

# Fact Sheet for Anti-Transgender Violence in the District of Columbia

Compiled by Jessica Xavier, August 21-22, 2003

The Washington DC Transgender Needs Assessment Survey (WTNAS) was conducted from 1999-2000 by Us Helping Us – People Into Living, Inc. and funded by the HIV and AIDS Administration of the DC Department of Health.<sup>1</sup> Based upon the data collected in the WTNAS and using an inferential analysis using a statistical method employed by the San Francisco Department of Health in their own transgender needs assessment surveys,<sup>2,3</sup> the transgender population of the District is estimated to be 4,000.

Forty-three (43%) percent of the WTNAS participants reported being victims of violence and/or crime.<sup>1</sup> Seventy-five (75%) percent attributed a motive of either transphobia or homophobia to the violence and/or crime. The top categories were Harassment (26%) Intimidation (17%) Assault with Weapon (17%) Simple Assault (16%) Robbery (14%) and Sexual Assault & Rape (14%).

Traditionally, anti-transgender violence in Washington has been under-reported, but has greatly improved following with the formation of transgender activist and support groups within the District during the 1990s. Transgender activists were galvanized by the death by malevolent neglect of Tyra Hunter, an African-American transgender woman and hair stylist. On August 7, 1995, Hunter was critically injured in an automobile accident at 50<sup>th</sup> and C Streets SE, with firefighters from DCFD Engine Company 30 responding to the scene. A firefighter (not a paramedic as has been often erroneously reported) treating Hunter cut away her pant legs, discovered she had male genitalia, stopped care and mocked her for five minutes as she lay bleeding on the ground. Hunter was later transported to DC general where an emergency room physician refused to treat her and she subsequently died. Her mother sued the District for violation of her child's civil rights and was awarded \$1.7 million by a jury.

Other victims of anti-transgender violence since Hunter's death were murdered and include Tyra Henderson (April 23, 2000) Tasha Hunt (May 15, 2002) and Mimi Young (April 9, 2003). On August 12, 2002 Stephanie Thomas (age 19) and Ukea Davis (age 18) were both shot to death while sitting in Thomas' car at the same intersection where Tyra Hunter had been denied care seven years and seven days earlier. A vigil was held one year later at JC Nalle's Elementary adjacent to the 50<sup>th</sup> and C Streets SE. Four days later Bella Evangelista (age 26) was allegedly shot to death by Antoine Jacobs at Allison Street and Arkansas Avenue NW, and two vigils were held at that site on August 18 and 19. The memorial erected for that vigil was maliciously destroyed by persons unknown on August 20, 2003. The same evening, Punana Walker (age 25), an African-American transgender woman was shot and critically injured at 3<sup>d</sup> and I Street NW, and later that night, Emonie Spaulding (age 25), an African-American transgender woman, was murdered at Malcolm X Avenue and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street SE.

## Notes

As of August 22, 2003. Only chosen names of victims have been used, and only those victims reported by the media are included herein.

## References

1. Xavier, J. (2000). *Final report of the Washington Transgender Needs Assessment Survey*, Washington, D.C.: Administration for HIV and AIDS, Government of the District of Columbia. Available online at <http://www.gender.org/resources/dge/gea01011.pdf>
- 2.. Clements-Nolle, K., Marx, R., Guzman, R., & Katz, M. (2001). HIV prevalence, risk behaviors, health care use, and mental health status of transgender persons: Implications for public health intervention. *American Journal of Public Health*, 91(6), 915-921.
3. Clements K., Wilkinson W., Kitano K., Ph.D., Marx R., Ph.D. (1999). HIV Prevention and Health Service Needs of the Transgender Community in San Francisco. *International Journal of Transgenderism*, 3, 1&2, and available online at [http://www.symposion.com/ijt/hiv\\_risk/clements.htm](http://www.symposion.com/ijt/hiv_risk/clements.htm)

and reports in the *Washington Post* and the *Washington Blade*