



Summer 2011

Seizing the Momentum

Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty

TCADP Launches County-level Campaign to Drive Down Death Sentences

In April, TCADP convened a meeting with San Antonio-area community leaders to initiate a county-level campaign aimed at driving down death sentences in Bexar County. Since 2007, Bexar County has had the third highest rate of sentencing people to death in Texas. However, we believe that this does not accurately reflect the attitudes and values of most Bexar County residents. For example, Bexar County jurors rejected the death penalty in two separate cases in 2009 and 2010, as well as in a third case from Bexar County which was referred to Victoria. Furthermore, most mainline religious denominations have statements opposing the death penalty and San Antonio hosts regional offices for multiple denominations. (To see Archbishop Gustavo's recent column on the death penalty go to: http://www.satodayscatholic.com/Gustavo_042211.aspx)

In addition to the initial stakeholder meeting at St. Mary's University, TCADP has spoken at the NAACP San Antonio Chapter meeting, attended the LULAC Black-Brown Conference on Prisoner Re-Entry, hosted a community information session at the PeaceCENTER, held a Death Penalty Community Activist Training, and signed up new supporters at both the San Antonio PrideFest and the Rio Grande Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church.

The Death Penalty Community Activist Training featured two guests presenters: Natasha Minsker, from the Northern California ACLU who leads their county-level organizing strategy, and Helene Burns, a TCADP board member and a member of Murder Victims' Families for Reconciliation. Helene shared her very powerful and personal story of coping with her mother's murder and her involvement in crisis management as a psychiatric nurse. Twenty-three new community volunteers participated in the four-hour training, which included a campaign strategy session, a communications workshop and three breakout groups on effective outreach through tabling, civic engagement and religious outreach. Stay tuned! We will likely repeat the Community Activist Training this fall!

Efforts are underway to host an interfaith dialogue on the death penalty with San Antonio-area interfaith leaders this October. The event will replicate the Houston Religious Leaders Dialogue hosted in January 2011 and will be open to the public. (To view video clips from the Houston event, go to <http://tcadp.org/what-we-do/religious-outreach/>). More details will follow soon! If you are interested in getting involved with the promotion of the interfaith dialogue, please email Vicki McCuiston at info@tcadp.org.

The Bexar County Campaign aims to reframe the debate about the ineffectiveness of the death penalty and its impact on our communities as a costly public policy that does not keep our streets safer and does not reflect our values as community members, faith leaders and elected officials. For more information, read Roger Barnes' OpEd, "Is the Death Penalty About to Die? Millions of Dollars Wasted on Capital Punishment in Texas," published in the *San Antonio Express News* on June 14, 2011, <http://www.mysanantonio.com/opinion/commentary/article/Is-the-death-penalty-about-to-die-1422636.php>

To learn more about the Bexar County Campaign and how you can get involved, visit: www.tcadp.org/bexar-county-campaign or contact Anita Grabowski, campaign coordinator: anita@ncadp.org.

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Scheduled Executions

July

7 Humberto Leal
20 Mark Stroman

August

10 Martin Robles
18 Larry Swearingen
30 Ivan Cantu

September

13 Steven Woods
15 Duane Buck
20 Cleve Foster
21 Lawrence Brewer

Execution Vigils: tcadp.org under
"Get Involved - Stop Executions"



From the Executive Director

This month we are observing the 35th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court decision *Gregg v. Georgia* (July 2, 1976), which upheld the new death penalty statutes of several states (including Texas) and paved the way for the resumption of executions. Just four years earlier, the Court had ruled in *Furman v. Georgia* (1972) that the death penalty system, as administered at that time, was arbitrary, capricious, and discriminatory – as random as being struck by lightning. With the *Gregg* decision, however, the justices reversed course and took the position that the death penalty did not offend “the evolving standards of decency which mark the progress of a maturing society.”



In reality, the death penalty is no less arbitrary or any fairer today than it was 35 years ago. To date, 138 individuals (including 12 in Texas) have been released from death rows nationwide due to evidence of their wrongful convictions. In addition, cases like those of Carlos DeLuna, Claude Jones, and Cameron Todd Willingham – individuals who may have been wrongfully executed – continue to raise doubts about the reliability of the criminal justice system.

