

Healey Family



In March 2008 Brenda Healey, a beautiful 27-year old woman, was murdered by her co-worker. Her grieving family was devastated – wondering how they would survive the loss of their daughter – sister – and aunt. At the conclusion of a ten week emergency counselling program provided by Victim Services of York, the Healey’s were given information on an eight week program that was available in Toronto, and at the conclusion of that they were on their own – no long term or ongoing support – no program – no Brenda.

The Healey’s began to search for a support group for people who, like them, had lost a loved one through homicide – but instead of finding an organization or group that would help them survive their loss, they discovered a need - and an opportunity – to help others who had also lost a family member or friend to homicide. Ed and Geraldine Healey and their two surviving daughters, Teresa and Sue, began to talk about establishing a social support group where family and friends dealing with bereavement through homicide could deal with their loss and rebuild their lives, and the idea of *REMEMBER ME* was born.

The Healey family contacted Victim Services of York, who provided them with referrals and introductions to various experts and specialists who could assist them. A Steering Committee was established to determine the direction *REMEMBER ME* would take, and the inaugural meeting took place in the fall of 2009.

REMEMBER ME meets in Newmarket on the 2nd Tuesday of each month. Sessions are open to anyone who has lost a loved one or a friend to homicide – regardless of how long ago the loss took place. A typical session begins with a welcome and brief update on news and activities, followed by an inspirational speaker – often another survivor talking about what they’ve done to get to where they are today. The focus of the sessions is support and how to survive loss – no one is asked to tell their story unless they wish to do so. The sessions are free, although participants are asked to contribute a small donation to assist with meeting location costs. Attendance at the *REMEMBER ME* meetings varies between 10 to 30 people, with participants coming from across the GTA. The Healey’s are currently investigating the viability of launching a new support group, “*REMEMBER ME 2*”, which would be based in Mississauga.

Teresa Healey was asked if there is a particular incident or event related to *REMEMBER ME* that stands out for her. She recalled a survivor telling her, "This group saved my life..." – and Teresa's response was "We're saving each others lives."

We asked if there was any advice the Healey's could give to others who may want to reach out and make a difference in their community as it relates to violence and violence prevention, and the response was quick and emphatic. DO IT! DON'T BE AFRAID – YOU HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE AND SO MUCH TO GAIN! This response echoes a quote from Maya Angelou which is posted on Brenda's foundation website: "*If you find it in your heart to care for someone else, you will have succeeded.*"

Contact information:

REMEMBER ME – SURVIVORS OF HOMICIDE

www.rememberme2.webs.com