



# Progress Report '07

Vol. 8 Issue 2

December 2007

## NEW PARTNERSHIP EXPANDS GLBT HOMICIDE RESEARCH INTO WASHINGTON DC *Police "Cold Case" Unit Provides First-of-its-Kind Access for CHR Researchers*

A landmark collaboration is underway involving unsolved homicide of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender victims in Washington DC. This project will give CHR researchers unique access to police records involving unsolved GLBT homicides in our nation's capital city. A major goal of the study is to develop new strategies for law enforcement to increase their clearance and solvability rate of homicide cases.

The Center is providing several components including the methodology design, training and analysis. The Metropolitan Washington DC Police Department (MPD) Major Case/Cold Case Unit will identify homicides and provide case files, as well as office space and direct supervision of the data processors. Marymount University in Arlington, Virginia is providing graduate students in forensic psychology to analyze and code the cases as volunteers. These intern students are receiving course credit for their involvement.

This is the first time that the Center has gained access to police files of unsolved GLBT homicides for the purpose of data collection and analysis. In the past, these types of open homicide case files have only been available on an individual, confidential basis while the Center provided assistance to investigators during case reviews, but not for research purposes.

In early December, participating graduate students and MPD crime analysts were trained by CHR Principal Researcher Dallas Drake at the MPD's Cold Case Unit. Beginning in 2008, graduate students will review, analyze and code each identified homicide incident from the

investigator's case file. Case files range from just a few pages to more than six inches thick. The research project is anticipated to be completed by fall of 2008.

Approximately 125 unsolved GLBT cold case homicides have been identified by MPD detectives for inclusion in this project. Following Drake's training in early December, detectives began to recognize additional cases not previously identified, but that should be included in this research. Each case is at least three years old. Information will be entered into a new database designed specifically for this project. It contains nearly 300 variables related to each GLBT homicide incident.

In the spring of 2008, Principal Researcher Dallas Drake will also likely train Washington DC homicide detectives and investigators on the topics of GLBT homicide and case solvability.

Washington DC has the distinction of having one of the nation's highest homicide rates as well as one of the highest GLBT populations. In 2005, Washington DC had 196 homicides, ranking it 13th among cities by homicide rate with 35 murders per 100,000 people. The national average was 5.6. By comparison, Minneapolis was ranked 75th.

Washington is in the top 10 cities with large gay and lesbian communities. Washington is ranked 8th as the most populous city based upon the population of gay, lesbian and bisexual people as a percentage of total residents (8.1%). Minneapolis is ranked 4th at 12.5%. (Source: Williams Institute on Sexual Orientation Law and Public Policy, UCLA School of Law 2006).

*(continued on page 3)*

*Approximately 125 unsolved homicides of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender victims will be involved in this project.*

## CENTURY COLLEGE COLLABORATION CONTINUES TO GROW


### *Expanded Opportunities for Criminal Justice and Law Enforcement Students*

For the last two years, the Center has been increasingly involving students and faculty from Century College in our research efforts. Each semester, approximately 20 students are involved in research and analysis projects at the Center. Most students are enrolled in the accredited law enforcement or criminal justice programs at Century College.

In order to participate, students undergo a criminal background check, sign confidentiality agreements, and complete a three-hour orientation. Students are then taught how to identify and research homicide cases using a variety of data sources, and to analyze homicide data. For students involved in criminal justice and law enforcement programs, this provides the opportunity to develop research and analysis skills, as well as to learn about both macro and micro-level criminal activity.

Century College is the second largest member of the Minnesota State College and University (MnSCU) system and offers four degree programs in law enforcement and criminal justice. Through a multi-year grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) called Investigative Sciences and Law Enforcement Technology (ISLET), Century College became a regional center for Criminal Justice focusing on Investigation, Intelligence, and Interoperability. The ISLET grant expanded Century's leadership in many ways, including partnerships with governmental, for-profit and nonprofit organizations. The involvement of Century College students at the Center for Homicide Research supports the objectives of this grant.