In a recent *Washington Post* editorial regarding the case of Mexican national Humberto Leal, Katherine Cesinger, press secretary to Texas Governor Rick Perry, is quoted as saying that “Here, in Texas, if you commit terrible and heinous crimes you’re going to pay the ultimate price” (“Why the U.S. should allow arrested foreigners to contact their consulates,” June 14, 2011). Yet even in Texas, which accounts for more than one-third of all U.S. executions since 1977, there is abundant evidence of the arbitrariness of the death penalty system. It is far more accurate to say that if you commit a terrible crime in Texas, your punishment will depend on where the crime was committed, who the district attorney is, how much money the county has to pursue a death sentence, the race of the victim, and the quality of the attorney appointed to represent you. A new report from the Death Penalty Information Center (DPIC) compellingly illustrates how all of these factors play a *major* role in determining who receives the ultimate punishment. The report goes on to observe that:

...A review of state penalty practices exposes a system in which an unpredictable few cases result in executions from among thousands of eligible cases. ... Many cases thought to embody the worst crimes and defendants are overturned on appeal and then assessed very differently the second time around at retrial. Even these reversals depend significantly on the quality of the lawyers assigned and on who appointed the appellate judges reviewing the cases. In such a haphazard process, the rationales of deterrence and retribution make little sense.

-Struck by Lightning: The Continuing Arbitrariness of the Death Penalty Thirty-Five Years After Its Reinstatement in 1976 (www.deathpenaltyinfo.org)

Texas juries have rejected the death penalty in more than a dozen cases over the past four years and overall, new death sentences have dropped more than 70% since 2003. More than half of all Texas counties have not sent a single person to death row. In addition, hundreds of individuals have been removed from death row in Texas since 1976 after new sentencing hearings or other legal developments in their cases.

The DPIC report notes that “a majority of the nine Justices who served on the Supreme Court in 1976 when the death penalty was approved eventually concluded the experiment had failed.” We cannot wait another 35 years for our elected officials to come to this same foregone conclusion. Let us use this watershed occasion to redouble our efforts to end the colossal failure we call the death penalty once and for all.

With gratitude for your ongoing support and commitment to this issue,

Kristin

TCADP *Seizing the Momentum*

TCADP Seizing the Momentum is published quarterly by the Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty, the only statewide grassroots organization working to end the death penalty in Texas through education, outreach and advocacy.

Subscription Information: *TCADP Seizing the Momentum* is distributed to TCADP members and allies. To find out more about the organization and become a member, visit our website at www.tcadp.org.

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(Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall)

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Contributors: Kristin Houlé, Chris Castillo, Bob Van Steenburg, Anita Grabowski, Karen Peissinger

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Volunteers

Thanks so much to the following individuals who have volunteered in the TCADP Office or provided administrative support in recent months: Lisa Bustos, Jade Herman, Ellen Valentine, and Susan Yates. We are immensely grateful for your assistance!



Calendar of Events

July

- 7 Scheduled Execution - Humberto Leal
- 18 El Paso Chapter Meeting, 6:00pm, elpaso@tcadp.org, featuring the showing of "At the Death House Door", a documentary featuring Rev. Carroll Pickett and the case of Carlos Deluna.
- 20 Scheduled Execution - Mark Stroman, Dallas Chapter Meeting, 7:00pm, dallas@tcadp.org

August

- 7 Odessa Chapter Meeting, 4:00pm, odessa@tcadp.org
- 10 Scheduled Execution - Martin Robles
- 15 El Paso Chapter Meeting, 6:00pm, elpaso@tcadp.org, featuring the showing of a National Geographic documentary about life on death row from the perspectives of death row inmates, prison staff, families, etc.
- 17 Dallas Chapter Meeting, 7:00pm, dallas@tcadp.org
- 18 Scheduled Execution - Larry Swearingen
- 30 Scheduled Execution - Ivan Cantu

September

- 13 Scheduled Execution - Steven Woods
- 15 Scheduled Execution—Duane Buck, *Seizing the Momentum: Honoring Houston's Champions of Justice*, Station Museum of Art, Houston
- 18 Dallas Pride Festival
- 20 Scheduled Execution - Cleve Foster
- 21 Scheduled Execution - Lawrence Brewer, Dallas Chapter Meeting, 7:00pm, dallas@tcadp.org

Looking for Interns!

