



From the Director

by Ann Dugger

Justice one day at a time

I don't remember a busier time since I've been with the Justice Coalition; I seem to meet myself coming and going, as the saying goes. My staff and I are working diligently to facilitate this year's fundraising events, offer guidance and support to new victims in the first days of crushing grief, assist other families during trials of the murderers, coordinate vigils and work with law enforcement as they continue their diligent quest to bring closure to the many cases assigned to them.

A bright spot in all this was the 8th annual Together We Can breakfast that brought together so many old friends and supporters, and introduced many new ones to the Justice Coalition's mission. I love greeting the judges, sheriffs and/or their representatives from Duval and surrounding counties, and other law enforcement personnel from the FBI and FDLE, all who work to see justice served for the many victims who turn to us for help. I also love seeing, and wish I could sufficiently express my gratitude to, all the

businessmen and women who for years, through good times and bad, have remained loyal to us and to the vision Ted Hires put before them when he founded the Justice Coalition.

I appreciated so much the courageous victims who spoke to the crowd, opening their hearts to express the grief they have felt since their children were taken away from them. Philip Bowling, grandfather of Somer Thompson, and Marie Griffis, grandmother of Haleigh Cummings, brought many to tears with their testimonies. And I was especially proud of Alex Lemon, a young teen who told his story of domestic abuse and how he has found a new home with a Justice Coalition employee.

Immediately following the breakfast, most of my staff and I attended the funeral of Makia Coney who had been brutally murdered the week before. My heart breaks for those parents, but I'm sure they were uplifted, as I was, by the outpouring of love for their beautiful daughter, who in her short life affected so many people.

Elder Robert Stanford, Sr., spoke directly to the Coneys, telling them that while many

people might say they understand what the family is going through, he can make that statement from experience. His two sons were murdered just two years ago on Christmas Eve. He eloquently reminded the family that when pain and grief are so great that nothing seems to ease the terrible burden, the Holy Spirit through faith in Jesus becomes stronger than the pain.

Another important event is playing out as I write this article. Jarred Harrell, the man named by Clay County Sheriff Rick Beseler as a "person of interest" in Somer Thompson's death, is being extradited from Mississippi where he was arrested a couple of weeks ago on 29 counts of possession of child pornography. The suspect declined to sign extradition papers, so Governor Charlie Crist signed the necessary warrant with the State of Mississippi and Governor Haley Barbour released him to the agent assigned to transport him to Clay County.

Several have questioned why Harrell would have the option to refuse extradition, so we inquired and learned that, regardless of their offense, individuals are entitled under

the constitution of each state to due process of law. It is to ensure, for example, that Florida has not maliciously or capriciously issued a warrant for him. He can waive extradition or not, but the governor's warrant expedited the procedural process.

So we'll keep praying that justice will be served in Somer's murder, that the truth

will emerge about Haleigh's whereabouts, that other missing children will be located and that sufficient evidence will be found enabling prosecution of long unsolved murders. We'll keep moving forward, day by day, doing everything we can to lend strength and assistance to victims of crime in our community.

Announcement

Mark your calendars - March 5 - at 2:00pm and please join us for a press conference regarding **Florida Missing Adult Persons Day** at the Police Memorial Building.

Inspirational Thought

When you pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites are, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. But when you pray, enter into your closet, and when you shut the door, pray to the Father who is in secret, and thy Father who sees in secret shall reward thee openly.


But when you pray, use not vain repetitions as the heathen do, for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not therefore like them, for your Father knows what things you have need of before you ask Him. After this manner, therefore, pray ye:

Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed by thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Matthew 6:5-13

Faith Corner


The Faith Community holds the key to true Restorative Justice for all mankind. Many churches and businesses support this concept. The Justice Coalition wishes to thank the following for their support in our quest for this goal of compassion and understanding:

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