The Center's Principal Researcher Dallas Drake and Board President Joe Shulka also serve on an advisory panel for the ISLET grant. Among other things, the panel is developing certification programs to augment existing degrees and to offer specialized training for career professionals. Several certificates have been developed and submitted to Century College's curriculum committee, including certificates such as crime analyst, homicide researcher, and media and community relations for law enforcement.

In late 2007 Century College made application for the second phase of the ISLET grant to the NSF. In this application, the Center for Homicide Research involvement is further expanded. In this proposal the Center may offer research and student involvement activities both at its own facility in Minneapolis as well as on campus at Century College in White Bear Lake. The involvement of the Center would also be a funded portion of the NSF grant. 

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS:  
U OF M JOB AND INTERNSHIP FAIR  
February 25, 2008 – Minneapolis Convention Center**

Stop by the Center's booth to learn about 2008 internship opportunities or visit [www.umn.edu](http://www.umn.edu).

## "AREN'T YOU FOLKS DONE YET?"

*Commentary by Joe Shulka, Co-founder and President*

That's the question that greeted me this summer while staffing our booth at the Twin Cities GLBT Pride Festival. To say the least, I was taken aback by the question.

But it did bring up important points about the nature of research and perceptions about our organization. Most people know research only from the sound bites heard on the evening news. Years of work are over-simplified and summed up in two to three simple sentences, leaving the viewer with the impression that the research is "done." But research means nothing if it's findings are not put in the hands of those who can use it. Training and education are just as important as research and study. Throughout our work, we have been concurrently conducting research, educating, and assisting in active and "cold case" investigations.

**"If you want to  
go fast, go  
alone. If you  
want to go far,  
go together."**


*African proverb*

Another perception is how big of an organization the Center is. Truth be told, we are a small, all-volunteer organization. But size isn't everything. Based upon our accomplishments, we often look much larger than we really are. Frankly, funding has always been an issue for us. In 1999 when we formed, we had no idea that within a year there would be the largest political upheaval in decades. The incoming administration would cut billions of dollars in funding for research, law enforcement, and crime prevention, and would turn GLBT people and human sexuality into "wedge issues." Our work deals with death, sex and GLBT people – hardly topics high on the current administration's funding agenda. Coupled with the economic downturn, we have not been able to grow as quickly as hoped.

Eight years into this and our full-time Principal Researcher is still unpaid. He, like everyone else, is a volunteer.

Amazingly – we have done so much more than I had imagined. We have helped with active homicide cases across the U.S and the globe. We are training law enforcement on homicide and the GLBT community. And we have not done this alone. Where once there were just three of us, we now have had hundreds of gifted students, professionals and community members involved in our work. We have even solved homicides.

From the beginning, the Center has made it a point to work in collaboration. From individual supporters, to community advocates, to law enforcement professionals, to our great academic partners – our work is having an impact. We are helping those in the community today and training a new generation of leaders who will carry on our work in their careers. This takes time. This work will not be finished by us. It will continue by all those with whom we work.

There is an old African proverb that says, "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." We have chosen to go far. 

## TWIN CITIES HISTORICAL HOMICIDES BECOME FOCUS OF SPECIAL PROJECT


### *Study of 40 Years of Homicides Shows Emergent Trends*

If you were to ask a Twin City resident about homicide, you quickly hear that there are areas of the Twin Cities and ethnic communities that have “always” had a problem with homicide. A new research initiative being undertaken at the Center for Homicide is showing that these perceptions are not correct. The number and locations of homicide incidents in the metropolitan area have changed over time, moved, and affected different populations and ethnic/racial communities over time. These findings are in stark contrast to widely held beliefs about homicide in the area.

This special project aims to catalogue and analyze nearly four decades of homicide information using Minnesota Department of Health data, law enforcement resources, media archives and historical documents. Student interns and service learners from several area colleges and universities are involved in this effort. Detailed homicide case files from the mid-1980s to the present have been developed. Archival information from the 1960’s and 1970s are being evaluated and interpreted.

