



BATTERED WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S MEMORIAL GARDEN

## SPEAKING OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Newsletter  
Issue One  
Winter, 2012

“We are here as a community of hearts to bear witness to past and present violence against women and children. This violence is created by perpetrators who rip through victims. Perpetrators create seismic waves of hatred and destruction that ripple out to families, communities and the world. This **BATTERED WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S MEMORIAL GARDEN** community dedicates our hearts, our time and our efforts today to you, Wendy, Zack, Ryan, and Nathan.”



### Dad kills wife, 2 kids, self

BY CHRISTINE ARMARIO  
*The Associated Press*

LAKELAND, FLA. — A 13-year-old boy who watched his father kill his stepmother and two younger brothers before aiming the rifle at him is helping investigators reconstruct what happened in their Florida home.

The teen was staying with his grandparents Monday, a day after investigators said his father, Troy Ryan Bellar, 34, shot and killed his wife, Wendy Bellar, 31, and then their 5-month-old and 8-year-old sons following an argument.

Bellar then chased his oldest son, Nathan, through the home's cluttered garage and took aim, but tripped on a bicycle before he could get off another fatal shot. As Nathan ran screaming to the safety of a neighbor's house, his father killed himself in the front lawn.

His father and stepmother had fought before, but Nathan Bellar told investigators he had no reason to believe their latest exchange would turn violent.

But then Wendy Bellar carried 5-month-old Zack James Bellar out the front door in a car seat when her husband followed them with a 7.62 mm rifle, the sheriff said. She intended to take the infant and 8-year-old Ryan Patrick Bellar to her in-laws for the night but was shot down on the screened porch.

A motive remained unclear for the killings.

It wasn't the first argument for the couple, who'd been married for 10 years. According to an arrest affidavit, Troy Bellar accused his wife of punching and scratching him in March. Wendy Bellar was arrested on suspicion of domestic battery, and the case was pending.

Every gathering of the **BATTERED WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S MEMORIAL GARDEN** opens with reading a portion of an article like the one above. We then read the Mission, Vision and Guiding Principles.

We close with a dedication: “We especially remember you, Wendy, Zack, Ryan, and Nathan, today.”

### MISSION

The **BATTERED WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S MEMORIAL GARDEN** is an alliance of people desiring an end to violence. We form a beacon of hope to honor the disempowered, remember those lost, and inspire justice through bearing witness, education, advocacy, and service.

### VISION

The **BATTERED WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S MEMORIAL GARDEN** creates a world in which each child, woman, and man values one another equally.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

We choose these fundamental principles for guiding our thinking, conduct and practices as an organization:

- Remain loyal to the disempowered
- Lead the discussion
- Ask questions
- Challenge gendered assumptions
- Expose and oppose oppression
- Apply accountability
- Honor diversity
- Practice responsible environmental stewardship
- Speak truth to power
- Make privilege visible
- Eradicate misogyny

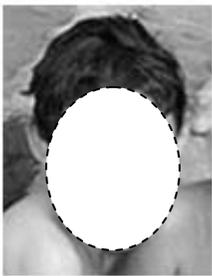
**A community of hearts bearing witness**

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

# Applying the Guiding Principles: Article Rewrite

The newspaper article on page one was provided by a MEMORIAL GARDEN witness. This witness has rewritten the article to demonstrate how violence could be reported in a just and accountable world (see below: Hate Crime Shocks Community To Action). The rewrite is an audacious leap into a world in which each child, woman, and man values one another equally. In such a world the MEMORIAL GARDEN Guiding Principles will be embedded in language, laws and life. Highlighted areas demonstrate how the MEMORIAL GARDEN Guiding Principles could be lived right now.

## HATE CRIME SHOCKS COMMUNITY TO ACTION



May 5, 2009, LAKE LAND, FLA. - Community members flooded this grieving neighborhood today upon learning of the vicious hate crime perpetrated on a family this morning. Off-duty police officers volunteered their time to help direct traffic.

A man bent on the ultimate control of his wife and family, and terrorizing the women of his community, shot and killed Wendy Bellar, age 31, as well as her five-month-old son Zack and eight-year-old son Ryan. He attempted to shoot her 13-year-old son Nathan, but Nathan ran out of the house and to a neighbor's home.

Police Captain Janice Burke, along with domestic violence shelter Executive Director Ralph Summerhill, held a joint news conference at noon in the street in front of the home where the hate crime took place.

"What happened here this morning was a terrorist act by a male

supremacist. It was conducted by Troy Ryan Bellar to exercise the ultimate control a man can have over his family, and to intimidate a community and nation to surrender to violent and hateful male supremacist viewpoints. Make no mistake: our community let down Wendy, Zack, Ryan, and Nathan Bellar over the days, months and years that they were held hostage by this man and his selfish, destructive and unacceptable patriarchal lies. We have to do better."

Within minutes the Mayor of Lakeland, Florence Mitchell, arrived with her family to join the other citizens who were already in the process of going door-to-door to offer neighbors support and discuss issues of men's violence.

Later, Mayor Mitchell announced that the high school football game scheduled for tomorrow night is cancelled so that a meeting place

large enough could be used for a non-violence rally.

The Lakeland Chamber of Commerce also announced that they would call an emergency meeting tomorrow at noon, open to business owners and the public, to discuss ways to detect male supremacist ideas and behavior in the workplace, and what to do about it.

