

Santa Clara County  
Domestic Violence Council  
Death Review Committee

## FINAL REPORT

OCT. 1998 – DEC. 1999

**DEATH REVIEW COMMITTEE -- DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ROSTER**  
**SANTA CLARA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA**

**ROLANDA PIERRE-DIXON, CHAIR**  
**DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE**

**DR. MARIA ALLO**  
Valley Medical Center

**DIMPLE MALHOTRA**  
Support Network for Battered Women

**CAPTAIN ROBERT BRAVO**  
Department of Correction

**TERRY BOWMAN**  
Deputy District Attorney

**LOIS LANSING**  
Pretrial Services

**LISA McCRARY**  
District Attorney's Office

**BARBARA KRYSZCZKOWSKA**  
Community Psychotherapy Institute

**SGT. SCOTT WONG**  
Palo Alto Police Department

**MOON HI REE**  
Asian Pacific Family Resource Center

**CYNTHIA SPENCER**  
Family Law Attorney

**LONA SPENCER**  
Department of Social Services

**PAM BUTLER**  
Department of Social Services

**DR. GREGORY A. SCHMUNK**  
Coroner's Office

**JESSICA SERB**  
Mountain View Police Department

**RICK BATA**  
Bata/Starr Counseling Association

**DOUGLAS ROGERS**  
Sheriff's Office

**MEGHAN DENZEL**  
Valley Medical Center

**WILLIAM A. BORZONE**  
Sunnyvale Dept. of Public Safety

**SGT. BRIAN CORRIGAN**  
Sheriff's Office

**SUE BRANDT**  
Adult Probation Officer

**LT. MIKE O'CONNOR**  
San Jose Police Department

**MELANIE SALAZAR**  
Next Door Solutions

**WIGGSY SIVERTSEN**  
San Jose State University - Counseling Services

## FINAL REPORT

OCTOBER 5, 1998 – DECEMBER 31, 1999

### DEATH REVIEW COMMITTEE

By: Rolanda Pierre Dixon - Chair

The Santa Clara County Death Review Committee was created in October of 1994. It was started at the request of the Department of Justice when the Santa Clara County Domestic Violence Council was awarded a grant for other work. The Department of Justice wanted a committee formed which would investigate domestic violence related deaths and try to use the knowledge gained to make system changes, which would hopefully save future lives. The first problem encountered by the committee involved confidentiality. How could several different groups and agencies both public and private come together and share pertinent information on the decedents in identified domestic violence related deaths? There was lots of discussion by the committee trying to answer this question. Eventually a solution was reached, based for the most part on the past relationships and trust developed among the members.

Once we got past this hurdle we began to discuss what the goal of the committee should be. Everyone agreed that the ultimate goal was to prevent domestic violence related deaths in our county and not to point fingers at one another. Once everyone accepted this as our goal we were able to move forward. All members of the committee were also asked to sign a confidentiality agreement, which is kept on file by the committee chair.

The Death Review Committee then established a working definition of what constituted a "domestic violence related death". A "domestic violence related death" is defined as one where the perpetrator and or victim were romantically linked, either at the time of death or prior to the death, and the conduct of either party led to the death. We look at homicides, suicides and homicide/suicide combination cases. In some rare instances we do review cases where a person dies as a result of an accident if there was previous domestic violence and the actions of the perpetrator contributed to the death of the either.

In 1996 legislation was passed which stated that counties may establish an interagency domestic violence death review team to assist local agencies in identifying and reviewing domestic violence deaths, including homicides and suicides, and facilitating communication among the various agencies involved in domestic violence cases. An oral or written communication or a document shared within or produced by a domestic violence death review team related to a domestic violence death review is confidential and not subject to disclosure or discoverable by a third party. Notwithstanding the foregoing, recommendations of a domestic violence death review team upon the completion of a review may be disclosed at the discretion of a majority of the members of the domestic violence death review team.

