

SPEECH AT GLENVIEW PARK 8/10/97

THANK YOU, REV. & MRS. REED, FOR ASKING ME TO BRING THE MEMORIAL WALL AND TO MAKE A FEW REMARKS AT THIS WONDERFUL EVENT.

WHY AM I HERE? WELL, 3 YEARS AGO MY YOUNGEST SON, CHRISTOPHER MARTIN, WAS KILLED BY A COWARDLY CAR JACKER WHO ONLY WANTED THE HUB CAPS AND OTHER PARTS OF THE CAR HE WAS SITTING IN. WE'RE FORTUNATE THAT IT WASN'T A DOUBLE HOMICIDE THAT AFTERNOON BECAUSE ONE OF CHRIS' FRIENDS WAS SITTING IN THE BACK SEAT BUT THE KILLER MISSED HIM WHEN HE GOT INTO THE CAR SHOOTING.

SINCE THE TIME MY SON WAS KILLED, I, ALONG WITH MANY OTHERS, HAVE BEEN TRYING TO REACH THE KIDS AND PARENTS TO FIND WAYS TO STOP OUR CHILDREN FROM KILLING EACH OTHER.

I'M HERE TO TELL YOU, THAT AS A PARENT WHO HAS LOST A CHILD, WHAT I FEEL IS UNRELENTING GRIEF. I FEEL ANGER, PAIN, DESPAIR. I FEEL A KNIFE IN MY SOUL & HEART. MY SON LIES IN A COFFIN THAT WILL NOT OPEN AGAIN. HE'S WITH GOD.

I WANT TO STOP ADDING NAMES OF OUR CHILDREN TO THE MEMORIAL WALL. RIGHT NOW, THERE ARE 585 NAMES OF CHILDREN, BABIES THROUGH THOSE WHO WERE 25 YEARS OLD, WHO HAVE BEEN KILLED IN CUYAHOGA COUNTY FROM 1990 TO 1996. I CAN'T BEAR TO GET THE NAMES OF THE CHILDREN WHO HAVE BEEN KILLED IN 1997 YET, BUT AT SOME POINT I WILL.

I ASK THAT YOU USE YOUR BRAIN INSTEAD OF GUNS OR KNIVES. YOUR MIND IS MORE POWERFUL THAN ANY WEAPON. DON'T BUY INTO THE VIOLENCE CONSPIRACY -- CHOOSE LIFE INSTEAD OF DEATH.

WHEN IT'S ALL OVER, IS IT WORTH DYING OR KILLING SOMEONE BECAUSE THAT PERSON CALLED YOU SOME STUPID NAMES OR ACTED IGNORANT.

WHEN IT'S ALL OVER, IS IT WORTH DYING OR KILLING SOMEONE BECAUSE YOU OR THEY ARE IN A DIFFERENT NEIGHBORHOOD. WHAT PART OF MILES, HARVARD, KINSMAN, HOUGH, SUPERIOR OR ST. CLAIR DO YOU OWN PERSONALLY.

I KNOW THAT I DON'T OWN ONE INCH OF LAND, AND EVEN IF I HAD EVER BEEN ABLE TO BUY A HOUSE, IT WOULDN'T BE MINE FOR ABOUT 30 YEARS UNTIL IT WAS PAID OFF.

TODAY'S VIOLENCE IS SENSELESS AND STUPID BECAUSE IT USUALLY INVOLVES OVERREACTIONS TO DUMB NAME CALLING, GREED, OR LACK OF RESPECT OR CARING FOR YOURSELF AND OTHERS.

IT DEFINITELY INVOLVES COWARDICE BECAUSE DISAGREEMENTS SHOULD BE SETTLED THROUGH DISCUSSION OR ON A ONE TO ONE BASIS.

TODAY'S VIOLENCE INVOLVES GUNS FIRED INTO A CROWD, GUNS FIRED FROM A MOVING CAR, OR SNEAK ATTACKS WITH KNIVES.

REMEMBER THAT LIFE IS PRECIOUS. YOU ARE PRECIOUS. YOU ARE IMPORTANT. SO TREAT YOURSELF AS AN IMPORTANT PERSON WHO IS LOVED. DON'T BUY INTO THE VIOLENCE CONSPIRACY. CHOOSE LIFE INSTEAD OF DEATH OR JAIL.