LaTisha Brown, President of the Chamber, issued a statement that included, "The days are long since over that we can pretend not to know what domestic violence is about. It is about male supremacy and privilege, and this ideology is immoral for our families and bad for our community and businesses. The Chamber re-commits itself to nonviolence in any and all forms."

The Mayor's office can be contacted for information on funeral arrangements. As is customary, the Governor of Florida is expected to attend.



The MEMORIAL GARDEN is working to craft a photograph policy. Here are some of the issues being considered: 1) Should photos of victims or perpetrators be used in MEMORIAL GARDEN publications? 2) If you were a victim of violence would you want the MEMORIAL GARDEN to show your photograph? Your mother's? Your child's? Your partner's? 3) Does showing your photo expose the crimes, the criminals, and the collusion of the community? 4) Does it put anyone at risk for violence? 5) Should the MEMORIAL GARDEN show photographs at all? 6) Should the MEMORIAL GARDEN show only altered photographs like the ones above?



# The MEMORIAL GARDEN is about Culture Change

## Culture Change . . . one Witness's vision

I want the BATTERED WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S MEMORIAL GARDEN to usher in a completely different culture, not a lukewarm reform of the nightmare that is and has always been the culture of violence.

I want culture change that makes me cry because I see and have to come to terms with, even though I don't want to, how far from truth and grace the culture of violence has led us.

I want the culture of the BATTERED WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S MEMORIAL GARDEN to be a touchstone that, without exception, defends and promotes courageously a world community of hearts bearing witness.

## Culture Change . . . fliPS: HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT

fliPS is a BATTERED WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S MEMORIAL GARDEN project.

fliPS creates FashionArt from recycled, felted wool.

fliPS is a woman powered enterprise.

Women come to fliPS to gather or to work alone,  
To talk or to be silent,  
To join women across time and place,  
To recover from what has been,  
To create what will be: warm, imaginative objects and wearables,  
And to have fun!

fliPS creates one of a kind FashionArt pieces: clothing, rugs, bags, scarves, really anything. All of these are created from existing woolens which makes fliPS part of global recycling and practicing responsible environmental stewardship. Women have always used whatever they could find to reuse and create – with spirits and hands – beauty and function.

fliPS welcomes all women interested in gathering, watching, gleaning, learning, sorting, designing, washing, marketing, and sewing fliPS creations. No experience necessary. fliPS will depend initially on volunteers. As the enterprise grows, fliPS will employ women.

Every time we turn our thoughts or actions to this venture we put the Guiding Principles of the BATTERED WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S MEMORIAL GARDEN to work.

We make real a vision of empowerment, inclusion, abundance, connection, responsibility, justice, accountability, stewardship, and safety. fliPS is work done in the spirit of community, not competition.

fliPS meeting times, locations, and other information can be found at the BATTERED WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S MEMORIAL GARDEN website, [www.memgarden.org](http://www.memgarden.org).



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# Gardening at the BATTERED WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S MEMORIAL GARDEN

**Today** ~ The garden is a plot of earth outside of the BATTERED WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S MEMORIAL GARDEN (also referred to as MEMORIAL GARDEN) office. The office has meeting and administrative space, and houses woolens for HiPS: Hiding in Plain Sight, artwork and other contributed items.

Dig in the dirt, water the plants, and put your hands in the soil. Join the Gardening Advisory Council. Join the MEMORIAL GARDEN'S community of hearts to provide vision, design and growth.

Gardening times are 12:30 - 1:30 p.m., the first Sunday of each month, rain or shine. When the ground is frozen an indoor meeting is held. All are welcome. Feel free to bring your own gloves and gardening tools or use the MEMORIAL GARDEN'S. Bulbs or plants are always welcome.



BATTERED WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S MEMORIAL GARDEN, Fall 2010

**Virtual** ~ The virtual MEMORIAL GARDEN exists now in a seedling state at [www.memgarden.org](http://www.memgarden.org). The concept of the virtual MEMORIAL GARDEN will be explored in the next newsletter. The MEMORIAL GARDEN is looking for cyber-gardeners to plant, tend, and water the website. If you can help the effort in any way please contact the MEMORIAL GARDEN. The website will take the MEMORIAL GARDEN to every curve of the Earth.

**Personal** ~ The Witnesses who make up the "alliance of people desiring an end to violence" are the MEMORIAL GARDEN. The MEMORIAL GARDEN exists wherever you are, in your mind, spirit, heart. Is there a safe place where you create your own MEMORIAL GARDEN in your apartment, house, business, outdoor spot or ~ in your heart?

**Tomorrow** ~ The MEMORIAL GARDEN is seeking a contribution of 20-40 acres of land somewhere in southeast Michigan. The land will remain a mostly natural setting with an international education center and gardens of different varieties. The MEMORIAL GARDEN needs help in these efforts. Would you consider joining the Land Acquisition Advisory Council?

## CONTACT US

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## Upcoming Memorial Garden Events

*Information about all events can be found at  
[www.memgarden.org](http://www.memgarden.org).*

**Conversations at the Memorial Garden** will be held on the first Sunday of each month from 1:30 - 3:00 p.m. Each Guiding Principle will be discussed, one per month, in 2012.

**Gardening** at 2340 West Stadium Blvd, Suite 8, is 12:30 - 1:30 p.m. the first Sunday of each month, April through November.

**Advisory Council** and HiPS ~ check the website.

## NONPROFIT

The BATTERED WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S MEMORIAL GARDEN is a Michigan tax exempt 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Contributions are tax deductible.



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