The Domestic Violence Death Review Committee (hereinafter referred to as the DVDRC) produces a final report at the end of each committee year. The last report was produced in 1998, covering all deaths from 1993 through October 1998. This years report will cover 6 cases from 1998 (from the end of last year's reporting period) and all the cases from 1999. There are 18 cases from 1999. Thus, 24 cases in all will be discussed in this report, for reference the Santa Clara County District Attorney's office filed criminal complaints on 28 homicides last year. It is the intention of the DVDRC to produce a report at the end of each year, culminating in a five year report at the end of each 5 year cycle.

The cases we are reviewing breakdown as follows.

**I. TYPES OF DEATHS**

1. 6 cases from 1998 (3 suicides, 1 homicide/suicide combination (three deaths involved)
2. 18 cases from 1999 (8 homicides, 1 suicide, 1 "blue suicide"-police shot a perpetrator who refused to lower his weapon, 4 homicide/suicide combinations)

**II. POLICE AGENCIES INVOLVED**

1. 8 cases from San Jose Police Department (2 homicides, 2 suicides, 2 homicide/suicide combinations)
2. 4 cases from Sunnyvale Department of Public Safety (1 suicide, 1 homicide/ suicide combination-3 persons died)
3. 4 from the Sheriffs office (2 homicides, 1 homicide/suicide combination)
4. 3 from Santa Clara Police Department (1 homicide, 1 homicide/suicide combination)
5. 2 from Los Gatos Police Department (2 homicide- both occurred in same incident)
6. 1 case from Milpitas Police Department (1 suicide)
7. 1 from Mountain View Police Department (1 suicide)
8. 1 from Campbell Police Department (1 homicide)

### III AGE/RACE/SEX/SUBSTANCE ABUSE/CHILDREN PRESENT

1. **Ages-** For all victims/perpetrators from 23 to 79 years old.

- A. Homicide adult average age was 37.4 years old. (Females average age 34.7 years, Males average age 45)  
3 elder victims (2 are 79, 1 is 72 are not averaged in)
- B. Suicide average age 35.87 years old. (Males average age 34, Females age 46-elder perpetrator of 79 years not averaged here)
- C. 3 elder victims. (1 homicide – victim was 72 years old, 1 homicide/suicide combination both 79 years old)
- D. 1 “blue suicide” (male age 32)

2. **Race:**

**Asian** 9 (3 homicides, 2 suicides, 2 homicide/suicide combinations)

**White -** 12 (3 homicides, 2 suicides, 3 homicide/suicide combinations- one combination case involves 3 deaths)

**Hispanic** 3 (1 suicide, 1 homicide/suicide combination)

**African American** 0

**Mixed Race** 0

3. **Sex:**

**Male** 12 (2 homicides, 9 suicides, 1 “blue suicide”)

**Female** 12 (11 homicides, 1 suicide)

4. **Substance Abuse:**

**Male** 2 (2 alcohol only)

- Female** 3 (1 alcohol only, 2 alcohol/drugs)
- 5 **Children Present:** 4 (3 homicides, 1 suicide (and in one case the child was abandoned right after the murder at a train station, 17 children were left without one or both parents))
- 6 **Perpetrators Sex:** 23 male (including the "blue suicide")  
1 female (one homicide/suicide combination)
- 7 **Manner of Death:** 16 guns (2 homicides, 4 suicides, 4 homicide/suicide combinations, 1 "blue suicide)-average age females 36, average age males 38. 1 Elder homicide/suicide combination ages were 79 and 1 female victim age 72 not averaged in.  
  
5 stabbing (5 homicides) - average females 34, male age 36  
  
1 burning (1 suicide) - male age 25  
  
2 hands/fists (2 homicides) - females average age 39
- 8 **Separated/Divorced or pending either at time of death:** 19 (6 homicides, 4 homicide/suicide combinations, 4 suicides)
- 9 **Prior Domestic Violence Contacts( police reports) :** 12 (5 homicides (2 cases involved different victims)), 1 homicide/suicide combination, 3 suicides and 1 "blue suicide")
- 10 **Restraining orders:** 1(1 homicide)
- 11 **Location of deaths:** 14 at home (5 homicides, 2 suicides and 3 homicide/suicide combinations)

6 public place (2 homicides, 1 suicide, 2 homicide/suicide and  
1 "blue suicide)

4 at workplace (1 homicide, 1 suicide, 1 homicide/suicide  
combination)

