
Parole Block Program ................................................................................... Pages 12
Marsy’s Law in Ohio ....................................................................................... Page 13
Donations ....................................................................................................... Page 14 - 15
‘THE AMENDMENT’ Brooks Douglas story to release in theaters ............... Page 15
Contact Person, Chapter Leaders & State Coordinator Corner ..................... Pages 16
In Memoriam ................................................................................................. Page 17
The Courage to Grieve, Grief Retreat Weekend ........................................... Page 17
For Your Information .................................................................................... Page 18
Newsletter Subscription & Editorial Team ................................................... Page 19