

Contents

Introduction
p. 1

U.S. Program:
Policy Work p. 1
Public Education p. 2
Enhancing Our Allies'
Understanding, p. 2-3
"Prevention, Not
Execution" p. 3
"No Silence, No Shame"
p. 3
Media and
Communications p. 3-4

International Program
p. 4

Office p. 5

Looking Ahead p. 5

Board of Directors
and Staff p. 6-8

Financial Report
p. 9-11

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Introduction

In 2010, the pro-victim, anti-death penalty message of Murder Victims' Families for Human Rights reached families, lawmakers, students, attorneys, radio and television audiences, and religious leaders in all regions of the United States. We were powerfully represented in Geneva at the 4th World Congress Against the Death Penalty, in Egypt at a conference on the death penalty in the Middle East and North Africa, and in South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan during our historic Victims' Voices speaking tour. At the end of our visit to Taiwan, we heard this gratifying comment: "The people of Taiwan will remember your story and it will change minds." We know that the testimony and the activities of MVFHR members had this impact in numerous locations.

Challenging the assumption that executions provide justice or closure for victims' families continues to be essential to challenging the need for capital punishment. As a victim-focused abolition and human rights organization, MVFHR brings survivors together to declare that the death penalty has no place in a just society. This year's annual report demonstrates that MVFHR continues to be an integral part of the movement against the death penalty and for victims.

U.S. Program

Policy Work

Because survivors of murder victims are commonly assumed to favor capital punishment, the voices of survivors who oppose the death penalty are in demand whenever the issue is under review or debate. MVFHR helps victims speak out against the death penalty and provides an organizational context and affiliation that strengthens each individual expression of opposition.

In 2010, MVFHR members testified, provided materials, and met directly with lawmakers in Illinois, California, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Montana, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, and Washington state. Members' testimony addressed such issues as the myth of "closure," the need for prevention of violence through the treatment of mental illness, and why families of law enforcement do not necessarily favor the death penalty.

Public Education

Voices of victims who oppose the death penalty help move the minds and hearts of people who are considering the issue, and ongoing public education is central to our organization's work. During 2010, MVFHR members participated in a wide variety of speaking events, both in the U.S. and abroad (see International Program, below). We were part of the "Murder Victim Family Members and the Death Penalty" series in Montana, the "Beyond Repair: True Stories of the Death Penalty" tour in Illinois, numerous educational events and press interviews in Kentucky, Kansas, and Connecticut, and several other special presentations throughout the year. Highlights of those presentations include a panel at an event called "No Human Way to Kill," sponsored by the Human Rights Centre at the University of Essex (England) and streamed live from the White Box Gallery in New York City; a talk at a media and human rights symposium; a presentation that was part of a Texas law school event on "The American Death Penalty in the Twenty-First Century," and a panel at People of Faith Against the Death Penalty's Kairos Conference in Atlanta.

In 2010 we added 15 new pages to MVFHR's online Gallery of Victims' Stories. Each page contains a photo, a brief description of what happened and the legal outcome in the case, a summary of the victim's family member's work and occasions of speaking out against the death penalty, a direct quotation about the survivor's reasons for opposing the death penalty, and links to further information. The Gallery puts real faces on victim opposition to the death penalty and is an accessible way to introduce lawmakers, students, members of the clergy, and other victims' family members to the issue.

Through our newsletter, *Article 3*, we drew attention to specific aspects of the death penalty debate and helped heighten awareness of victims' needs in the aftermath of murder. Newsletter issues in 2010 featured material from families of law enforcement who oppose the death penalty, an interview with victims' advocate Mary Achilles on enhancing our response to homicide, joint testimony from the daughter of the victim of an IRA bomb and the man who planted the bomb, and our usual round of news and updates about MVFHR's work and about victim opposition to the death penalty around the world.

Our "For Victims, Against the Death Penalty" blog regularly presented our message of victim opposition to the death penalty through reports about our members' work, excerpts from their testimony, letters to the editor, op-ed pieces, and speeches, and summaries of relevant research and commentary.

Enhancing Our Allies' Understanding

Part of MVFHR's work is to help our colleagues in the death penalty abolition movement increase their understanding of victims' experience and perspective. In 2010 we created a collection of materials, compiled into a binder notebook, designed to serve anti-death penalty activists who work with murder victims' families. The collection, titled *Murder Victim Family Member Opposition to the Death Penalty: A Guide for Activists*, includes sections on common assumptions about victims and the death penalty, the impact of victimization, some reasons

"Every death penalty story is also the story of a crime that occurred. A death penalty story does not begin with an execution or a death sentence or even with an arrest. It begins with a murder victim's loss of life and the devastating impact that that loss has on the surviving family members. Including victims' stories when talking about the death penalty is the right thing to do."

