

TOTAL FATALITIES: 158

NO MORE
TOGETHER WE CAN END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & SEXUAL ASSAULT

2013

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
FATALITIES
IN PENNSYLVANIA**

PENNSYLVANIA COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

107 VICTIMS + 51 PERPETRATORS = 158 DEATHS

“Words can’t describe the scene ... heartbreaking.”

The Huntingdon County district attorney uttered those words in 2013 after a Petersburg man fatally shot his 2-year-old son at point-blank range and wounded the boy’s mother before fleeing and killing himself later.

The same could have been said about any of the **115 incidents** that resulted in **158 domestic violence-related deaths** during the year. That’s a **10 percent increase** over 2012’s 143 deaths.

In 2013, as in every year, domestic violence spared no age, socioeconomic class or educational level.

The **107 victims** included a college math professor, a paramedic, a nurse, a high school senior set to graduate in two weeks, a college student, a florist, five women over age 80, single mothers and a bride on the way to the final fitting of her wedding dress.

Fifty-one perpetrators also died, mostly by suicide. This number is a significant increase over 2012’s 31 perpetrator deaths. Each of these deaths also represents a loss and a tragedy to the families they leave behind.

The accused perpetrators included a professor of neurological surgery, a nurse, a firefighter, an Army Ranger, a high school student and a former state trooper.

Guns topped the list of preferred instruments of death, as they do every year. More than half of victims and 90 percent of perpetrators died by gunfire.

Gross overkill marked many of the homicides. One man shot his estranged wife more than 30 times before killing himself. One victim was shot through the heart with an arrow, dismembered, decapitated and stuffed inside a metal drum. Another victim was stabbed nine times as he slept beside his girlfriend. Her ex-boyfriend, who was later convicted of murder and sentenced to life in prison, told police, “I should’ve just punched him in the face.”

SOME EXAMPLES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOMICIDES IN 2013

In Allegheny County, a 19-year-old college student was fatally shot by her 52-year-old father, who also shot and critically wounded his wife and 21-year-old son before killing himself. He also killed the family dog, a beagle.

In Chester County, a 37-year-old woman was killed in her home with a shotgun. Her boyfriend, with whom she shared a child, called 911 and said, “I need the police. I just shot my girlfriend.” When officers arrived he was smoking a cigarette on the porch. He was charged with murder. The day before he had changed his Facebook profile picture to a photograph of a shotgun shell and the background photo to that of a shotgun similar to the one used in the murder.

In Lancaster County, a 21-year-old mother of two was fatally shot in her apartment. Her 6-month-old baby was with her but unharmed. Her ex-boyfriend was charged with homicide, aggravated assault, simple assault, terroristic threats, child endangerment and weapons violations. Police say he pointed a gun at the victim and two other women in the apartment and threatened to kill everyone there, which included four children under the age of 5.

In Centre County, a 49-year-old woman was fatally shot by her estranged husband, a former state trooper, inside the supermarket where she worked. He then turned the shotgun on himself. Two months earlier he had been arrested for wrestling the victim to the ground, pinning her arms behind her and attempting to bind her with duct tape. He also pointed a gun at her and threatened to kill her. He spent a week in jail before posting bail. **The victim told prosecutors then, “The next time I see him is going to be at the end of a gun.” After her death the district attorney said, “We were very concerned when he got out (on bail), and we’re just devastated now.”**

COUNTING DEATHS, SAVING LIVES

A NEW PROGRAM TO PREVENT DEATHS

PCADV is doing more than just counting domestic violence fatalities. We are trying to prevent them. In partnership with the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, community-based domestic violence programs and local police departments, PCADV implemented the Lethality Assessment Program in 18 counties in 2013. It includes a brief screening tool for police officers on the scene of domestic violence incidents to use to identify victims at highest risk of being killed by their abusers. Officers can then connect those victims to immediate assistance at their local domestic violence program.