TCADP is seeking bright, energetic, and passionate undergraduate or graduate students to serve as interns this fall. Interested candidates should send a résumé and cover letter to khoule@tcadp.org. These unpaid internships provide excellent experience with grassroots advocacy! Hours and location can be flexible.

Look for TCADP on Facebook and "Like" today! See photos of activities and links to important news developments.

facebook



82nd Texas Legislative Session Wrap-up

Thank you for contacting your State Representatives and Senators during the 82nd Texas Regular Legislative Session, which concluded on May 30, 2011. It is clear from our conversations with dozens of legislative offices that TCADP members generated an unprecedented number of calls and emails this year to express their opposition to the death penalty. Your grassroots advocacy plays a critical role in our efforts to shift the political climate on this issue!

From our perspective, the legislature took a few steps forward and (at least) one step back regarding the administration of justice in Texas.

On the positive side:

- The House and Senate unanimously approved **House Bill 215**, which requires police departments to adopt written guidelines for how they conduct eyewitness identification procedures. Mistaken eyewitness identification is the leading cause of wrongful conviction nationwide and was a factor in 38 of the 45 Texas exonerations based on DNA testing. The bill heads to Governor Perry, who has indicated that he will sign it.
- The legislature also approved **House Bill 417**, relating to claims for compensation for wrongful conviction. Among other provisions, the bill stipulates that “a person is entitled to compensation if... the district court’s dismissal order is based on a motion to dismiss in which the state’s attorney states that no credible evidence exists that inculpates the defendant and, either in the motion or in an affidavit, the state’s attorney states that the state’s attorney believes that the defendant is actually innocent of the crime for which the person was sentenced.” This provision addresses the case of Anthony Graves, who was denied compensation by the State Comptroller’s Office because the order releasing him did not contain the words “actual innocence.” The bill also provides exonerees with access to health insurance through the Texas Department of Criminal Justice.
- **Senate Bill 122** provides greater access to post-conviction DNA testing in cases where the evidence was not previously subjected to DNA testing or could benefit from newer testing techniques. Both SB 122 and HB 215 were recommendations from the Timothy Cole Advisory Panel on Wrongful Convictions.



On the disappointing side:

- Towards the very end of the session, after some wrangling between the Senate and House of Representatives, **Senate Bill 377** passed in its original form by a vote of 132 to 14 in the House, with 2 present not voting. This bill expands the scope of the death penalty by making the murder of a child who is less than 10 years of age a capital offense. The 14 Representatives who voted against it are: Burnam; Dutton; Farrar; Gonzalez; Gutierrez; Howard, D.; Johnson; Marquez; Miles; Muñoz; Naishtat; Oliveira; Rodriguez; and Veasey. The bill has been sent to the Governor for his signature.

If you live in the district of one of the Representatives who voted NO on SB 377, please take a moment to call or email your legislator to thank him/her for taking a stand against this needless expansion of the death penalty. Go to <http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/Home.aspx> to determine contact information for your legislator or send an email to firstname.lastname@house.state.tx.us (example: jane.doe@house.state.tx.us).

- The legislature did not take action on the vast majority of bills related to the death penalty; it also left several other important criminal justice reforms pending.

If you have questions about other death penalty-related bills or the voting record of your legislators, please contact Kristin at khoule@tcadp.org or 512-441-1808. Thanks again for responding to our calls for action during the session and, particularly, for your support for HB 819, a bill to repeal the death penalty in Texas.



Recent Death Penalty Developments

(as of July 1, 2011)