– *From MVFHR's Guide for Activists*

victims' family members oppose the death penalty, pressure on victims' families to support the death penalty, working with victims' families: a guide for activists, rethinking "closure," pro-victim advocacy, human rights and victim justice, and a history of the crime victims' movement. We distributed these collections to colleague organizations throughout the U.S., and convened a telephone conference to provide an opportunity for discussion about how to make good use of the materials.

"Prevention, Not Execution" project

We continued to work with our colleagues at the National Alliance on Mental Illness to distribute the report, *Double Tragedies: Victims Speak Out Against the Death Penalty for People with Severe Mental Illness*, and provided consultation to organizers in states that were considering legislation that would exempt people with severe mental illness from the death penalty. We delivered presentations on the topic of mental illness and the death penalty to student participants in Texas's Anti-Death Penalty Alternative Spring Break and to members of the National Alliance on Mental Illness's Charlotte, North Carolina group.

"No Silence, No Shame" project

As part of our ongoing effort to draw attention to the ways in which the death penalty harms families of those executed, we published an article in the Spring issue of MVFHR's newsletter titled "After Abolition: Helping Families of the Executed," based on an interview with Tamara Chikunova, whose son was executed in Uzbekistan, a country that subsequently abolished the death penalty.

At the 4th World Congress Against the Death Penalty (see International Program, below), we met briefly with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and presented her with materials containing our recommendation that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) undertake a study of families of the executed worldwide. Later in 2010, we participated in the 12th European Union-Non-Governmental Organization Forum on Human Rights, and proposed that priority be given to an examination of how the death penalty affects families of the executed. The group's final report included recommendations about integrating victims' voices into death penalty work and about focusing on how executions affect families of people who are executed.

Media and Communications

"Death penalty hurts – not helps – families of murder victims." "Victim's Family Asks to Block Execution," "Death row lets victims' families down." Throughout 2010, MVFHR continued to track coverage of victim opposition to the death penalty – mentions in news or feature articles, op-ed pieces, and letters to the editor -- and to include relevant excerpts in our newsletter and blog. Voices of MVFHR members were featured in news and feature stories throughout the U.S., and our participation in the 4th World Congress Against the Death Penalty was the subject of posts in the U.K. *Guardian* and *Dallas Morning News* blogs.

MVFHR's Victims' Voices speaking tour in Asia received substantial media

"Abolition of the death penalty does not automatically eradicate the suffering of families of those who have already been executed. As MVFHR continues to document, executions harm surviving family members in ways that can linger long after the execution itself, and can even carry into the next generation. Thus, even when executions are halted, work needs to be done to attend to the needs of the families for whom abolition did not come soon enough". – From MVFHR's Spring 2010 newsletter

coverage both in English and in the languages of the host countries. “Scrap death penalty, bereaved families say,” was the headline of the *Japan Times* story. “Victims’ rights activists urge Taiwan victims to reconsider the death penalty,” said *Taiwan News*. At MVFHR’s press conference in Tokyo, Stefan Huber, head of the EU delegation to Japan, included these remarks:

“There is a widespread assumption, and not just in Japan, that victims’ families favor the death penalty. As today’s main speakers have previously stated, executions are presumed to meet survivors’ need for justice and closure and to oppose the death penalty is often seen as somehow being ‘anti-victim’. But this is not necessarily the case.

“This visit will allow many Japanese to hear the voices of victims’ families in a context that is rarely heard in the public sphere in Japan, and I sincerely hope that it helps bolster the movement towards a mature, responsible debate in this country.”

In early 2010, MVFHR launched its new website, redesigned to be clearer and more accessible to visitors. Colleague organizations helped to publicize that launch, and we continued to track site traffic throughout the year.

“We from MVFHR are here because we believe that despite the differences in our legal systems, we can join together to acknowledge that the death penalty all over the world, from the United States to Japan, from China to Iran, needs to be re-examined. It accomplishes little for crime victims but takes great risks with human life and precious human resources.” – *from MVFHR testimony in Japan, June 2010*

International Program

At the 4th World Congress Against the Death Penalty, where 1,700 people from 100 countries gathered in Geneva in February, MVFHR members delivered powerful testimony during the “Words of Victims – Voices of Experience” evening, spoke as part of a “Violence, Victims, and the Death Penalty” roundtable, and offered an educational poster session about working with victims’ families.

