REMEMBERING THE VICTIMS OF THE PULSE NIGHTCLUB MASSACRE

On June 12, 2016 the worst mass shooting in United States history occurred at the Orlando, Florida based gay nightclub known as ‘Pulse.’ 49 people were killed, and another 53 were injured over the course of 3 hours 13 minutes.

After the attack, many wondered, “how could this have happened?” The Center for Homicide Research has proposed a study looking into the effectiveness of conceal-carry and the effect that Pulse has had on conceal-carry rates among the LGBT community. Additionally, this purposed study hopes to provide insight into the perceived feelings of public-safety among the LGBT community before and after the Pulse Nightclub Shooting.

It is somewhat unclear whether or not an individual with a concealed handgun would have been able to stop the offender in the Pulse Nightclub shooting. We hope to examine the effectiveness of conceal-carry in certain situations versus others. We also hope to identify police perspectives on conceal-carry and whether or not police feel that conceal-carry weapons increase tensions with police officers.

This study will begin mid-May and will continue into early fall in addition to the Center’s other research projects.
Center For Homicide Research Hosts First Annual Spaghetti Dinner

On April 11, 2017 the Center for Homicide Research successfully hosted its first annual spaghetti dinner fundraiser at University Lutheran Church of Hope in Dinkytown. The Center was successful in its goal of engaging the community and teaching people about homicide prevention. Guest speakers from the Center spoke about a variety of topics including gun violence prevention, victim selection, the process of case assistance, and how to think like a researcher.

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Information and investigative techniques researched by us are used by agencies and law enforcement all across the country.

About Us

The Center has hired its first ever Research Manager

Jeff Mathwig was hired to become the Center’s first research manager last October. Mathwig graduated from Minnesota State University, Mankato with a bachelor’s degree in geography with a focus on geographic information science. Mathwig began as a GIS intern with the Center working on the Native American Homicide Project in June. A spot was not initially available for Mathwig, but through determination he was able to convince the summer team to bring him on under the stipulation that he go out into the community on assignments every day.

As research manager, Mathwig ensures staff members are properly entering data into the National LGBT Homicide Database, attends trainings on behalf of the Center, engages the community through colloquial presentations, and works on independent research projects. Mathwig’s research interests include family annihilators, public mass shootings, and gun violence prevention.

Meet the Members

LAUREN STUDER: Lauren Studer began at the Center in August 2016. Studer graduated from Hamline University in January 2016 with a degree in criminal justice and has continued her research at the Center since graduation. When asked what she believes people can do to prevent homicide Studer stated, “I think that everyone can play a role in the prevention of homicide. First of all, if you see something, say something. Never be afraid to speak up if you sense that you or somebody else could be in danger.

RESEARCH

Here at CHR, we believe that knowledge is key. Our aim to produce unique and accurate data about homicide.
Words from the Head Researcher: Dallas Drake

“The Center is now in its 18th year. Although much has been accomplished, we are still working hard to solve and prevent homicide. We do this by using observational data, oftentimes referred to as empirical data. Because all human behavior is patterned, even anti-social behavior can be tracked and predicted. It was this simple idea that helped found the Center back in 1999.

Research is inherently a collaborative process that requires scholarship and networking, both of which function interdependently. Scholarship is the act of giving credit to others for their hard work. Networking occurs when we present papers and research with the discernment of other colleagues. This often results in the creation of new collaborative projects or provides informal critical feedback. We grow as scholars when we take note of and then incorporate this feedback or criticism to our process. Researchers at the Center reach for both scholarship and networking opportunities, often leading to conversations on otherwise absent topics—whether LGBT, missing or abducted women, or about American Indian homicides.

Collaboration presents two distinct challenges to our Center. Unlike newspapers who collect data and publish in the span of one day, our process of publication takes on average about two years. This is because we produce scientific work that not only has to be accurate but mutually agreed upon. It takes time to go to conferences, or to rewrite—or even reconceptualize—our ideas. I have one book chapter, now published, that took approximately six years from start to finish. In fact, I have several papers that have never made it off the computer desk. Some projects begin and end within the course of months, but that which has survived is magnificent.

Our second challenge is the monetary resources needed to collaborate. Airfare is expensive and hotel costs are jarring, but these are opportunities to have serendipitous circumstances evolve into lifelong connections. People run into each other in the elevators. Colleagues meet spontaneously after meetings and during leisure activities. The length to which we go to build relationships is only bound to how much we care.

After years of work, one might ask me what causes homicide, and what are the means of prevention. Fundamentally, there are two types of homicide: predatory and non-predatory. Of the small percentage of predatory homicides, they might be difficult, though not impossible to prevent. The non-predatory ones are more of the preventable variety. Once we have addressed the type we must realize that there are many cases of homicide all with unique elements and must be approached as such.

There is much work left to do and I have no doubt that we are making a valuable contribution to provide the knowledge necessary to make these needed changes.”

Dallas S. Drake