



Unsolved

*How you can play an active
part in your loved one's
unsolved case.*



▶ strength in numbers

Get involved in a homicide support organization in your area. Other survivors will probably be more than willing to help. They know what it feels to lose a loved one like you have. Strength comes with numbers. Do not underestimate the power of a helping hand or someone else helping you bear the burden.

While it is sad that they have to be there, many groups exist nationwide for those impacted by murder. Contact these groups for assistance with your loved one's case. Even if they cannot help you, they may be able to direct you to someone who can. Some examples include:

- Homicide Survivors, Inc.
serving those in Tucson and Pima County, Arizona
www.azhomicidesurvivors.org
- Parents of Murdered Children,
a nationwide system of support groups
www.pomc.com
- Justice for Murdered Children
serving those in the Los Angeles, CA area
www.jfmc.org
- Families of Homicide Victims and Missing Persons, Inc.
serving those in Colorado
www.unresolvedhomicides.org

Find help near you: <http://ovc.ncjrs.org/findvictimservices/>



▶ **crime stoppers/anonymous tip lines**

There are few times when increased publicity is not recommended. Check with the detective or local Crime Stoppers program about a reward for the case. Follow the detective's advice about whether or not to do a reward or what information can be shared.

- Ask the detective on your case to ask 88-CRIME or your local Crime Stoppers program to get involved. They may be able to do a reenactment of the crime, offer a reward, or publicize the case such as by using flyers with your loved one's picture and brief circumstances of the crime.
- Some Crime Stoppers programs automatically have a reward offer at no cost to the family, such as \$1000 for any tip that leads to an arrest.
- Make a personal appeal to the public to come forward with any information that may help solve the case and bring justice to the victim.
- Get volunteers to help distribute flyers throughout the community. Ask people to post flyers where they live, work, shop, etc. If there is no Crime Stoppers program in the area, you may have to make your own flyers asking anyone with a tip to contact local law enforcement. **BE SAFE** when passing out flyers: never go alone. Detectives or law enforcement might want to go with you.
- Check with your local Crime Stoppers program to see what the requirements are for you to increase the reward amount. They may have a scheduled time that they increase the reward or rules on how the family can add to it.

Many tipsters don't even want the reward money, just to help

- Don't sell all of your belongings to raise the reward funds
- Consider having friends and family help put on car washes or other fundraisers to raise reward amount on significant anniversaries (six months, one year, five years after the crime, your loved one's birthday...)
- Contact America's Most Wanted at www.amw.com/about_amw/faq.cfm. You can submit your unsolved case information online at www.amw.com/mystory. They will not show every story, but it may be worth trying.



▶ use the media

Use every opportunity to keep the case and reward in the news. The media may be a challenge sometimes, but they are also a valuable tool. Keep in mind that you always have the right to refuse an interview or pick which stations or reporters you want to talk to.

The media will help; you just have to keep contacting them. But know that they do not just give free advertisement; they must have a "story". And the TV media must have someone or something to film, so someone must be willing to be interviewed and/or go on camera. Often the media needs some new development in the case to do a story if they have covered it previously.

Follow these tips to use the media rather than just being used by them:

- Check with the detective about what you should or should not say. The detective may ask that you refrain from saying certain things or showing certain specific places or they may also ask that specific places or things be focused on. Make sure to follow the detective's advice as you do not want to jeopardize the case.
- If a similar murder happens, contact the media and tell them you have something to say. Often when a crime first happens, new survivors are too devastated to talk to the media, so the media will talk to another family that has a similar case or circumstances that is ready. Use this opportunity to relate your unsolved case, while helping others.
- If you are going to distribute reward flyers, hold a news conference or invite media to attend. Groups like Homicide Survivors can serve as a liaison for you and may have easy ways of contacting all of the stations.
 - Contact all media and tell them your group is meeting at a specific location to pick up the flyers and to begin to distribute/post them.
 - Tell them family members & friends will be available for interviews.
 - Talk to the media about how important it is to solve this case, bring the perpetrator to justice and make our streets safer. Talk about the reward.
 - Plead with people to call with information ... their loved one could be next.
 - Let the media follow along to film some of the volunteers posting flyers.
- Now and periodically hold fundraisers to increase a reward fund if there is one. Car washes are good. It is not so important how much money is raised, but how much awareness. Contact the media so they will come cover the car wash. Use the opportunity to again talk about the case, reward & need for information from the public.
- Create a web page about your loved one & the unsolved case. Send out e-mails to ask others to link to their web sites. Ask the media & other agencies with web sites to put a link on their web site to your web page.
- Contact specific reporters who do *Most Wanted* or other crime segments both locally and nationally.



▶ never give up

You may need to take a break from actively pursuing justice, but never give up hope. Somebody somewhere knows what happened to your loved one. You never know when that someone will be ready to come forward with information.

Sometimes seeing a flyer or poster is all it takes for someone to decide that they can come forward. Maybe a relationship has gone bad and a former friend or romantic partner is now willing to share information. Perhaps hearing a news story will remind someone of something they heard or saw.

New DNA & computer technology and cold case units are solving many unsolved cases. DNA can take time to process, but some departments receive grants that enable them to eliminate backlog of cases. Local, state, and federal law enforcement agents continue to work cases even when families have done all that they can. Old cases are being investigated and arrests are being made. Murderers are being brought to justice years and even decades later.

Never, never, never, never give up. - Winston Churchill