12. **Same sex couples:**

0



#### IV. CASE SUMMARIES

**CASE 72: Suicide** – The decedent and the victim are introduced to each other by family members. It is the wish of both families that they marry. They begin dating, however the victim tells him some months later that she is in love with someone else. The decedent can't accept this and kidnaps her from her college and tries to convince her to stay with him and marry him. They are together 5 days when a family member reports her missing. He returns her home unharmed and then comes back over and chokes her into unconscious. He kidnaps her again and she is able to convince him to return her home. Once she goes to an emergency room, eventually she is convinced to contact the police. The police take a report and go and arrest the decedent, he gives them permission to search his vehicle, they find "kidnapping" apparatus and a handgun. Everything is taken into evidence. The decedent is bailed out and told to appear in court in 2 weeks.

The day before the decedent is to appear in court, he goes to a shooting range, rents a gun and then proceeds to hold the gun to his head and then shoot at the target. Eventually the manager of the range is informed of the decedent's conduct and tries to tell him to stop; the decedent puts the gun to his head and also aims it at the manager. They scuffle over the gun, the decedent gets it to his own head and pulls the trigger, another worker at the shooting range also shoots the decedent twice in the back. He dies from the shot to the head. Asian male, no children were present, this was a workplace. (1998)

**CASE 73,74 AND 75: Double homicide/suicide** – The perpetrator is a 79 year old white male. He and his wife (victim #1) are both 79 and have been married over 50 years. They have a grown son (victim #2) and daughter. The son moved back into the family home with the decedent and his wife. The son had apparently been terribly spoiled by the mother all his life. When he moved back in, he was given the master bedroom and the parents took other bedrooms in the house. The decedent was concerned because victim #1 was giving more and more money to the son. It was decided then that they would divorce and the community assets would be split. The decedent and victim retained the same attorney to work out the divorce and settlement. The son was being used as the mediator. It was also understood that this divorce would be on paper only as the decedent and victim #1 intended to continue living together.

9 months before the fateful day the decedent purchased a handgun. According to victim #1 she was afraid with the gun in the house she wanted the gun out of the house. Since there was no indication of domestic violence the gun could not be taken but the decedent agreed to give them the ammunition. About two weeks later victim #1 called the police again, again the ammunition was taken. Two months later victim #1 gets the gun and hides it; she calls their mutual attorney and informs her that she is afraid of decedent. Two months later the daughter is unable to reach her father. The neighbors also notice that the garage door has been open for 3 days and the cars are still in the garage. The police are called and find all three residents in the home dead. The

decedent (79 years old) had shot his wife, then his son and then killed himself. White family, no minor children were present. (1998)

**CASE 76: Suicide** – Decedent and victim marry in 1998. They have no children together, he has grown children and she has a 17-year-old son. The decedent is a Vietnam veteran. 3 months after the marriage he threatens the victim and bites her ear. The police are called and a police rpt taken. The decedent and victim then move into another city in the county. A few days later they argue again and the decedent threatens to kill the victim and himself, the police are called. When they arrive the decedent is arrested for making terrorist threats and the police confiscate all the guns in the residence. The victim tells them he also has weapons in an outside storage area. They take those weapons too. The victim is given an emergency protective order. When the decedent comes to court he pleads guilty to the charges and the victim asks that the protective order be lifted. The decedent is also told he cannot possess weapons for 10 years. He is put on probation and ordered into domestic violence counseling. Per the victim they were already in marriage counseling.

About one month later, the decedent now back at home, threatens suicide again. He is mad because the police confiscated his weapons. He calls his daughter and tells her he needs a gun, she gets one to him. The decedent gets the gun and threatens the victim again, she gets the gun away and does not call the police. 5 days later an argument erupts, the def calls his job and quits and the decedent pulls out the gun. The victim and her son run out of the residence, the decedent kills himself (1998)

**CASE 77: Suicide/attempted murder** – When decedent and victim meet and marry, she is 16 and he is 25. They have 2 children, both girls. The decedent has a severe drinking problem. He pushed the victim around; there were no injuries. The police are called the decedent is intoxicated and he is arrested but released 3 days later, no charges filed. 6 months later the decedent brandishes knives at the victim, she does not call the police. A month later the decedent threatens the victim, she flags down the police. He is located and arrested. He is given jailtime, probation and a requirement to go to counseling. He is also ordered not to drink. The victim leaves him and takes the children.

