WHERE HAVE ALL THE FLOWERS GONE?

The California Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence honors our loved ones who were killed or injured by gun violence.
Every year in California over 7,500 people are shot with guns. Nearly half of them die. The survivors face a lifetime of dealing with their injuries.

Laura was killed in a rampage shooting at her place of work in Nevada County. A severely mentally ill gunman shot Laura four times at close range, killing her instantly. She was nineteen.

Laura had extraordinary capabilities, kindness, and spirit. She was an outstanding student, graduating as high school valedictorian, and was at the time of her death a sophomore at Haverford College and in the midst of her campaign for the student body presidency. Laura was extremely organized and motivated; she lived life fully as she danced through her days, easily juggling rigorous academics, student council, community service, piano, ballet, and long distance running. She had many close friends.

Laura’s killer had a houseful of illegal guns. In Laura’s memory, we are working to keep guns out of dangerous hands. We seek to spare other parents the pain of losing a child to gunfire. We miss our daughter every day.

At age nineteen, Laura was already living a life full of service; she wanted to make a positive difference in the world...she had unlimited possibilities and the brightest of prospects. Her daily life was witness to her beliefs as she touched and inspired the lives of those around her.

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Amanda and Nick Wilcox, parents
Nevada County
In one year on average, more than 100,000 people in America are shot or killed with a gun – over 30,000 of them die.

Brandon Lee Evans 1988-2008

Brandon Lee Evans left his hometown of San Diego at the ripe age of 20 to move to San Francisco to pursue his passion in music and to attend college. An avid lover of reggae music, which promotes peace and love, Brandon was so excited to go out on his own, live in a new place and share new experiences with some new and old friends. His mother and brothers were sad to see him go, but embraced his move because he was so bright about his future.

Three weeks later, Brandon’s mom and brothers received the most heart-breaking news possible. Their beloved Brandon (aka BB Lee) had been gunned down in cold blood in Golden Gate Park on Thanksgiving weekend of 2008. Brandon had called his mother that night when he was going out and told her he was going to the park to listen to music with some friends. He was so happy and so excited because he had already found a job teaching boxing to disadvantaged teens at a youth center. He would never see that first day of work.

Brandon was shot in the back while going to his car alone that night to retrieve his cell phone. He always promoted peace, yet died a violent gun death through no fault of his own. His death will not be in vain. It is our hope that through his death, we will achieve the peace that he sought in his short life. By supporting the Brady Campaign, you can make a difference.

Christine Evans, mother
San Diego County

Every day, an average of nine young people ages 0-19 are killed by firearms in the U.S. An average of 57 young people are wounded by firearms each day.

Jan Heyne 1954-2005

Memorial Day, 2005, my beautiful wife of 25 years, Jan, and I were returning a boat we had used to my best friend, Steve Mazin. As we were speaking with Steve in his front yard, a man with a history of violence and, with whom Steve had a longstanding feud, appeared suddenly, walked straight up to us, pulled a 9mm hand gun from behind his back, and shot all three of us multiple times. Jan and Steve died instantly, and I was left for dead. I was rescued by neighbors, since recovered fully, and by the grace of God, our three amazing children have at least one parent still in their lives.

Incredibly, Steve had recently been granted a restraining order against the killer, knowing he was capable of doing exactly what he did!

The following day, the killer took the life of another young woman, stole a car, and then killed himself as authorities were closing in on him. When authorities searched the monster, they found him armed with a .357 Magnum and a .45 to go along with the 9mm.

Jan was an amazing mother, wife, and the most peaceful loving beautiful spirit I had ever known. That her life was indiscriminately snuffed out by a violent person with such free and easy access to as many guns as he cared to get his hands on, and that they were left in his hands with a restraining order granted against him, is reprehensible! To her memory, Jan’s children and I ask that you please join us to do everything possible to keep this kind of tragedy from happening to someone else by doing whatever necessary to help keep guns from the hands of dangerous people!

Tim Heyne, husband
Ventura County
Firearm homicide is the second-leading cause of death (after motor vehicle crashes) for young people ages 1-19 in the U.S.

