



## Remembering Jennifer: A Mother's quest to educate others about intimate partner violence



There are few things that challenge the human spirit of a parent more than the violent death of their child.

On February 20, 2007, 29-year-old, Humboldt County native Jennifer Ayson Bushnell was

shot to death by her boyfriend at a service station on Thornton Road in Flag City near Lodi, CA. The graphic murder was captured on the service station's security camera.

Jennifer was described as having a "heart of gold," with an ever-present smile that lit up her face. Like most young women she enjoyed spending time with her friends, shopping, chatting and keeping up on all the latest beauty secrets and fashion. She was a lover of animals and had been active in her youth from ages 9-18 with 4-H, raising sheep and pigs for show. At the time of her murder her beloved Pomeranian Gucci was by her side.

"Jennifer was the biggest animal lover," said Jennifer's mother, Angela Gillam. "She always cried if she thought any animal was hurting or in pain. When I think of Jennifer, all that comes to mind is love and giving. She always wanted everyone to be happy, she hated any type of conflict, she couldn't stand it if she thought someone was mad at her. She just always was happy-go-lucky and would do anything for you that she could."

Gillam said she really started to realize Jennifer was in 'trouble' when after a three week absence she called her mother from the Central Valley to tell her she was coming home and not to be mad when she got home, as she had bruises all over her face and arms. Gillam said that Jennifer lied about how she got them but finally admitted her boyfriend had done them to her.

According to Futures Without Violence, one in four women have experienced violence by a spouse or boyfriend, seven million children live in families in which severe partner violence occurs, and on average, almost 500 women are raped or sexually assaulted each day in the US.

"I want others to learn from my daughter's mistakes. She thought she could change him. She thought when he said he was sorry, that it wouldn't happen again. She hid everything that was happening from her family and friends. She was ashamed and embarrassed that she allowed him to control her."

Following Jennifer's death, the District Attorney of San Joaquin County approached Gillam about becoming involved in the making of a

documentary film about three moms telling their daughter's stories of how they were murdered by their boyfriends. The film is geared toward 9th graders as statistical data shows that this is an important timeframe when dating becomes more serious.

"We wanted to show them the warning signs of intimate abuse, control and eventually what can happen when you allow yourself to be treated in those ways," she said. "We decided that kids today are exposed to so much violence on TV, video games, movies, that they have been desensitized to the violence. We also decided that if we were going to do this film it had to get their attention. These are not actors and actresses, it's not fake blood and these girls won't be in next week's episode."

Getting their 'attention' meant Gillam allowed the filmmakers to include her daughter's crime scene photos, autopsy photos, 911 call, and the tragic video of Jennifer being shot and killed at the service station.

"Having the mother's of these murdered children present makes it so much more real for these students and they see us and the girls as real people."

The Jennifer Bushnell Memorial Fund was created by the Bushnell family at Humboldt Domestic Violence Services in memory of Jennifer's love for animals. The fund helps provide safe boarding and care of a client's animal, usually a cat or dog, while in emergency shelter. Animals are frequent targets in domestic violence relationships as they often represent an extension of the person who is being abused. Pets are used to demonstrate, as well as maintaining, power and control.

"Gucci, was her baby! So many women will not leave their abuser's for fear that their animals will be harmed or killed—since most shelters will not allow the victim to bring their animals into the shelters with them. If they know their pets are being taken care of, that they are in a safe place, and the abuser can not get to them, then they are more apt to leave their situation and get out safely. I know Jennifer would have never left her precious Gucci behind even if she knew she was in danger. Maybe if there had been a fund like there is now, maybe she would have thought more about leaving her abusive relationship and got out before it was too late. I know she would be so very proud of this memorial fund."

HDVS wishes to thank the family of Jennifer Bushnell for allowing us to share her story.

- Brenda Bishop, Executive Director

### In this issue:

**This and That . . .**  
Domestic Violence:  
is the Secret Killer  
That Costs \$8.3  
Billion Annually

What Are some of  
the Warning Signs of  
DV?

What's the Buzz . . .  
. . . Program, Services  
and Outreach.

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Looking for a way that you can reach out to HDVS? We are currently seeking two community representatives to serve on our Board of Directors. Call today, 707-444-9255, to speak directly with our Executive Director about this opportunity to serve.

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Your generous donations help us to serve the survivors in our community.