The victim is now living separately and seeing someone new. She has filed for a divorce and the papers are served on the decedent. He is very upset by this and begins drinking. Def does have a gun; the victim knows this but never told the police of its existence. Decedent does tell his boss he is contemplating shooting himself, the boss told him to get rid of the gun. The decedent later told him he got rid of the gun and the boss thought everything was fine. The decedent also made remarks to his boss that when a woman from his country wanted a divorce she got one with a bullet in her head. The decedent also admits to friends that he was following the victim. The day before their anniversary the decedent receive the divorce paperwork. He dresses up the next night and while in the bathroom the victim's brothers hear him working the slide of a handgun. The decedent leaves, finds the victim on her lunch break with a friend sitting in a vehicle. He shoots her three times and then shoots himself in the head. He dies instantly, she miraculously survives. Hispanic male, no children were present. This occurred on a public street. (1998)

**CASE 78: Suicide** – Decedent and victim meet, she is 47 and he was 29. They begin a relationship and the victim is quickly made aware of the fact that the decedent is an alcoholic. The decedent and victim move in together and about 2 years later she comes home to find him there drunk and entertaining a drunken friend. She puts the friend out and the decedent attacks her, he hits and chokes her. The police are called and the decedent is charged with a felony. The victim goes to court and testifies that she wasn't really injured and writes a letter to the judge begging him to reduce the charges against the decedent. The charges are reduced, the decedent pleads guilty to the misdemeanor and is given 3 years probation, alcohol counseling and domestic violence counseling. Not too long after this the decedent and victim break up. But she allows him to return.

When he returns he begins drinking again. The victim talks about leaving him for good. The decedent brings what she thinks is a gun into the house, it is actually a starter pistol, which looks just like a handgun. She locks him out of the house, but comes home to find him there, when she tells him to leave, he grabs the gun and threatens to kill her. The police arrive, see her running towards them in the courtyard and the decedent behind her with a drawn gun (it is nighttime). The decedent is told several times to drop the gun, he refused, then pointed it at the officers. He is shot and killed. Decedent is white, no children were present and he dies in the public courtyard. (1999)

**CASE 79: Homicide** – Defendant and victim meet and marry in a foreign country. They come to the United States with their three children in 1990. Per the children there was at least one domestic violence incident before they came to the U.S. but it was never reported. The defendant had a serious drinking problem and never got any professional help. He starts going into work late and acting very strange. He tells his boss that he is having problems at home. Eventually he began leaving the family for long periods of time and he was spending large sums of money. The victim became aware that he was having an affair with another woman in another state. She follows him there and begs him to come home. He eventually does and promised to straighten up. Things are ok for a while but defendant tells his boss that the victim is keeping close tabs on him. One afternoon after dinner the defendant and victim go into the bedroom, he stabs her one time through the heart killing her. No prior police reports. The victim was a white female, a minor child was present and she was murdered at home. (1999)

**CASE 80: Suicide** – Decedent and victim meet, she is 14 and he is 20. He meets her when he was driving by her middle school. They begin a relationship and two years later she had a son for him. She had lived with him for a while but then moved out. She wanted to break up with the decedent but he wouldn't accept it. He kept calling and coming around. He even caused her to be fired from her job because of his constant telephoning. He becomes aware that she had started dating someone else. He comes over uninvited, snatches the baby and this forces her to come with him. He eventually lets her go but the new boyfriend calls the police. The police respond to his residence. As they go up to find the defendant, he shoots himself, officers also fire at him. Their

child was present during the kidnapping and there were children in the home at the time of the suicide. The decedent was an Asian male, died at home. (1999)