In memory of Peter Verge, murdered at age 18 in Santa Monica, CA.

Peter was the epitome of life itself - always moving. Peter’s first love was surfing. Peter and his buddies would leave the house at the crack of dawn and they would surf almost every day. Peter worked as a box boy at Vons Supermarket and was always so happy and easy going. Peter lived life to the fullest. He crammed a lot of living into 18 years. He was working to move to Hawaii so he could surf the best waves. His life was taken 2 weeks before Christmas by a 33-year-old attorney who was mixed up with drugs.

The man who killed Peter was sent to prison after a lengthy trial. The trial was very difficult on our family but looking back, I realize that it gave us some form of justice. My heart goes out to those families who do not know who killed their loved one. I found out the man who killed my brother was out of prison when I picked up his medical record from the discharge shelf at the local hospital where I worked. Thankfully there are better laws now to notify the family. The positive outcome of this tragedy is that I have worked with some absolutely amazing people in the gun violence prevention movement and our family is much closer.

Suzanne Verge, sister
Los Angeles County

Keith Stephens 1982-2006

I didn’t want to see Keith in his casket... It wasn’t Keith Stephens I saw in there. Not that waxy-faced, motionless, solemnly sleeping man. The Keith I loved was an eternal kid at 24, with glossy ebony skin that earned him his nickname “Black” and a flash of white teeth his oldest sister called “his Colgate smile.” The Keith I loved could never have lain there so still. He could never have gone that long without laughing, without pulling some prank that made everyone around him crack up. The Keith I loved couldn’t be what his father told reporters his son had become: “Just another statistic – just another young black man getting killed in the Bay Area.” The Keith Stephens I knew was a joyful, charismatic kid working hard to become a responsible adult. Then he was murdered. He can’t become just another statistic.

By Meredith Maran, Salon.com, March 27, 2006

Keith Stephens was my friend. He was a student at Contra Costa College and was studying to become a firefighter. He was killed in Berkeley over the sale of a used car.

Carole Johnson, friend
West Contra Costa County

Although African-American children and teens are almost five times as likely as their white peers to be killed by firearms, African-American children and teens are almost five times as likely as their white peers to be killed by firearms.

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Suzanne Verge, sister
Los Angeles County

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Mindy Finkelstein was 16 years old working as a camp counselor at the North Valley Jewish Community Center, in Granada Hills, California, the summer of 1999. She left for camp that hot Tuesday morning looking forward to playing with her campers. As Mindy walked back into the lobby holding the hand of James, her 5-year-old camper, and a basket of games, she felt this piercing pain and air rip through her leg. Hearing this loud noise Mindy knew she was shot but never saw the gunman who was just 10 feet away.

Mindy grabbed James’ hand and ran to a room filled with campers and started screaming for them to escape with their counselors. Everyone was running, but Mindy was too weak from the loss of blood and collapsed on the grass protected only by a short brick wall. Thoughts of Columbine raced through Mindy’s mind as she heard the sounds of screaming coming from inside the Center. Finally, an ambulance rushed Mindy to the hospital where there was total chaos of hysterical parents frantically looking for their children. Mindy was shot twice in her leg, the second bullet ripped open a large hole in her upper thigh leaving bullet fragments in her leg. The receptionist and three other campers were shot and wounded, too. A few hours later, the gunman shot and killed our postal worker.

Mindy was able to finish her senior year in high school as she recovered from her physical wounds. But that September, as we helped Mindy move into her dorm and start college, she got sick. It was clear that the upbeat fun loving Mindy had to move back home, and shortly after that she slipped into a horrible depression and stopped eating. A year later, Mindy returned to UCSB and finished her degree.

Ten years later, Mindy proudly works in the San Francisco Bay Area and does volunteer work for the CA Brady Campaign, Women Against Gun Violence, and the Legal Community Against Violence.

