



Photos by Courtney Gaillard
Jetta Shepherd, director of violence response programs with Family Services, speaks to the crowd gathered to honor victims of domestic abuse, as an advocate for the abused women holds a mock headstone with a victim's epitaph.

Silent Victims

Agency holds ceremony to honor abused women

BY COURTNEY GAILLARD
 THE CHRONICLE

Slain victims of domestic violence were honored and remembered in a rally last Thursday called Remember My Name. The rally, sponsored by Family Services Inc. and the Domestic Violence Community Council, was also held to show support for survivors of domestic violence.

Law-enforcement officers, attorneys, health-care professionals and domestic-violence advocates — all of the people who work to assist and protect abused women were present at the rally held in Winston Square Park. All declared their agencies' commitments to ending the violent behavior that leads to so many deaths.

"While we honor the memory of those who lost their lives due to domestic violence, it is also our hope that this particular service will galvanize our community in its commitment to end domestic violence. We must create a zero-tolerance-to-domestic-violence. These deaths must not be in vain," said Joetta Shepherd, director of violence response programs with Family Services.

According to Shepherd, communities around the area were encouraged to gather at the same time on that day to raise awareness about domestic violence.

Black shadow silhouettes covered in a single victim's name and date of death from domestic violence were held as a reminder of the thousands of women who are murdered from physical abuse. Their names were read off to the small and silent crowd who gathered at the park to honor those whose lives were brought to a brutal and tragic halt.

Single white candles were lit to symbolize the 14 victims of domestic violence in the last two months. A 15th candle was lit to recognize the next victim who has yet to come forward for help. Brandy, Latahnya, Debbie, Elizabeth, Lisa, Tiffany, Jennifer, Valerie, Tiana, Marilyn and Andrea were just some of so many who have been murdered by husbands or boyfriends, some as recent as two weeks ago.

"I think if we've learned anything and walk away with anything today, it is that domestic violence is not just an issue that Family Services deals with or the Sheriff's Office or Winston-Salem Police Department. It affects every single system, agency and citizen in this community," said Sharee Fowler, coordinator of the Domestic Violence Community Council with Family Services.



People gathered at Winston Square Park to memorialize those recently killed due to physical violence.

One survivor named Teresa came forward and expressed her gratitude to staff members at Family Services who helped her get out of an abusive relationship. She spoke of numerous trips to the Battered Women's Shelter when she was overcome with feelings of entrapment in her relationship, despite her job as a Winston-Salem police officer.

"I broke the silence and freed myself from that relationship," said Teresa, who finally decided three years ago that "enough was enough."

Once an e-mail began to circulate around agencies stating that eight domestic violence murders had occurred between June and July of this year, Shepherd said it was quickly decided that a memo-

rial service would be necessary to raise awareness.

"I think we think about sometimes the fact of people being beaten and people verbally abused, but we don't necessarily think about the fact that this could end up with someone being seriously injured or killed," Shepherd said.

Here are five things to say to a victim of domestic violence who is reluctant to leave a violent situation:

- I am afraid for your safety.
- I am afraid for the safety of your children.
- It will only get worse.
- I am here for you when you are ready to leave.
- You deserve better than this.

For information, call the Shelter and 24-Hour Crisis Line, 723-8125, or log onto www.familyserv.org.

Citizens urged to remain calm as SBI probes shooting



File Photo
Jessie Grooms, 14, was shot Saturday morning after the alleged stolen car he was driving was stopped near Rupert Bell Park, which is off File Street in East Winston.

FROM STAFF REPORTS

An official with the State Bureau of Investigation told The Chronicle Monday that the investigation into the shooting of a 14-year-old boy by Winston-Salem police could take weeks or even months to complete.

"It is basically a criminal investigation to determine the facts of the case," said Loy Ingold, supervising agent for the SBI's Greensboro office.

The Winston-Salem Police Department called in the SBI Saturday, soon after Jessie Grooms was shot by police. WSPD always calls in the state agency when an officer uses such force.

The Police Department has been tight-lipped about the incident. It is unclear how many times Grooms was shot and why police thought it was necessary to fire a gun.

The department did release a written statement over the weekend, in which officials said that Grooms was stopped (beside Rupert Bell Park) by officers in a stolen vehicle. Two officers approached the stolen vehicle and asked Grooms to turn off the ignition of the car. According to

the Police Department, Grooms did not obey the command. When an officer reached into the car to turn the ignition off, an altercation ensued and Grooms was shot with the gun of Lt. W.S. Weaver, according to the Police Department statement.

Grooms was admitted to Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center in serious but stable condition. By press time he had been upgraded to satisfactory condition.

Two people who claim to have witnessed the incident

have called The Chronicle this week. Both said that they did not see Grooms resisting officers.

Ingold said the investigation into the shooting will include the collection of physical evidence as well as interviews with those involved and witnesses. Ingold said that since the incident occurred on a weekend near a busy park, there are a lot of interviews that must be conducted.

When the SBI concludes

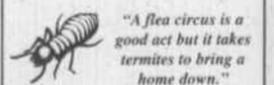
See Investigation on A4

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