**CASE 81, 82: Homicide/Attempted Homicide/ Suicide** – Decedent and victim meet and marry, he is 34 and she is 21. They open a restaurant together. The victim is much younger than the def and seems to be more “Americanized”. He wants her to behave a certain way and she rejects this. He is also suspicious that she is having an affair with a younger man and at one point he speaks to this individual and asks him not to return to the restaurant. The individual continues to come. In the three weeks preceding the deaths the decedent told his relatives and friends that if anything happened be sure and have his body sent back to his country of birth. The decedent goes out and purchases a gun, the victim thought he bought it to protect the business. Decedent is acting depressed and isn't helping with the business. The victim asks her mother to come and help out. A month before the murder the def threatened to kill or paralyze the victim, she tells this to a friend but does not report it to the police. The victim attempts to get an apartment but decides not to follow through on the application process. She also contacts a lawyer about a divorce and pays a retainer.

On the date of the killings, the decedent waits until everyone except the victim and her mother leave the restaurant. He comes in, doesn't speak to anyone, grabs his gun and shoots his mother in law in the head, killing her. He then shoots the victim in the eye, causing a loss of her eye, loss of part of her tongue and 2 teeth. Then shoots and kills himself. Asian male and female both died, no children were present. Occurred at a workplace. (1999)

**CASE 83: Homicide** – Defendant is 76 years old and the victim is 71. They met in 1997. She is married but her husband has Alzheimer's disease. He is also married to another woman, but they are separated. She left him because in 1993 he pulled a gun on her and threatened to kill her if she left him. She moved out with their grown sons and then later the defendant moved into senior citizen housing and she and one son moved back into the house. Per the children (now grown) the defendant had been violent with his wife. The defendant and victim meet about once a week for lunch. She tells him about 2 weeks before the killing that she will be unable to continue the friendship. He felt it was because she either had someone else or that he was too poor because he was on a fixed income. One week before the killing she comes over and reminds him that this will be their last week together, the defendant pulls out a handgun and shoots her in the head, killing her. She is an Asian female, no children were present and this occurred at the defendant's home. (1999)

**CASE 84, 85: Homicide/suicide** – Decedent and victim married 20 years, they have a grown son and a minor daughter. The victim had recently began dating another woman and was living with that woman at another address. He still ran his business out of the family home so he was there as well. The decedent follows the victim one night and finds out where he is staying, she is angry about this. Her son is a gun collector. She asks him to teach her how to shoot a gun. He agrees, he takes her target shooting, after the target shooting, she buys ammunition, telling him she needs it for the next time they go. In the meantime she has purchased a gun. After the mandated waiting period she picks it up and begins practicing loading and unloading it in the home. About a

week later is their 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary date, the victim does not come home. He does show up two days later, the decedent shoots him 6 times and then shoots herself in the head, both die. Asian male and female, no children present and it occurred at home. (1999)

**CASE 86, 87: Double homicide** – Defendant and victim#1 meet 15 years before the deaths. Their relationship is marred by violence. The defendant is a white supremacist and they clash over this and the fact that he wants to control her and the three children they have together. The defendant hits her and is sent to prison. While in prison victim #1 agrees to marry him. During his stay in prison, she thinks better of it and tells him she wants a divorce. She begins dating other people and ends up pregnant by another man. She has the child and the defendant is not happy. When he eventually gets out of prison, he is told to go to counseling by his parole officer. He moves in with another woman, but makes it clear to victim #1 and his friends that he is still in love with her and wants her back. One week before the deaths she begins dating someone new, the defendant finds out where he lives and his phone number. He calls victim #2 and tells him to leave his wife alone. He goes to the residence, begins arguing with victim #2 grabs a knife from the residence and stabs him to death. Victim #2 is on the phone calling for help the defendant chased her and stabbed her several times, she dies at the hospital. Both victims are white, no children were present and they died at home. (1999)

**CASE 88: Homicide-** Defendant and victim meet, move in together and then marry. The defendant is an alcoholic and the victim also drinks. He is also violent and was convicted of beating his first wife. This wife had left him because of the violence. The families of the defendant and the victim both know he is very violent with the victim. Everyone saw bruises and cuts on her over the years. They even warned her and told her to leave him, she stated that she loved him too much. The defendant was in and out of alcohol rehabs. They continued to argue, so much so that every single neighbor told the police that they were used to the yelling and screaming and no longer called the police. The defendant eventually stabs and kills her in the shower. No children were present and she died at home. (1999)