One aspect of this project is the use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) tools to map these data over time to show the movement over time of these homicide incidents, as well as the characteristics of these crimes.

Analyzing homicides in the main homicide cluster in North Minneapolis is important as at least 33% of GLBT homicides involve black victims many who were killed in this area. Race, class and homophobia play a significant role in many of these homicides.

The preliminary findings are being shared with criminal justice professionals, academic partners and community groups involved with homicide prevention and investigation. This research was included in two media articles in 2007. The first was an investigative report by *Rake* magazine on homicide in Minneapolis called “Murder by the Numbers” in which Principal Researcher Dallas Drake was quoted extensively. Our research was also featured in a two-part investigation by KARE 11 television on the history of violence in North Minneapolis. 

### SUPPORT OUR WORK

The Center for Homicide Research receives no support from government agencies. We are dependent upon support from the community. Donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. Please make a gift today.

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## FAR-RIGHT EXTREMIST AND GLBT HOMICIDES TO BE ANALYZED

A new collaboration will compare homicides committed by extremists in the United States with homicides involving GLBT people. Michigan State University doctoral candidate Jeffrey Gruenewald will use the Center’s database of GLBT homicides as a comparison tool to analyze data in a far-right wing crime database developed by Joshua Freilich, PhD, Michigan State University, School of Criminal Justice and Steven Chermak, PhD, City University of New York-John Jay School of Criminal Justice.

The research will compare extremist homicides with other forms of bias-motivated and non-ideological homicides. 

## CHURCH SHOOTINGS ARE SUBJECT OF ORIGINAL RESEARCH

Two CHR research interns have developed first-of-its-kind data on 140 shootings occurring in churches from 1980-2005. This data has the potential to provide insight into the nature of hate crimes in churches and mass killings.


Research interns Amy Kilmeyer (University of North Dakota) and Derek Bixby, B.A. (University of Minnesota) conducted the research and developed the data. The dataset is currently ready to be submitted to the Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research based at the University of Michigan and is being prepared for presentation at various national conferences. 

### **WASHINGTON DC PARTNERSHIP** *(continued)*

Lead volunteer staff for this project includes Academic Coordinator Leah Russell, a graduate student completing her Master’s Degree in Forensic Psychology at Marymount University; Det. James Trainum of the MPD; and Dallas Drake, Principal Researcher at CHR.

This project developed slowly over the last 18 months and is one of the projects the Center has been unable to discuss until now. Detective Trainum first learned about our work in the fall of 2006 through brochures distributed at the International Homicide Investigators Association annual meeting. When Det. Trainum returned to Washington, he learned more about our work through Sgt. Brett Parson, then commanding officer of the Department’s Gay and Lesbian Liaison Unit. Parson had learned about our work from then CHR intern, Elizabeth Sanberg. Trainum then contacted Drake and began to develop the project.

In June 2007, they met in Washington DC while Drake was attending the National Summit on Homicide Prevention and Investigation, co-sponsored by the Center. At that meeting, Drake gave a presentation on GLBT homicide for Trainum and his staff. Throughout the summer and fall of 2007, details on the project were finalized.

A similar project that was initiated in Minneapolis in 2004 was shelved after months of work following a change in department administration. 

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\* Multiple gifts † Includes in-kind donations  
Donations from Dec. 1, 2006 to Dec. 1, 2007

## SPECIAL THANKS

Dan Ahlquist, Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension  
American Society of Criminology  
Audrey Lorde Project  
Augsburg College  
Candice Batton, University of Nebraska  
Century College  
CityPages  
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The Center for Homicide Research is an independent, volunteer-driven, nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing the capacity of the community, criminal justice professionals, and law enforcement to become more effective in identifying, solving and preventing homicide.

Research began in 1992 and incorporated in 1999 as a nonprofit organization called the Minnesota Gay Homicide Study. In 2004, the name was changed to the Center for Homicide Research.

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