- ⇒ Six executions have taken place to date this year in Texas, out of 25 nationwide.
- ⇒ There have been seven new death sentences in Texas in 2011 and at least one resentencing, including these recent cases:
 - On May 20, 2011, a Travis County jury sentenced Areli Carbajal Escobar to death for the murder and sexual assault of Bianca Maldonado in 2009. According to the *Austin American Statesman*, this was the 10th case in which Travis County prosecutors have asked a jury to impose the death penalty in the past decade. In those cases, juries have chosen life in prison four times and death six times. ("Escobar sentenced to death for slaying of 17-year-old," May 20, 2011)
 - On June 7, 2011, a Fort Bend County jury sentenced Albert James Turner to death for the 2009 murders of his wife Keitha Turner and his mother-in-law Betty Joe Frank. Turner was a former prison guard and an honorably discharged Gulf War veteran.
 - On June 17, 2011, Joseph Jean was sentenced to death by a Harris County jury for killing two Baytown teenagers, cousins Chelsy Lang, 17, and Ashley Johnson, 16, and setting fire to the home to cover up the crime. Jean previously dated Lang's mother.
 - On June 24, 2011, a Harris County jury imposed a death sentence on Teddrick Batiste for the 2009 murder of Horace Holiday. Batiste and a friend sought to steal the rims on Holiday's white Cadillac.
 - A Tarrant County jury sentenced John Hummel to death on June 28, 2011 for the 2009 slayings of his pregnant wife, Joy, 34, his disabled father-in-law, Clyde "Eddie" Bedford, 57, and his 5-year old daughter, Jodi. Tarrant County has sentenced 70 people to death since 1976; this is the first new sentence in two years.
- ⇒ According to a new study by U.S. 9th Circuit Judge Arthur L. Alarcon and Loyola Law School professor Paula M. Mitchell, taxpayers in California have spent more than \$4 billion on capital punishment since it was reinstated there in 1978; this amounts to an average of \$308 million for each of the 13 executions carried out by the state in the last 33 years. ("Death penalty costs California \$184 million a year, study says," *Los Angeles Times*, June 20, 2011) The additional costs of capital trials, enhanced security measures on death row, and legal representation together add \$184 million to the budget each year over the cost of those sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

The authors present California voters with three options: fully preserve capital punishment by allocating \$85 million more in funding for courts and lawyers each year; reduce the number of death penalty-eligible crimes for an annual savings of \$55 million; or abolish capital punishment and save taxpayers about \$1 billion every five or six years. There currently are more than 700 people on death row in California.

New Death Penalty Resources

Film: "Grave Injustice: Convicted of murder and sentenced to death", the 48 Hours episode about Texas death row exoneree, Anthony Graves, can be watched online on the 48 Hours website. TCADP has ordered copies of the DVD for loan to groups. Be in touch with TCADP to host a viewing and discussion.

Report: The Death Penalty Information Center released a new report commemorating the 35th anniversary of *Gregg vs. Georgia*, the U.S. Supreme Court decision in July 1976 that paved the way for the resumption of executions. The report, "Struck by Lightning: The Continuing Arbitrariness of the Death Penalty Thirty-Five Years after Its Reinstatement in 1976," illustrates the fact that race, geography, money, and other arbitrary factors continue to play a major role in determining who is sentenced to death in this country. You can read the report online at <http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/documents/StruckByLightning.pdf>.

Pop-Quiz: TCADP has developed a 5-question quiz that highlights some of the misunderstandings about the death penalty. The quiz is being actively used in tabling opportunities, trainings, and speaking/education events. The quiz is available in English and Spanish. The answer key on the back helps educate Texans about the death penalty. Contact TCADP to get a copy of the quiz and begin using it as an education tool today!

Book: Dale Recinella, the author of [The Biblical Truth About America's Death Penalty](#) has a new book out, a memoir of his journey from Wall Street finance attorney to Catholic Lay Chaplain working on Florida's death row. The book, [Now I Walk on Death Row](#), is Recinella's telling of his own faith journey and is as well written as his first. If you have not read either book, we encourage you to do so very soon!



Voices of Texas

"I want people to understand that there is nothing outside of yourself that can bring closure to what has happened."

-Joanna Rankin



Joanna Rankin learned about her mother's death from her sister-in-law. She called her on the telephone and told Joanna to watch the news. Joanna saw her mother's apartment on the television. The TV news did not release the name of the victims but indicated three people were dead.

Joanna said the family got the official word from law enforcement later that evening when police detectives informed Joanna's brother about the deaths.

"My mother and her boyfriend were murdered 20 years ago in Southwest Houston. After the murder, the killer turned the gun on himself," she said. The killer was her mother's ex-husband, a man Joanna knew as her stepfather from the age of 13. He committed the murders on April 2, 1991.

"My mom was liked by everyone. She was friendly and helpful. She was devoted to God. She served as a reader in the Episcopal church. A year or so before she was killed she became a realtor. She was killed shortly after selling her first house. She was 53 years old," Joanna said.

Joanna lived only about six miles from her mother's home in Southwest Houston when the murder occurred. Now, she resides in Pearland and works for the Catholic Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston.