Later in the year, when the General Assembly of the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty was for the first time held in the United States, MVFHR participated in a “Voices of Victims” panel, discussing the value of abolitionists reaching out to victims’ families right from the start.

In June, seven MVFHR members traveled to South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan to conduct a speaking tour with the goal of bringing the message of victim opposition to the death penalty to a part of the world where support for the death penalty is widespread and murder victims’ family members are often so ashamed and isolated that they are reluctant to speak out about anything, let alone opposition to the death penalty. The speakers gave public presentations and met with government officials, attorneys, activists, and other victims’ family members, repeatedly addressing audiences who had never before heard the MVFHR perspective. In November, our Asia liaison followed up with another trip to the region, this time also making visits to China and Mongolia. The presentations in both countries were very well received.

In September, MVFHR was invited to participate in the second Regional Conference on the Death Penalty in the Middle East and North Africa, titled “Death Penalty: Risks, Opportunities, Proposed Tools and Strategies.” We valued the opportunity to contribute to the discussion among human rights activists and policymakers about the risks and opportunities inherent in working against the death penalty in this part of the world.

Office

MVFHR faced a major challenge when, in late August, a fire in the American Friends Service Committee building, which houses MVFHR's office, destroyed significant inventory and archives and displaced our staff for the remaining months of the year. Essential files and equipment were recovered, and staff continued to carry out MVFHR's program and administrative work from their homes during the clean-up and reconstruction of the interior of the building.

Looking Ahead

As we end 2010, we are looking ahead to a Victim Summit that will bring victims together from around the U.S., to beginning work on an updated edition of our report *Dignity Denied* for an anticipated tenth-anniversary release in 2012, to continued efforts to draw attention to how the death penalty harms families of the executed and to the connections between the death penalty and mental illness.

As always, we look forward to continuing to amplify the voices of victims and to educating listeners, readers, and voters about victim opposition to the death penalty. Throughout our work, we will continue to put into action our belief that executions do not achieve justice for victims and that the death penalty is a violation of basic human rights.

We remain extremely grateful to all who support the work of Murder Victims' Families for Human Rights.

2010 Board of Directors and Staff

Bill Babbitt, member of the Board of Directors, has spoken publicly about the way the death penalty affects families of the executed since his brother Manny was executed by the state of California in 1999. His story is told in the book *Capital Consequences* and in the documentaries *And Then One Night* and *A Question of Justice*. Babbitt has spoken at a press conference at the United Nations, testified before legislative committees in Massachusetts and New Jersey, and addressed many college audiences about mental illness and the death penalty.

Jeanne Bishop, Treasurer of the Board of Directors, is the sister of Nancy Bishop Langert, who was shot to death along with her husband and their unborn child in 1990. Bishop has testified before Illinois the Governor's Commission on Capital Punishment, the Illinois Prisoner Review Board, and several state legislative committees. She appears in the death penalty documentaries *The Innocent* and *Too Flawed To Fix*. Along with her sister Jennifer, she received the Brigid Award from Concern Worldwide, honoring women who exemplify justice, generosity, and compassion in their work and daily lives. Bishop serves as assistant public defender in the Office of the Cook County Public Defender and is an adjunct professor at Northwestern University School of Law in the trial advocacy program. She is the author of several law review articles and op-ed pieces, serves on the Advisory Board of the Northwestern Center on Wrongful Convictions, and volunteers for the gun violence prevention organizations Million Mom March and the Illinois Council Against Handgun Violence.

Catherine Brady, Bookkeeper, has been crunching numbers since it was done with pencil and ledger paper. She took an eight-year break from numbers to engage in grassroots organizing and fundraising in the 1980s and early 90s with INFACT, leader of the Nestle and GE boycotts. Catherine has held positions ranging from part-time bookkeeper to Director of Finance and Administration with several progressive non-profits in the Boston area.

Priscilla Caputo, Administrative Staff, has worked for several years with families and victims of oppression and violence developing and directing a variety of clinical and community programs to provide support and equal access to crucial services within the medical, legal, and social service systems. She is a counselor, educator, and committed human rights advocate.