We anticipate that this innovative, evidence-based approach will reduce future fatality numbers. It already has, by 34 percent, in the last five years in Maryland, which pioneered the program.

In Pennsylvania, 72 police departments participate in the Lethality Assessment Program, including the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police – which serves the state’s second largest city – where more than 800 police officers conduct screens and make referrals to the domestic violence hotline operated by the Women’s Center and Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh.

Pittsburgh City Council passed legislation that served as the impetus for this effort in response to the January 2013 death of Ka’ Sandra Wade. She was found dead in her home a day after two police officers responded to a 911 call coming from there. The officers left after speaking to her boyfriend through a window. A day later he killed himself in a standoff with police after tossing them a note that indicated they could have saved her life.

“She was trying to get out of that abusive relationship,” a victim’s friend said. “She was afraid. She just didn’t get away far enough.”

HOW THIS REPORT IS COMPILED

Pennsylvania has no central database or separate reporting requirements for domestic violence homicides. We rely on news reports and police data to compile this report.

We counted killings among current, former and new intimate partners (including perpetrators killing their ex-partner’s new partner) and family members. We also included perpetrator suicides and killings (by police or other interveners) and bystander and intervener deaths during domestic violence incidents.

We know that every year this report misses victims whose deaths didn’t attract media attention because they occurred in poor, crime-ridden neighborhoods. In other cases, the relationship between perpetrator and victim, or the perpetrator’s motive, was unavailable.

All numbers in the report are based on information available at the time of printing. It can take years – and

occasionally decades – for arrests to occur in some domestic violence cases. We exclude unsolved cases, cases where no arrests have been made (even if intimate partners or family members are suspects), and child abuse and child neglect cases because the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare reports those.

We also know, from advocates’ anecdotal accounts, that some victims take their own lives because of unrelenting abuse.

A summary of each known 2013 domestic violence fatality, by county, can be found at www.pcadv.org.

We dedicate this 2013 report to the memory of all Pennsylvania’s victims of fatal domestic violence – counted and uncounted, known and unknown – and to the efforts to one day make this kind of report unnecessary.

VICTIM PROFILES

“He is begging me to come home, and I feel unsafe seeing him or being in the house with him. ... I just want to safely get my belongings, my dogs and be safe at work and in my (home).”

107 VICTIMS KILLED

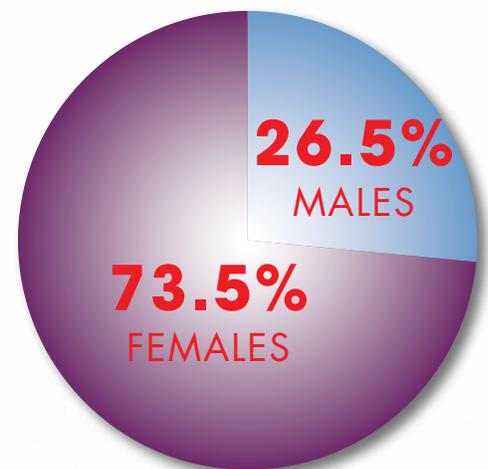
FEMALES	65
MALES	42
YOUNGEST AGE	2
OLDEST AGE	91
AGES 0-12	5
AGES 13-17	1
AGES 18-64	90
AGES 65 AND OLDER	11

HOW THEY DIED

63 SHOT	1 EACH
24 STABBED	STABBED & BEATEN
6 BEATEN	SHOT WITH ARROW
4 STRANGLED	POISONED
2 BURNED	HIT ON HEAD WITH JACK
2 NEGLIGENCE	RUN OVER WITH VAN
	STRUCK WITH PICK AX

VICTIMS OF INTIMATE PARTNER-RELATED VIOLENCE

TOTAL **68**



- 49** Females Killed By A Current Or Former Intimate Partner
- 1** Female Killed By A Rival
- 10** Males Killed By A Current Or Former Intimate Partner
- 8** Males Killed By A Current Intimate Partner's Former Partner