After the murder of her mother, Joanna was very conflicted about the death penalty. "I realize now that it was about my own anger, not about what was really right or wrong. I think maturing and having a conversion experience has enabled me to understand the death penalty more clearly." Watching the movie "Dead Man Walking" about Sister Helen Prejean's experience on death row played a major role in her change in thinking. "It (the movie) made me realize that everyone is someone's brother, father, sister, mother, aunt, uncle, son, daughter. We are all people loved by someone even when we do wrong (and thank goodness for that!)"

Joanna is now strongly opposed to the death penalty. "I am opposed for many reasons but the most important reason is that killing someone is wrong. It goes against respecting life. I am not saying a murderer should go free and not 'pay' for his/her crime, but killing them is treating them without dignity or respect for them as a person, a human being, a creation of God."

"I want people to understand that there is nothing outside of yourself that can bring closure to what has happened." No matter what happens to the person that killed, the person who was murdered is still dead. Nothing will bring them back," she said.

Joanna graduated from Sam Houston State University with a BS in psychology and a minor in criminal justice. She worked for 13 years with emotionally disturbed children. For the last 13 years, she has been working for the Catholic Church, first at a parish, and now at the Chancery. She attends St. Helen Catholic Church in Pearland.



Submitted by Chris Castillo, the National Outreach Coordinator for Murder Victims' Families for Reconciliation, ccastillo@mvfr.org.

Read/Print more of these Voices of Texas, provided by Murder Victims' Families for Reconciliation in English and Spanish. They can be found on the TCADP website under "Victims Outreach" - <http://tcadp.org/what-we-do/victims-outreach/>

Save the Date: TCADP 2012 Annual Conference, San Antonio—Saturday, February 18, 2012.



Building Membership in Dallas

This spring, Dallas-area TCADP members decided to kick-off a public education campaign to build support in the Dallas metro area for death penalty abolition. In March, Les Breeding and Anita Grabowski facilitated a half-day Grassroots Advocacy Training in which TCADP members learned about the strategic steps of a legislative campaign, how to build power and presence in key legislative districts, and ways to target public education activities with key audiences. Following the Grassroots Advocacy Training, local members held an informational tabling event and bake sale at Southern Methodist University, where they signed up new supporters and raised funds for local events and activities.

Participants from the spring training and others gathered for an outreach and education planning session. The group divided into two subcommittees: religious outreach and civic engagement.

- The religious outreach committee will focus on building relationships with area clergy and congregations who may be willing to sign on to TCADP's interfaith sign-on letter (www.tcadp.org/interfaith-sign-on-letter) as well as those who would be interested in hosting an educational speaker or event with members of their congregation. For more information or to get involved, contact Laura Seipp (liseipp@yahoo.com).
- The civic engagement committee is identifying public speaking opportunities to reach clubs and community groups across Dallas and is putting together plans for a possible speaking tour with death row exoneree Juan Melendez.



For more information or to get involved in these activities, contact Lauren Zielinski (laurenz@hotmail.com). Let us know if your organization would be interested in signing TCADP's letter of organizational affiliation, found at the following link: <http://tcadp.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/TCADP-organizational-statement-of-support.pdf>.

YES, I want to help TCADP continue the momentum toward abolition!

Name/Organization _____

Mailing Address _____

Phone Number _____

Email Address (Help us verify that we have your current email address!) _____

Enclosed is my tax-deductible donation:

- \$100 Annual Organization Membership
 - \$60 Annual Household Membership
 - \$40 Annual Individual Membership
 - \$15 Annual Student/Restricted Income Membership
 - Sustaining Membership (Renews Annually)*
 - \$_____ Additional donation for TCADP
- \$_____ Total

I want to be a Partner for Justice* (learn more on Page 11)!

Make my donation of _____ (minimum \$10) recur on a

- monthly quarterly annual basis.