Renny Cushing, Executive Director, whose father was murdered in 1988, is a lifelong social justice activist and a pioneer in the effort to bridge the death penalty abolition movement and the victims' rights movement. He has testified before the U.S. Congress and several state legislatures and addressed hundreds of audiences in other venues in the U.S. and abroad regarding victim opposition to the death penalty. He is the co-author of *Dignity Denied: The Experience of Murder Victims' Family Members Who Oppose the Death Penalty* and *I Don't Want Another Kid to Die: Families of Victims Murdered by Juveniles Oppose the Juvenile Death Penalty*. He serves on the board of the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty and the steering committee of the World Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty. He is a recent member of the New Hampshire State House of Representatives and of the Criminal Justice Committee of the National Conference of State Legislators.

Reverend Walter Everett, member of the Board of Directors, serves on the board of Pennsylvanians United Against the Death Penalty and speaks several times a month to audiences around the states. He has testified before the Joint Judiciary Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly and spoken at numerous events surrounding the state's efforts to carry out its first execution in 45 years. Everett's son was shot and killed in 1987, and after a long struggle Everett was able to reconcile with the man convicted of the murder, to the extent that the two now speak together at prisons, universities, and churches. Reverend Everett has been active in several restorative justice organizations, including the Restorative Justice Task Force of the Christian Conference of Connecticut (for which he has served as Chair) and the Hartford-based Board of Community Partners in Action.

Toshi Kazama, Asia Liaison, is a photographer who spent eight years gathering the images for "Youth of Death Row: A Photodocumentary Exploration." The documentary includes photos of 20 American youths on death rows across the country – photos that Kazama was able to take after being granted unprecedented access to the prisoners and the facilities – and portraits of the prisoner's family members, the victim's family members, the prison, the prison cemetery, the state's execution chamber, and the crime scene. Kazama has shown the documentary at universities, conferences, and other public forums in the United States, Japan, and Taiwan, and received considerable press coverage for the presentation and the discussions that follow.

Kate Lowenstein, Program Staff, is an attorney and social worker with many years of experience organizing and advocating for victims who oppose the death penalty. In 2004, Kate co-wrote *amicus curiae* briefs on behalf of victims' family members in two high-profile cases that were before the U.S. Supreme Court: *Schriro v. Summerlin* and *Roper v. Simmons*. In her work with MVFHR, Kate contributes expert knowledge about victims' rights issues and death penalty abolition work and keen sensitivity to the issues involved in working with victims and helping them to assert their rights and become effective spokespeople against the death penalty.

Bill Pelke, member of the Board of Directors, is the president and co-founder of "The Journey of Hope ... from Violence to Healing," an organization that hosts annual speaking tours led by murder victims' family members who oppose the death penalty. He is also the chair of the board of the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty and a board member of Alaskans Against the Death Penalty, and he has spoken against the death penalty in numerous forums across the United States and in 10 other countries. Initially a supporter of the death penalty, Pelke eventually became involved in an international effort to spare the life of the 15-year-old girl who was sentenced to death for the murder of Pelke's grandmother. He continued to speak out against the juvenile death penalty up until the Supreme Court's recent ruling in the *Simmons* case. He has been interviewed for numerous radio, television, and magazine stories.

Vicki Schieber, Chair of the Board of Directors, has been outspoken in her opposition to the death penalty since her daughter was raped and murdered in 1998. Vicki and her husband Sylvester actively opposed the death penalty for their daughter's murderer and subsequently testified in support of abolition in Maryland and several other states. They have published op-ed pieces about the death penalty in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Washington Post*, and their story is included in an NBC film on the death penalty sponsored by the Robert Kennedy Foundation. Vicki has long been active in leadership positions in non-profits dedicated to literacy and programs for elderly, disabled, and low-income residents of Washington, DC. She holds a Masters in Business Administration and served for many years as Executive Director of the Council on Employee Benefits in Bethesda, Maryland.

Susannah Sheffer, Project Director and Staff Writer, has developed numerous written materials about victim opposition to the death penalty, including *Double Tragedies: Victims Speak Out Against the Death Penalty for People with Severe Mental Illness* and *Creating More Victims: How Executions Hurt the Families Left Behind*. She is the author of four books, and in her work with MVFHR she draws upon two decades of experience interviewing, writing, and editing.

Marie Verzulli, member of the Board of Directors, whose sister Cathy was murdered, works as the victim/survivor advocate for New Yorkers for Alternatives to the Death Penalty, focusing on filling the gaps in services and empowering victims to advocate for programs that address the root causes of crime and violence. Marie is Vice-President of the Capital District Coalition for Crime Victims Rights and serves on the Restorative Justice Commission of the Albany Roman Catholic Diocese, the Center for Community Justice Board and the advisory committee of the downstate parole reform and prison re-entry project. Marie is the founder and director of Family and Friends of Homicide Victims.