PERPETRATOR PROFILES

119 TOTAL PERPETRATORS

FEMALES	17
MALES	102
YOUNGEST AGE	16
OLDEST AGE	89

51 PERPETRATORS DIED

COMMITTED SUICIDE	42
SUICIDES BY GUN:	37
SUICIDES BY OTHER MEANS:	5
KILLED:	9
SHOT BY POLICE:	5
SHOT BY OTHER INTERVENER:	4

“When she filed for divorce and he was served with the papers, we knew he was going to kill her,” a neighbor said. “You won’t find one person on this street that wouldn’t believe that.”

One perpetrator escaped as far as the Rio Grande River, which he jumped into in an attempt to flee to Mexico, before being captured by U.S. Border Patrol agents.

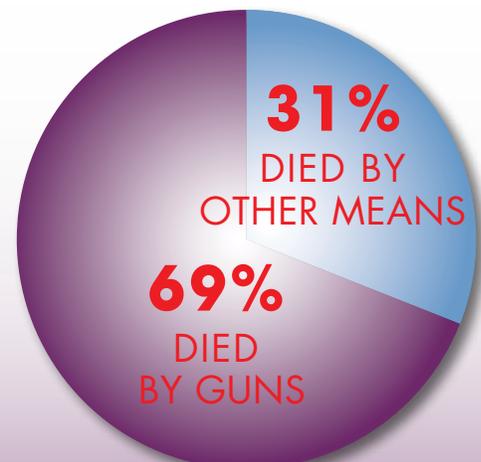
LETHAL GUN VIOLENCE

TOTAL GUN DEATHS: 109

63 VICTIMS

46 PERPETRATORS

TOTAL 2013 DEATHS



SUFFER THE CHILDREN ...

Domestic violence takes a particularly tragic toll on children. Five children were domestic violence-related homicide victims in 2013.

- A **2-year-old** boy was shot in the back by his father during a custody exchange in Huntingdon County. His mother was shot in the legs and face while struggling to save him but survived. His father then fled the scene and later killed himself.
- A **2-year-old** Lancaster County girl, found unconscious by police in her home, died in a hospital. Her mother's boyfriend was charged with homicide, aggravated assault and child endangerment. Police said he punched the girl in the head, split her retina, blinded her in one eye and kicked her in the stomach several times, damaging her internal organs.
- A **2-year-old** Luzerne County girl was shot in the head by her 34-year-old father, who then turned the gun on himself. Earlier he had called the girl's mother and told her, "Say goodbye to your daughter."
- A **10-year-old** Philadelphia boy sleeping in his bed was fatally shot by his father. His mother also was shot but survived. His **14-year-old** sister locked herself in her room and called police. By the time police arrived the perpetrator had killed himself.
- A **12-year-old** Philadelphia boy was stabbed and placed with his mother, who had been strangled, under a burning mattress in their apartment. Police speculated that his mother's boyfriend was attacking her when the boy tried to come to her aid. The boyfriend was charged with both murders.