*Credit/Debit Cards only

Make a difference.
DONATE

Please make checks out to TCADP. All donations are tax deductible and should be mailed to: TCADP; 2709 S. Lamar; Suite 109; Austin, TX 78704. A secure online donation can be made through the TCADP website: www.tcadp.org (click on "Donate"). **THANK YOU!**

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Member Spotlight

George Cunningham, College Station



1. How did you come to be against the death penalty?
There are a host of reasons to oppose the death penalty, but mine primarily is based on religious, social, and justice. First, I find the death penalty to be contrary to my religious beliefs as a Christian. Second, racial minorities and the poor are disproportionately more likely than their peers to be executed. Any system that disadvantages people based on their race or resources (or lack thereof) is fundamentally flawed. Third, the finality of the death penalty is troubling on so many levels, but chief among them is that mistakes cannot be rectified. Cameron Todd Willingham is the perfect example of this horrible injustice.
2. How did you learn about the Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty?
I learned about it from Rich Woodward, who invited me to protest the death penalty with him and others.
3. What are your expectations in becoming a member of TCADP for yourself?
For the organization?
I really just hope to help the organization to rid Texas of this archaic law. Anything I can do to move toward this end will be quite welcomed.
4. Where do you see the most progress in the movement to end the death penalty in Texas?
I see progress in two, related areas. First, DNA testing has been monumentally helpful in freeing innocent women and men from prison. This process shows that mistakes can be and are made, and the same goes for capital punishment cases, too. This has helped people to see the folly in executions, as they cannot go back and undo their mistakes. Thus, related to the first point, as more states realize this point and abolish the death penalty (like in New Mexico or Illinois), momentum will gain for the punishment to be forever abolished.
5. What is the most compelling argument for you that the death penalty should be repealed?
For me, the religious and social issues are most important and why I feel compelled to actively seek to end the death penalty. I recognize, though, that others do not have the same perspectives I do. That is why the finality of the punishment is so persuasive. I think most reasonable people want to be sure that what they do is correct, and if it is not, that it can be corrected. But with the death penalty, there are no corrections. The more this can be reinforced, people will come to see the folly in the death penalty.
6. What other societal issues concern you?
As a professor, I have the opportunity to conduct research on social issues in sport. My research primarily focuses on gender, racial, and sexual orientation issues in sport. Thus, for example, we examine the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals in sport, the opportunities they have to be physically active, the discrimination they face in the employment context, and strategies that can be enacted to improve their experiences and opportunities. This is where most of my time is spent.
7. What other organizations are you a member of?
I am a member of St. Thomas Episcopal Church in College Station, Aggie Allies, the Human Rights Commission, and a volunteer youth soccer coach.
8. What are your gifts, hobbies, and areas of expertise?
The gifts for which I am most thankful are my wife and two daughters. Outside of swimming and work, most of my time is spent with them.



George Cunningham was elected to the TCADP Board in May. He is a Professor in the Department of Health and Kinesiology at Texas A&M University, where he also serves as the Director of the Laboratory for Diversity in Sport! Welcome!



EPADP participates in the first El Paso NAMI Walk

A team of six intrepid individuals joined the El Pasoans Against the Death Penalty (EPADP) Team for the first ever National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Walk to take place in El Paso, Texas. The NAMI Walk was held on the grounds of Ascarate Park in south-central El Paso the morning of Saturday, June 4th. Though the EPADP Team was established only a few weeks before the walk, team members raised \$250!

EPADP Team members, including Yolanda Cano, Pat Delgado, Pat Doyle, Matthew Venhaus, Karen Peissinger and Pat White, walked the three-kilometer course that followed the shoreline of Ascarate Lake. (Some EPADP Team walkers were so enthused by excitement of the day that they walked the course twice!!) NAMI's El Paso Chapter reported that over 365 people participated in the walk, which raised funds to support NAMI's outreach to mental health consumers, providers, and their families and friends.

EPADP and TCADP share with NAMI El Paso a concern for those with mental illness in El Paso and across Texas. In Texas, at least 25 individuals with documented diagnoses of paranoid schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or other persistent and severe mental illnesses have been executed. Many of these individuals sought treatment before the commission of their crimes, but were denied long-term care.

EPADP wishes to express its sincere gratitude to the EPADP Team walkers for their participation and fundraising. We also thank the donors for their generosity to the EPADP Team and NAMI El Paso.

Editor's Note: Participating in local NAMI walks is a great way to find common ground with new people and raise the issue of concern about the death penalty. And of course it raises visibility for your local efforts, too!



EPADP Team members (l-r) Pat White, Pat Delgado and Matthew Venhaus and other walkers start the 2011 NAMI El Paso Walk.



EPADP Team members (l-r) Pat Delgado, Pat White, Matthew Venhaus and Karen Peissinger take a break at the 2-kilometer mark on the 2011 NAMI El Paso Walk.