**CASE 89: Homicide** - Defendant and victim meet and begin going together. She has a child for him in 1995. The victim becomes aware that the defendant is violent, she calls the police and he is arrested. She gets a restraining order against him. Over the last year before the deaths, the victim or her landlord calls the police when the defendant violates the order. The police department also knew the defendant on sight and would arrest him if he were anywhere near her residence. Apparently about 2 months before the death, she began to feel that the defendant had changed, so she began secretly meeting with him at a local motel. She also brought their daughter along so he could visit with her. About one week before the killings the defendant tries to start fights with his roommates and others. He then goes to meet with the victim and at some point beats her to death. The four-year-old is present. He then leaves the motel and takes the child to the train station and leaves her there. He is later arrested at another hotel. Victim is Asian, a child was present and she was killed in a workplace. (1999)

**CASE 90: Homicide** – Defendant and victim met and began dating about 2 years before the death. They moved in together. The victim was a recent Asian immigrant, who came to America

leaving her young son behind. She begins working and is making a lot of money, the defendant begins gambling and also uses up her assets. About 6 months before the death she begins to think about leaving him. About 2 weeks before she breaks up with him and moves out. She tells the defendant she is going to marry someone else. The defendant is upset and won't accept the breakup. He continues to call her and tries to arrange meetings. She is adamant it is over, he comes to her place of business, she agrees to speak with him in his car, and the def strangles and kills her. Asian female, no children are present, she dies in a public parking lot.

**CASE 91, 92: Homicide/suicide** – Decedent and the victim meet when she is about 16 years old and he is 22. He was also seeing another young girl at the same time. The parents of the other young girl get a restraining order against him. He stays away. He continues to date the victim and her parents are not pleased. At 18 years of age the victim leaves home and moves in with the decedent. By the time she is 23 she realizes the relationship will not work out. Some family members say she wanted to get married and he didn't. Eventually she moved out and then the decedent changed his mind and wanted her back and wanted to marry her. She said no. It was also understood by all that he was very controlling of her and very jealous. He began calling her job and then shows up there a couple of times. On the date of the death he comes to her job, they argue over 3 hours in a public parking lot. She takes off in her car, he is following her. He catches her on the freeway, she is on a cell phone to her mom. He makes her pull over, he had also been on a cell phone call and a friend was trying to tell him to leave her alone. The victim's mom then called the police; it was all too late. The decedent came up to her car, shot her dead and then killed himself. They were both Hispanic, no children were present and they died on a public highway. (1999)

**CASE 93: Homicide** – Defendant and victim met when she was 17 and he was 19. The defendant and victim graduate and go their separate ways. The defendant actually marries at one point and it separated very quickly. He marries again and has 2 children. He is also very violent, not only to his spouse but also to his family members. They get a restraining order against him. About 3 months before the death the defendant begins dating the victim again. She knows he is married but he says he is getting a divorce. On the day of the death, the victim tells him that their relationship is over until she sees the divorce papers. He drives her to a neighborhood and begins to stab her repeatedly; citizens see him and phone police. She is stabbed over 72 times, she dies. She is a white female, no children were present and she dies on a public street. (1999)

**CASE 94, 95: Homicide/suicide**- Decedent and victim meet about 2 years before. They move in together. About 3 months before the death the victim breaks off her romantic relationship with the decedent. He is not happy about this. About 2 weeks before her death she begins dating her old boyfriend from high school. Apparently this angered the decedent. The decedent was considered a "survivalist" by his friends and owned a number of guns. They argue at her job site. She and the decedent continue to live together. She begins talking about moving out; the decedent shoots her and then sets the house on fire. Both die, no children are present, they die at home. (1999)

## V. TASKS ACCOMPLISHED :

The Santa Clara County Death Review Team is recognized as one of the premiere teams in the country. We have been received requests for information on setting up death review teams from several different states and counties. The Attorney General's Office for the State of California has come out to visit our team in anticipation of preparing the statewide model guidelines for Death Review Teams.