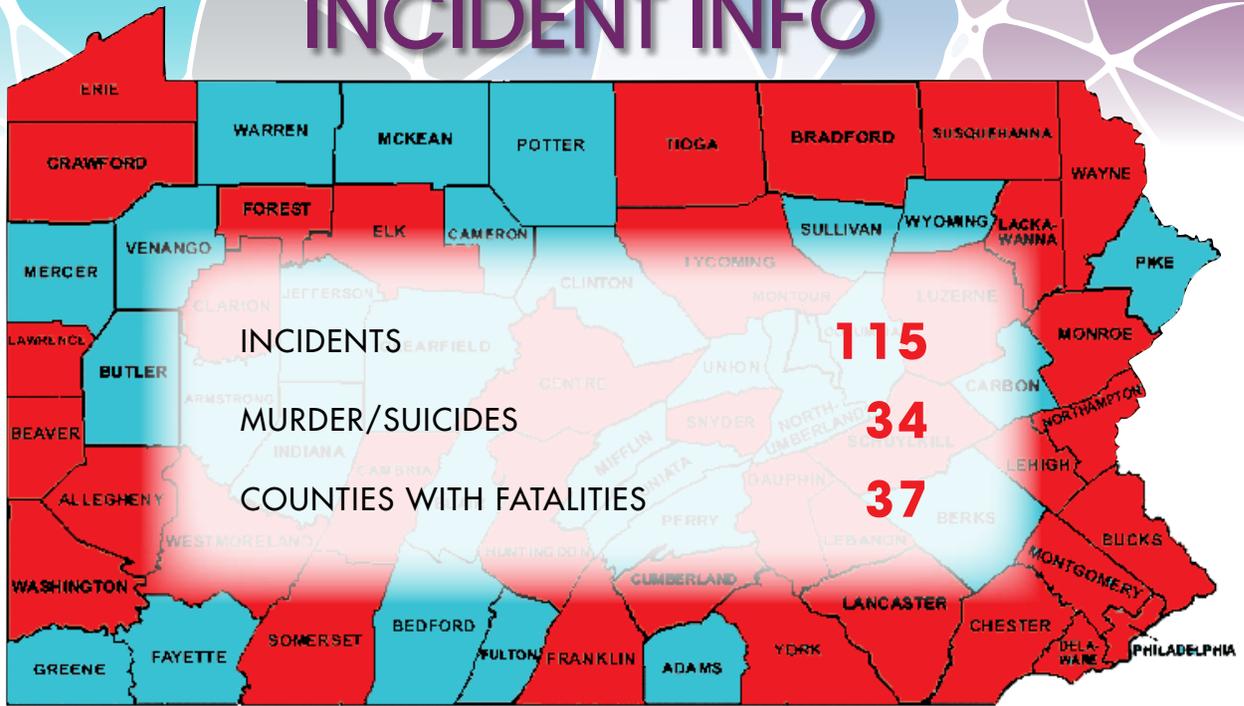
Some surviving children had to not only endure the loss of a parent but also to witness their murder. They will serve another kind of life sentence imposed by memory.

- A **16-year-old** Bucks County girl was sitting in the passenger seat of a car when her mother's ex-husband rammed the car, trapped her mother in the driver's seat, pointed a 12-gauge shotgun across the

passenger seat and shot her mother three times. The girl was injured by flying windshield glass as she tried to protect her mother. He later shot a policeman who was saved by a bulletproof vest. The policeman then shot and killed the perpetrator.

- Three Lehigh County children – **ages 3, 10 and 16** – saw their father shoot their mother in the head outside their home. He then fled with the **3-year-old** and was arrested about 15 minutes later at a nearby store. When the **3-year-old** was returned to the family home, she cried, "I want my mom."
- A **15-year-old** Luzerne County boy ran to a neighbor's house screaming that his father had shot his mother. She died later at a hospital. Her husband had shot himself but survived. The boy told police he heard his parents arguing. Then he heard a gunshot and his mother yelled, "Call 911!" He found his father holding a pistol and standing over his mother. His father then put the gun to his chin, fired and fell to the floor.
- Twin **5-year-old** girls were sleeping upstairs in their Montgomery County home while their mother was stabbed at least 15 times with a 14-inch carving knife. Her trachea was severed and both lungs were punctured. Police charged their father with murder.
- An **11-year-old** girl saw her mother fatally shot in the chest and her **22-year-old** sister wounded when her mother intervened as a man threatened his wife in a parking lot. The perpetrator then killed himself.
- A **15-year-old** girl was lying in bed beside her mother, watching television, when her mother's ex-boyfriend entered the home and shot her mother nine times with a .380-caliber handgun. The girl was uninjured as were two other children, **ages 9 and 13**, and a 21-year-old woman in another bedroom. Her mother died in a hospital 18 days later. The perpetrator was charged with murder. **"It was a very brutal ... quick attack. I can't imagine the emotions and trauma those children in the home experienced, witnessing that," a state trooper said.**