EPADP Team members (l-r) Karen Peissinger, Matthew Venhaus, Pat Doyle and Yolanda Cano pose on the Ascarate Lake boardwalk during the 2011 NAMI El Paso Walk.

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News from the Field

Brownsville: On May 3, 2011, the Brownsville Chapter hosted a presentation by Chris Castillo, the National Outreach Coordinator for Murder Victims' Families for Reconciliation, at El Buen Pastor United Methodist Church. Chris' visit received terrific media coverage from two local television stations and the Valley Catholic (the Diocesan newspaper).

El Paso: El Pasoans Against the Death Penalty (EPADP) recently launched a summer film festival, which will screen three death penalty-related films. On June 20, the chapter screened "Juan Melendez: 6446," a documentary about Juan's wrongful conviction and 17+ years on death row. It was followed by a question and answer session with Juan Melendez himself! Other films in the line-up are "At the Death House Door" and "Inside Death Row." (To borrow films from TCADP, please contact Vicki at info@tcadp.org.) See page 9 about the NAMI Walk.

Houston: Twenty-five Houstonians participated in TCADP's first Speakers' and Tabling Training on May 24, 2011, during which they learned how to:

- ⇒ give a five-minute "pitch" on the state of the death penalty in Texas and ways to get involved with TCADP;
- ⇒ support the needs of featured storytellers (victim's family members, exonorees, attorneys, etc.);
- ⇒ respond to frequently asked questions on the death penalty; and
- ⇒ make the most of speaking and tabling events.

Thanks so much to Jennifer Simmons and St. Paul's United Methodist Church for hosting the event!

Local members also have been busy with community outreach initiatives, staffing information tables at the Houston International Festival, the Houston Peace Festival, and the Houston Pride Festival. Tabling at these kinds of events is a terrific way to recruit new members. Many thanks to all of our volunteers!

Odessa: TCADP welcomes Lorina Martinez as the new president of the Odessa Chapter! She is taking over from Father Mark Miller, who founded the chapter three years ago and inspired us with his leadership and vision. We would like to thank Father Mark for his many contributions to our organization and our cause, and we wish him all the best as he moves back to Missouri.

Organizing/Education Opportunity:

TCADP has designated October as the month to "Engage Your Faith on the Death Penalty". Begin working now in your local congregations to host some type of education event on the death penalty during the month of October. TCADP will work with you to provide a speaker, show a film, or provide education through church communications. Contact info@tcadp.org for more information.

Vigil Locations tcadp.org under "Get Involved"

Huntsville (Location of Executions) Corner of 12th and Ave. I (in front of Walls Unit) at 5:15 pm

Austin (Site 1) - On Congress at 11 St., 5:30 - 6:30 pm, **(Site 2)** - Prayer vigil at St. Ignatius Martyr Catholic Church on Oltorf and Congress at 6:00pm (approx 20 minutes)

Beaumont Diocese of Beaumont, Diocesan Pastoral Office, 703 Archie St. @ 4:00 pm on the day of an execution

Brownsville 802 and Paredes Lane from 4:30 -5:30pm

College Station 5:30 to 6 pm, east of Texas A&M campus at the corner of Walton and Texas Ave. across the street from the main entrance

Corpus Christi Sisters Of Incarnate Word Convent, 2930 Alameda, 6:00 pm

Cuero At Gazebo on Main Street , next to Library, 5:45 pm. Public Invited. For information call 361-676-2921

Dallas SMU Catholic Center at the corner of University Blvd. and Airline Rd., starting at 6 pm

El Paso 6:00 pm Saint Patrick Cathedral, 1118 N Mesa St

Ganado At Assumption Catholic Church Pro-Life Monument, 5:45 pm Public invited. For information call 361-771-3325

Houston Rotating Locations... July-September 5:30 to 6:20 at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 1805 Alabama

Lubbock St. John's United Methodist Church, 1501 University Ave., 5:30 to 6:30 pm

McAllen In front of The Monitor, corner of Nolana and Jackson at 5:30 pm

McKinney St. Gabriel the Archangel Catholic Community located at 110 St. Gabriel Way, the last Sunday of the month, following the 11:00 mass to remember those scheduled for execution in the following month, as well as the victims of their crimes and family members on both sides