## Humboldt Domestic Violence Services

P.O. Box 969  
Eureka, CA 95502



Office: 707-444-9255  
Crisis/Support Line: 707-443-6042  
1-866-668-6543

Fax: 707-444-3190

E-mail: [dvservice@hdvs.org](mailto:dvservice@hdvs.org)

*All of our services are confidential.*

**We're on the web at**

[www.hdvs.org](http://www.hdvs.org)

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*The mission of HDVS is to break the cycle of domestic violence through services, education & advocacy.*

## This and That . . .

Domestic Violence: is the Secret Killer That Costs \$8.3 Billion Annually (Forbes 2013)

Intimate partner violence affects all of us, not just victim and survivors, The strain that it puts on our already struggling economy and incalculable human cost is too much to ignore. Break the silence and talk to your family, friends, co-worker, employees and anyone who will listen about intimate partner violence.

**WARNING SIGNS:** All the signs below may indicate that you're in an abusive relationship.

Does your Partner ever . . .

Insist on knowing where you are, who you are with, how long you'll be gone?

Constantly accuse you of having sex or flirting with people in your life (teachers, friends, bosses, co-worker(s)?)

Monitor what you wear, how you wear it, how much makeup you put on?

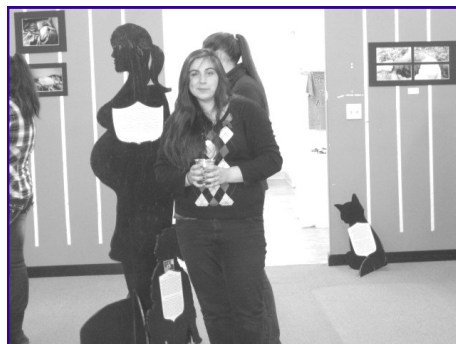
Get angry easily and have quick mood changes or predictable behavior?

Call you names, ignore your feelings, and criticize qualities you like about yourself?

Break or throw things, punch or kick walls and doors when angry?

Threaten to abuse, torture or kill your children, family, friends, pets?

Tease you about your body or manipulate you to do sexual things when you don't want to?



HDVS would like to thank Stephanie Kingham, of McKinleyville High school who organized the Art from Mending Hearts event in October during Domestic Violence Awareness month..

## What's the Buzz . . .

### HDVS Programs, Services and Resources



We are in gratitude and thanks to the following business sponsorships - without their support we would not be able to provide quality services to our survivors. Please, when shopping at these businesses thank them for their support on behalf of HDVS and the community we serve.

**The Ladies of 2nd Street in Old Town Eureka Businesses:**

**Humboldt Herbals, The Linen Closet, The Booklegger, Going Places, The Irish Shop, Yarn and Sassafras for their ongoing business support and collective support.**

**Thank you to Victoria Secrets' staff and Bath and Body at the Bayshore Mall.**

**Cypress Grove Chevre, Inc. Arcata Exchange and Costco**

Please support our sponsors above. Without their donations HDVS would not be able to provide the services and ongoing support needed daily for the Women, Men and Children in our community. Would you or your business like to donate?

#### **Crisis Services - Shelter - Community Outreach - Fundraising**

When we get calls on our crisis/support line, 707-443-6042 or 1-866-668-6543, callers are put in touch with a crisis worker who starts the process by listening, not judging or blaming the caller. HDVS provides information, referrals and works at exploring options and work with the caller to develop a safety plan.

One of the focus of our crisis services next month will be to effectively implement ALICE (client-based software) a program that will provide HDVS with vital data.

**Support Groups** - HDVS currently has two ongoing active Support Groups, Please call us directly for more information.

- ◆ - Wednesday: Noon - 1:30 p.m.
- ◆ - Thursday: 6 :00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Our goal is to add two more groups starting in 2014—one to support the HSU community and another located in Fortuna. We also provide a safe, enrichment service for client's children during support groups.

**Fundraising** - Our Just for Jewelry fundraiser is an annual event that happens the first weekend in November, 2014 hosted by

HDVS's Board of Directors. HDVS is always looking for year round sponsorship of quality jewelry and gold jewelry donations. Volunteers start collecting items starting January 2014. If you're interested in this fun event please or if you would like to more know about how to donate, please call business office at 707-444-9255.



Humboldt Roller Derby will be hosting HDVS on Feburay15, 2014 at 7 pm

Redwood Rollers vs. Oakland Outlaws at Redwood Acres Fairgrounds

For more information check out: [www.humboldtrollerderby.com](http://www.humboldtrollerderby.com)

#### **Outreach**



HDVS is looking for a variety of children and women's gently used clothing and coats. If you're looking for a place to take your items to after cleaning out your closet this

New Year - please consider donating to Humboldt Domestic Violence Services. Call us for more details.



During the summer months of June, The Humboldt-Del Norte Relief Society of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints gathered together to help beautify the grounds of Humboldt Domestic Violence Services' business office, including painting the playground equipment, cleaning up the vegetation and supplying the area with new plants. The Relief Society said that helping HDVS's women and their children brings joy to all. "We are proud to lend our helping hands."