Josh Stepakoff was 6 years old when he faced a neo-Nazi gunman at a Jewish day camp. He and scores of other children were enjoying a carefree summer day when the gunman, who had a history of mental illness, walked in with a semi-automatic weapon. In seconds, he fired more than 70 rounds striking five people and terrorizing dozens of small children. Josh was hit twice, one bullet breaking his leg, and the other narrowly missing his spine and vital organs.

Today, Josh is a typical 17-year-old, but along the way he struggled with post traumatic stress disorder and with the notoriety that came with being “one of the kids who got shot at the Jewish Community Center”. While the psychological aftermath of what happened is part of who he is, he doesn’t let it define him. He sees himself as a survivor, not a victim. Gun violence should not be part of growing up in America.

Music is his passion and he dreams of becoming a music producer or perhaps pursuing a career in music therapy, and he wants to use his story to educate kids about the dangers of guns.

Marlys Nunneri I met my future husband at the age of 13. Two years later, at the age of 15, I found myself pregnant and did what many were encouraged to do in that situation — I got married. I was married for 41 years and during that time endured physical, mental, verbal, sexual, and financial abuse. I divorced my abusive husband in 1995, but I continued to see him off and on for 4 years. Then, on June 17, 1999, my ex-husband shot me through the heart, lung and paralyzed my diaphragm on the right side. He is currently in prison for life, and I am finally out of my prison.

Marlys Nunneri I survived 41 years of domestic violence, bring shot through the heart & now I’m FINALLY alive!”

I continue to receive counseling which has helped to change my life. I often speak to violence prevention groups, at workshops, to school students, and other organizations to share my story about domestic violence and gun violence, and about survival and triumph over what some feel is the unspeakable. It is healing for me to do this and I pray that I am able to help others find the strength to free themselves. I have survived physical and emotional pain, and I have emerged with a powerful story of survival.

Marlys Nunneri San Fernando Valley
Every year there are only about 200 legally justified self-defense homicides by private citizens compared with over 30,000 gun deaths.

Robert Kelly 1954-1982

Robert Kelly was the oldest son in a family of seven children. As the oldest son, he was a strong and influential force in the lives of his sisters and brother. He was by far the funniest, wittiest person in the family, and in a large Irish family, this is high praise.

Rob struggled in school when he was young. But with hard work and determination, he received his bachelor’s degree in business. Our brother enjoyed good conversation, baseball, exercise and days at the beach. He loved driving, and loved to teach his siblings and niece how to drive.

Our brother was shot and robbed while walking to his parked car. The killer has never been found. Rob was 28 years old when he died. It is shattering to stand by the hospital bed of someone that you love completely, as he is dying from a gunshot wound. It is heartbreaking to witness your mother endure the deepest of suffering.

Our family has been forever changed. But our love for Rob has not changed. We remain grateful to God, that it was our family that was blessed to have Rob as a son, brother & uncle.

Peggy McCrum, sister
Los Angeles County

Kenzo Dix 1978-1994

Kenzo means health and creativity.

When he was young, he waddled after his brother. Soon, he would jump into his mother’s arms. It turned into a game. She would say “Hup, Kenzo.” He would leap for a hug. He got bigger. One day she said, Kenzo, you’re knocking me over; this is the last Hup. I have a picture of Kenzo in her arms. long legs dangling as she staggered back, both of them grinning.

He asked what she wanted for Christmas. “Just make me something.” He taped his picture into a frame using old plastic and scotch tape. Strange angles, it keeps coming undone. She treasures it.

A high school teacher had him write his ten year plan. Kenzo would play basketball, DJ for radio school, travel with friends, learn photography, play the drums, study hard. He thought he’d be a pediatrician—he liked kids. He would raise his children to value health, creativity, family, community.

Kenzo was visiting a friend’s house. His friend decided to show him his father’s gun. Thinking he had unloaded it, his friend walked into the room and pulled the trigger. The bullet, still hidden in the chamber, killed Kenzo.

Kenzo was shot. Our lives stopped. Unintentional shootings could be prevented with simple changes in gun design. But guns are exempt from federal consumer product safety regulations.

Our lives have gone on... But Kenzo is missing.