Odessa Public vigil takes place from 5:00 to 5:30 pm in front of St. Joseph Catholic Parish, 907 S. Dixie, Odessa 79761. Prayer takes place inside the church from 5:30 to 6:00 PM. All are welcome. The church phone number is 432-337-2213

San Antonio (Site 1) - Archdiocese of San Antonio, in the St. Joseph Chapel at the Chancery, 2718 W. Woodlawn Ave. (1 mile east of Bandera Rd.) at 11:30 am on the day of execution. Broadcast on Catholic Television of San Antonio (Time-Warner cable channel 15) at 12:30 pm and 6:30 pm on the day of execution. **(Site 2)** - Main Plaza across from Bexar County Courthouse and San Fernando Cathedral - Noon **(Site 3)** - Join the Sisters of Divine Providence and friends in vigil and prayer from 6:00 - 6:30 pm on Texas execution days in front of Our Lady of the Lake Convent by the large crucifix. 515 S.W. 24th Street

Spring Prayer Vigil at 6 pm on evenings of executions at St Edward Catholic Community, 2601 Spring Stuebner Rd, Spring, TX 77389 for the murder victim, for family and friends of the murder victim, the prison guards and correctional officers, for the family of the condemned man/woman, for the man/woman to be executed and to an end to the death penalty

Victoria At Incarnate Word Convent, 5:45 pm. Public Invited. For information call 361-575-7111



Thank You for Your Generous Support

TCADP thanks the following individuals & organizations for their generous contributions in the past quarter (March 18 through June 24, 2011). Your financial assistance is critical to all of the activities and events described in this newsletter! Please let us know if we have inadvertently left you (or your spouse) off of this list. We apologize in advance if we missed anyone.

Angelle Adams*
 Tom Allen
 Nancy Bailey
 Niki Bergin*
 Tom Biddle and Claudia Morgan
 Kim Brewster
 Susan Buchanan
 Helene Burns*
 Raymond J. Champion
 Barry D. Clar
 Kathryn S. Clark
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 Joe Watt
 Ruth Westfall
 Janice and Wayne Williams
 Daesene Willmann
 Rev. Mark Woodruff
 Richard Woodward*
 Gay Z. Wright

Diocese of Beaumont

*signifies Partner for Justice
 (TCADP's recurring donation
 program; go online for details!)

In Memoriam

TCADP
 member
 Amy Linn
 O'Sullivan,
 31,
 passed
 away
 peacefully
 at her



home on Saturday, April 9, 2011 after several years of serious illness. She was passionately involved with the sanctity of all living beings, and one of her proudest achievements was working with TCADP to end the death penalty. Amy believed that all humans were of value and deserved the right of redemption, and she served as a pen pal and friend to several death row inmates in Texas. Amy also was a steadfast participant in the TCADP Annual Conference and local activities in the Houston area.

We express our heartfelt sympathy to Amy's friends and family, particularly her mother, Lori Contella, and we remember Amy for all of her contributions to this organization and the cause of abolition.

Thank
 You!

TEXAS COALITION TO ABOLISH THE DEATH PENALTY

2709 S. Lamar Blvd., Austin, TX 78704
(512) 441-1808



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If there is **no date** on your address label or a date prior to **7/1/2011**, please take the time to renew your membership or become a new member. See tcadp.org/join-tcadp/ for membership form. Thank you!

Save the Date! TCADP will host a fundraising event on Thursday, September 15, 2011 at the Station Museum in Houston. During the event we will recognize the extraordinary work of three Houstonians who have enriched our conversation with the public about the death penalty issue and who we consider to be "Champions of Justice". Their endeavors and their victories encourage us to stay the course as we journey towards repeal.

Seizing the Momentum: Honoring Houston's Champions of Justice

Thursday, September 15, 2011

7 to 9 p.m.

Station Museum of Contemporary Art

1502 Alabama Street

Houston, TX 77004-3936

Please join us as we honor these individuals:

Jessica Farrar	State Representative for District 148 and sponsor of repeal legislation (House Bill 819)
David Dow	University of Houston Law Center Professor and Founder of the Texas Innocence Network
Nicole Casarez	Professor of Journalism at The University of Saint Thomas and lead counsel for the exoneration of Anthony Graves

Tickets for the event will go on sale for \$50 on August 1. More details coming soon!