Bud Welch, President of the Board of Directors, became an ardent spokesperson against the death penalty after his daughter, along with 167 others, was killed in the bomb blast that destroyed the Murrah federal building in Oklahoma City in 1995. Welch has testified before 22 state legislative bodies, the U.S. House Judiciary Committee, the Russian Duma, and the British and European Parliaments, and addressed groups at universities, law schools, and religious organizations across the U.S. and Europe. He serves on the board of the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty and was a member of the board of the Oklahoma City National Memorial Foundation. For his work as an anti-death penalty activist, he has received several “abolitionist of the year” awards and other honors and been interviewed for numerous print and broadcast news stories.

Financial Report

Murder Victims' Families for Human Rights (MVFHR) was founded in 2004 and was incorporated in the state of New Hampshire as a non-profit organization in 2005. MVFHR has received a determination letter from the Internal Revenue Service that it is a tax-exempt non-profit organization within the meaning of Section 501(c)3 of the Federal Tax Code. Donations to MVFHR may be claimed as a deduction for charitable contribution purposes on federal tax returns. A copy of our Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, and Financial Statements are available at guidestar.org, and our IRS Form 990 will be available there by July.

MVFHR maintains an account at Bank of America. Deposits are made at branches in New Hampshire and Massachusetts. A finance committee, composed of members of the board and staff, reviews the organization's finances via teleconference call meetings.

The unaudited statements that appear on the following pages show the organization's financial position as of December 31, 2010. The income statement shows a modest surplus for the year. The balance sheet shows funds received in 2010 from the European Instrument on Democracy and Human Rights, unspent through year-end. These funds are available to meet operating expenses until the next installment of funds is received in 2011. The balance sheet also shows grants receivable of \$60,000 expected in 2011. We are well positioned financially to carry out our program plans in 2011.

MVFHR is grateful for the support of the following foundations and groups in 2010: European Instrument on Democracy and Human Rights, The Atlantic Philanthropies, Solomon Fund.

Submitted by

Jeanne Bishop
Treasurer

Catherine Brady
Bookkeeper

Murder Victims Families for Human Rights
Profit & Loss
January 1 through December 31, 2010

Income	
Contributions Income	16,423
Expense Reimbursements	2,417
Grants	314,097
Interest, credits, rebates	420
Total Income	<u>\$333,357</u>
Expense	
Computer & Internet	640
Conferences & Meetings	1,619
Occupancy	1,200
Bank Service Charges	626
Books, Subscriptions, Reference	85
Dues and Subscriptions	375
Expendable Equipment-Grant funded	1,148
Fees and Registration	147
Miscellaneous	1,026
Postage and Delivery	3,803
Printing and Copying	6,993
Office Supplies and Equipment	1,112
Personnel	199,777
Professional Fees	8,554
Program Expense - other	736
Telecommunications	4,387
Travel	55,342
Total Expense	<u>\$287,482</u>
Net Income	<u><u>\$45,875</u></u>

Balance Sheet as of 12/31/10

ASSETS

Current Assets

Checking/Savings

Checking

2,320

Savings

1,167

Total Checking/Savings

\$3,486

Accounts Receivable

Promises To Give-Restricted

60,000

Total Accounts Receivable

\$60,000

Other Current Assets

Prepaid Expenses

688

Released from Restriction

204,097 (1)

Total Other Current Assets

\$204,785

Total Current Assets

\$268,272

Fixed Assets

Accum Depr - Furn and Equip

-1,104

Furniture and Equipment

3,312

Total Fixed Assets

2,208

TOTAL ASSETS

\$270,480

LIABILITIES & EQUITY

Liabilities

Current Liabilities

Accounts Payable

Accounts Payable

6,344

Total Accounts Payable

\$6,344

Credit Cards

299

Other Current Liabilities

Loans

930

Payroll Liabilities*OE

6,416

Unearned or Deferred Revenue

131,840 (2)

Total Other Current Liabilities

\$139,187

Total Current Liabilities

\$146,128

Total Liabilities

\$146,128

Equity

Fund Balance-Restricted

60,000 (3)

Retained Earnings

18,776

Net Income

45,875

Total Equity

\$124,650

TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY

\$270,778

Notes:

(1) Funds earned from European Union grant in 2010

(2) Funds unearned in 2010 from European Union grant

(3) Atlantic Philanthropies grant receivable