We have also been requested to present on death review at many different venues, including the U.S. Department of the Navy, The National Association of Attorney Generals and the California Association of Probation Officers.

We have made several inroads into the Asian community and have presented at a number of conferences. However, we still need to focus our attention on educating our Asian community on domestic violence. This year's deaths include 8 cases from the Asian community. This is three more than the last reporting period. It is also proportionately more that their representation in the Santa Clara County population. We must make each of them feel that reporting domestic violence to the police is the right thing to do and going for outside help with a domestic violence problem is ok. We must get this concept across to the Asian community.

We have also requested that all police cases in which a firearm is used or threatened to be used come to the district attorney's office for review for filing of criminal charges. Gun use is prevalent in this death review report and we want to save lives. Reviewing all such cases will be a step in the right direction. The current countywide police protocol (signed on to by all 13 police agencies in the county) mandates that all such reports are turned over to the district attorney's office.

The Death Review Committee also worked closely with reporters this year on public education pieces around the issue of domestic violence and death.

## **VI. SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS:**

1. **Perpetrators of deadly domestic violence have several characteristics, which are evident in many of the cases.**
  - a. **Threats of suicide/homicide- 18 cases**
  - b. **Victim is talking about divorce or separation and the perpetrator cannot handle it- 18 cases**
  - c. **He or she is unraveling in front of everyone's eyes i.e. sleeplessness, loss of job, repetitive movements, playing with guns, talking about funeral arrangements, excessive drinking. - 17 cases**
  - d. **They met and began dating the victims as teenagers - 10 cases**
  - e. **They often hit the victims at least once and in most cases more than once before the death occurred or used violence with a previous partner - 18 cases**
  - f. **Engaged in stalking conduct - 11 cases**
  - g. **Extremely jealous/possessive of partner - 18 cases**
2. **Everyone close to the victim and perpetrator knew that something was very wrong in the relationship but did not intervene**
3. **Workplaces must step up and provide domestic violence information to potential victims and work to help protect them.**
4. **Handguns were still the chosen manner of death in the majority of cases (16). We must get better control over the accessibility of guns.**
5. **Domestic violence deaths have occurred in every jurisdiction in this county and have involved every socio-economic group. We must also be cognizant of the fact that domestic violence is not just a young person's problem. Three people over the age of 70 are represented in these numbers. Education on domestic violence issues must continue for all age groups.**



## VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

We the members of the Santa Clara County Domestic Violence Death Review Committee do recommend as follows:

1. The Domestic Violence Council continues its effort to educate the public on domestic violence, including the release of this report to the public.
2. That our community stand up and report domestic violence when it is observed. Ignoring the problem is not the answer to solving the problem.
3. The Workplace Violence Committee continues to educate employers about the issue of workplace violence as it relates to domestic violence.
4. All local school districts develop a curriculum, which addresses the issues of domestic violence and dating violence.
5. Continue to promote the idea that victims of domestic violence should get restraining orders.
6. The Domestic Violence Council examines and reports on the availability of mental health care for low/middle income families.
7. Encourage the media to report on the availability of assistance for domestic violence victims, so that victims, family members and others can have the information needed to assist victims.
8. Insure that all domestic violence related educational information be culturally competent and take into account that domestic violence also occurs in the elder, gay and lesbian community.
9. Encourage family law attorney's to question divorce/separation clients about prior domestic violence and get the appropriate protections in place.
10. Encourage better policies for handgun rentals at those businesses.
11. Promote education on the issue of domestic violence which will encourage psychiatrists and batterer treatment programs to obtain releases from perpetrators so that information can be shared.
12. Encourage the use of assessments for substance abuse and encourage substance abuse counseling in domestic violence cases.

13. Encourage utilization of available monies for mental health services for children exposed to domestic violence.
14. Encourage parents to get parenting classes which discuss the impact of domestic violence on children.
15. Encourage victims to access available support services.

The Santa Clara County Domestic Violence Council Death Review Committee ends this report with the hope that the above information and recommendations will lead to the reduction in the number of individuals who may lose their lives in the years ahead.

Respectfully Submitted,

The Death Review Committee- 1999  
Santa Clara County Domestic Violence Council