THINK ABOUT WHO YOU ARE WITH; WHY YOU HAVE TO BE THERE; AND PLEASE THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU ARE DOING AND WHO YOU ARE DOING IT WITH. IS IT REALLY WORTH THE POSSIBILITY OF BEING KILLED OR HURTING SOMEONE ELSE AND ENDING UP IN JAIL?

WHEN THE LID OF A COFFIN CLOSES, IT IS FINAL. YOUR LIFE ON EARTH IS OVER. YOUR FAMILY IS IN PAIN FOREVER AND IF YOU HAVE CHILDREN, THEY HAVE LOST THEIR FATHER OR MOTHER.

REMEMBER THAT WHEN ONE OF OUR CHILDREN IS MURDERED, WE REALLY LOSE TWO PEOPLE. ONE FAMILY'S CHILD GOES TO THE CEMETERY AND ANOTHER FAMILY'S CHILD GOES TO JAIL FOR A LONG TIME.

WE, AS PARENTS, AS NEIGHBORS, ALL OF US WHO KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LOVING AND HATING, HAVE TO START NOW TO MAKE SURE THAT ALL OF OUR CHILDREN WHO ARE HERE TODAY AND WHO WILL BE BORN LATER KNOW THAT THEY ARE IMPORTANT AND LOVED.

WE HAVE TO TEACH THE IMPORTANCE OF RESPECT -- RESPECT FOR YOURSELF AND OTHERS.

I'LL SAY IT AGAIN. YOU ARE TOO WONDERFUL TO DIE SO YOUNG. LOVE AND RESPECT IS A TWO WAY STREET. YOU MUST HAVE TRUE LOVE AND RESPECT FOR YOURSELF. CARE ABOUT YOURSELF. AND WHEN YOU DO THAT, YOU CAN CARE MORE ABOUT OTHER PEOPLE.

BE INVOLVED IN YOUR OWN FUTURE. BE INVOLVED IN YOUR COMMUNITY. STAY ALIVE.

THANK YOU.

Judy Martin (8/24/97)

MENTION ABOUT DISRESPECTFUL LANGUAGE, TEMPER TANTRUMS, THE OLDER PLAYERS, ETC.

Presentation of the Memorial Wall - Friday, 5/23/97, 3:00 p.m.

Reason:

I am here today in memory of my youngest son, Christopher Martin, who was killed on this corner by someone who wanted the car he was sitting in. He only wanted pieces and parts of that car. He got in the car shooting. He didn't care about the two young men sitting in that car. We are fortunate it wasn't a double homicide that afternoon.

I am also here today to present this Memorial Wall in memory and in honor of all the children we have lost to the violence we are allowing to consume our children.

Today's violence is senseless and stupid because it usually involves overreactions to dumb name calling, or greed, or lack of respect or caring for yourself and others.

It definitely involves cowardice because disagreements are not settled through discussion or on a one to one basis.

Today's violence involves guns fired in a crowd, guns fired from a moving car, sneak attacks with knives, and children playing with guns.

**We, as parents,
as neighbors,
as anybody who was raised to know the difference between loving and hating,
have to start NOW to make sure that all of our children who are here today and who will be born in all of the tomorrows know that they are IMPORTANT AND LOVED.**

**We have to begin teaching the importance of RESPECT.
-- RESPECT FOR YOURSELF AND OTHERS.**

There have to be boundaries of behavior. And we as parents have to teach this to our children, the friends of our children, the children in our neighborhoods, and the children you meet wherever you go.

If we talk to our children with love and respect, our children will respond.

I'd like to thank Art McKoy for encouraging me to try to find a way to get this wall built. I'd like to thank all the members of BBCI, VOICES, S/V of Tragedy and the many other people I've met on this journey through grief that is never ending.

I would like to thank the generous donations of material for the Wall from Cleveland Plastic Fabricators and the time and effort by the employees of City Blue to put the names of our children on the Wall. I'd also like to thank JDRP for its support. This Wall will move with us when we march, have vigils or when we speak to groups.

Thank you.