Griffin Dix, father
Alameda County

The unintentional firearm-related death rate for children 0-14 years old is 9 times higher in the U.S. than in the 25 other industrialized countries combined.
Matthew Blek was only 21 years old and was about to graduate from college with honor majors in math and physics. He was a gifted scholar, an undefeated high school wrestling champion, and enjoyed the arts – playing the violin and guitar. One of his favorite things to do was to perform magic tricks for youngsters!

In June of 1994, Matthew was on another adventure, working a summer job in New York City. All his dreams for a bright future never happened as he was shot and killed by teenagers while he was walking a date home. The weapon, a cheap and easily obtained junk gun commonly called a “Saturday Night Special” was manufactured within 50 miles of his family home in Orange County. We learned from this teen that guns were brought from the south and sold out of car trunks in his New York neighborhood. Sadly today, the gun show loophole, and lax state and federal gun laws continue to take the lives of loved ones.

Our family feels the loss of Matthew each and every day. We have learned to cope with our pain by working with others dedicated to strengthening and creating common sense gun laws so that other families will not have to walk in our shoes.

Mary Leigh and Charlie Blek, parents
Orange County

In 1995, my mother, who had been clinically depressed for many years, pulled my father’s .357 Magnum out of a bedside table, put it to her temple and pulled the trigger. Mom left an agonizing tear in our hearts. In my Dad, it never mended. The woman he had shared 48 years with, had two children with, the woman he adored, became an unrelenting nightmare. Like me, Dad was unable to separate the good memories of her from her final act. It was always there.

Dad considered himself a responsible and sane firearm hobbyist. He also believed in keeping guns for personal protection. He was so accustomed to and comforted by their presence that he didn’t think twice about having them around the house. He didn’t consider the possibility that any one else would use one.

Dad never slept in that bedroom, again. He sold their house and moved. After moving, Dad brought home one additional piece of furniture — a locking gun cabinet. That’s where he kept his 14 firearms until he died.

Ellen McCord, daughter
Nevada County

Gun violence impacts society in countless ways: medical costs, criminal justice system costs, security costs, and reductions in the quality of life because of fear of gun violence. These impacts are estimated to cost U.S. citizens $100 billion annually.

Catherine McCord 1926-1995

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A gun in the home is 22 times more likely to be used in a homicide, suicide, or unintentional shooting than to kill in self-defense.
In Memory of My Two Cousins Lost to Gun Violence

Gun violence in my hometown of Richmond, California, rivals that of the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars. Indeed, the war acronym KIA could stand for “Killed In America” here. If only there were programs available to treat all of the children walking around with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder - like we have for our Veterans. Families must find a way to go on living without any financial help for their injuries and mental stress. And every day we read in the papers about another young person killed with guns in Richmond, like my two cousins Travante James and Dante Boone. In the meantime, the gun manufacturing industry is thriving.

Carole Johnson, cousin
West Contra Costa County

Community violence, including gun violence, has the equivalent emotional impact on children as war or natural disaster.

My daughter, Melissa, was an active and artistic child, bright and into everything. She was a beautiful and intelligent woman and had a great smile with an off-beat sense of humor and called me her “mini-moo”. Melissa had just moved to live with my eldest sister, Sylvia, in Missouri. She wanted to start over and had already gotten a job. She was very family-oriented and, unfortunately, this later got her into trouble since she trusted the wrong people. Melissa was planning on becoming an Esthetician and only staying with Sylvia 6 months then moving to St. Louis, Missouri. She was also considering buying some property and sending for me so that we could live together in Missouri. After living there for 6 weeks, she was shot to death by her second cousin, who lived next door, after an argument they had.

She was my only daughter, my only child. I miss her each and every day of my life. And I still ask myself WHY??

Heather Earle, mother
Solano County

Higher household gun ownership correlates with higher rates of homicides, suicides, and unintentional shootings.
Nazar Sulliman was born on July 7, 1978 and was murdered on November 16, 2002.

