

July 1, 2009

Statement from Ivana Chapcakova, Counselor, NYC Anti-Violence Project

I am Ivana Chapcakova.

I am one of the counselors here at the Anti-Violence Project and a former Hate Violence and Police Relations Program Coordinator. I have been with AVP for 5 years working with survivors of hate violence including families of homicide victims.

When I began this work 5 years ago, I never thought I would see so many lives destroyed by hate. I cannot – we cannot - accept these acts of violence against LGBT communities as a normal part of everyday life.

The message I want to send out today has 3 parts:

1. Hate violence affects not only the individual victims and their families and friends, but it also has a ripple effect on whole communities of people. Hate crimes are intended to instill fear and send a message to the target group that says “you should be afraid for your life”. What could be more frightening than to lose one’s life?
2. The NYC anti violence Project (AVP) is here 24 hrs a day, 7 days a week for the survivors and families of murdered loved ones and we will continue to be here for as long as they need us and our services.
3. But this violence needs to stop NOW. We cannot allow yet another life to be ended by this type of violence and for our communities to continue to live in fear.

There are many types of survivors and in the case of a homicide the survivors are family and friends. The next speaker is a survivor of a homicide himself, a close friend of Michael Sandy murdered in a hate crime in 2006, and the President of the Michael Sandy Foundation Board, Patrick McBride.