INCIDENT INFO



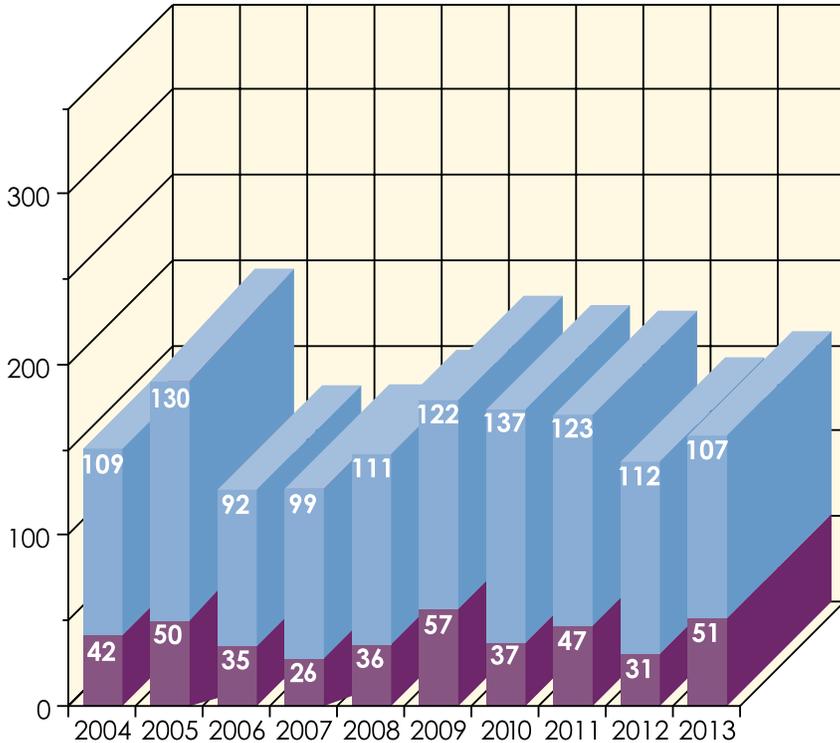
FATALITIES BY COUNTY

COUNTY	VICTIM(S)	PERPETRATOR(S)	TOTAL
Allegheny	18	10	28
Beaver	1	0	1
Bradford	2	1	3
Bucks	3	2	5
Cambria	4	2	6
Centre	1	2	3
Chester	1	1	2
Clarion	1	1	2
Crawford	1	1	2
Cumberland	1	0	1
Dauphin	5	1	6
Delaware	7	5	12
Elk	2	0	2
Erie	1	0	1
Forest	2	0	2
Franklin	2	2	4
Huntingdon	1	1	2
Lackawanna	1	0	1
Lancaster	4	1	5

COUNTY	VICTIM(S)	PERPETRATOR(S)	TOTAL
Lawrence	3	3	6
Lebanon	1	1	2
Lehigh	2	0	2
Luzerne	3	2	5
Lycoming	2	1	3
Monroe	2	2	4
Montgomery	3	0	3
Northampton	1	1	2
Philadelphia	17	3	20
Schuylkill	1	0	1
Snyder	1	0	1
Somerset	1	2	3
Susquehanna	1	0	1
Tioga	1	1	2
Washington	2	1	3
Wayne	1	0	1
Westmoreland	2	1	3
York	5	3	8
Totals	107	51	158

VICTIM & PERPETRATOR DEATHS 2004-2013

■ Victims ■ Perpetrators



“You might want to check on her. She might have a little life in her,” a perpetrator told police.

“This was a premeditated and cruel murder. This was not an argument. This was an execution,” a district attorney said. “This is another example of domestic violence accelerating into a murder. A mother is dead and a child has been left an orphan.”

Published by PCADV

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