Nazar, his mother, brother and sister came to the United States four years before Nazar was killed. His family had fled the terrorism on the streets of the Sudan and sadly they found violence here in the United States when Nazar was shot and killed while on a freeway onramp in Los Angeles, California. The homicide detective working on Nazar’s “still open case” called it a random act of violence.

Nazar had graduated from college just the year before his death; being one of the first in our family to do so. He had made his family very proud, however, all his hopes and dreams were taken in an instant when someone chose to take his life for no rhyme or reason. He was killed along with his best friend, Gregg W. Gibson, II, two innocent human beings.

We, his family, still live the nightmare of his violent death, never understanding how it is that our loved one was taken in such a horrible manner, in a place where we had come to seek peace.

Fadwa Sulliman, mother
Los Angeles County

Twenty-two percent of U.S. teenagers (ages 14 - 17) report having witnessed a shooting.

Gregg W. Gibson, II was born April 30, 1982 and murdered November 16, 2002.

Gregg couldn’t wait to enter this earth; he was in a hurry right from the start as he was almost born in the elevator at the hospital. He weighed in at close to 9 lbs and continued one of his favorite past times throughout his life - eating.

His love of the water endeared him to his Father; his love of life endeared him to his Mother. His protection endeared him to his sisters and his handsome physique endeared him to the girls.

He was a lover of animals and children which led him to his occupation as a Veterinarian Assistant. His two constant companions were a Dalmatian he named Oreo whom he saved from being euthanized and an adopted Rottweiler mix named Nando. He also attended college part time with the hope to become a K-Nine Officer.

He was a kind soul whose life on this earth ended abruptly on November 16, 2002, when he and his friend, Nazar Sulliman, were shot and killed while stopped at a signal light enroute to the freeway on ramp. Their murders have been labeled “random acts of gun violence” and it is suspected that it may have been gang associated. Neither Gregg nor Naz had any gang affiliation. Their perpetrators have yet to be caught.

Gregg’s memory continues on through those whose lives he touched and there are many.

We ask you to keep him in your thoughts (there are too many people like him being killed) and to do what you can in your daily lives to bring about change in an often times violent world. Together we can make a difference - Gregg did!

Gregg and Judy Gibson, parents
Los Angeles County
**We Believe:**

- All Americans have the right to be safe from gun violence in their homes, neighborhoods, schools, and places of work and worship.
- All children and youth have the right to grow up in environments free from the threat of gun violence.
- Gun violence is a public health crisis that harms not only the physical, but also the spiritual, social, and economic health of our families and communities.
- It is too easy for dangerous people to obtain dangerous weapons. This increases the risk of death or severe injury in situations of domestic violence, criminal activity, gang-related or youth violence, suicide attempts, and unintentional shootings.
- It is possible to reduce the number of deaths and injuries caused by gun violence with reasonable and responsible, common sense gun laws to protect our families and our communities.

**Our Mission:** The Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence is devoted to creating an America free from gun violence, where all Americans are safe at home, at school, at work, and in our communities. The California Chapters of the Brady Campaign educate and mobilize their communities to advocate for sensible responsible guns laws, regulations, and public policies at the local, state, and national levels.

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**Mark Roth 1972-1993**

Mark was a young man, having recently celebrated his 21st birthday, when he was murdered by his neighbor with a handgun. They had spent the evening at a neighborhood bar and returned to their apartment building when Mark was shot. Everyone wanted to know why, Mark was a kind, thoughtful person. The answer, I eventually came to realize, was because he could. He was a man with a temper and a handgun.

Five guns were taken from his apartment by the police. He served 11 years in state prison before being paroled. One of the conditions of parole is no possession of firearms. But, unlike California, he lives in a state where, due to the gun show loophole, he has probably gone to a gun show and bought the gun he now possesses.

Jane Roth, mother
Napa County

It is estimated that over 40% of gun acquisitions occur in the “secondary market”. That means they happen without a Brady Background Check at a federally licensed dealership.

**THE CALIFORNIA CHAPTERS OF THE BRADY CAMPAIGN TO PREVENT GUN VIOLENCE**

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