

## What is the “Journey of Hope”?

The Journey of Hope is a public education tour where members of Murder Victims’ Families For Reconciliation (MVFR) and activists speak out against the death penalty. MVFR members describe the experience of losing a loved one through murder and their eventual recognition, unique to each one, of how hatred and the desire for revenge is destructive to themselves and our society as a whole. They share their struggles to let go of their vindictive feelings to move on and up to a healthier, more humane way of responding to the offender and dealing with their grief.

Speakers tell stories of reconciliation and forgiveness. Each family member for a variety of credible and compelling reasons, oppose the death penalty.

### What is MVFR?

MVFR was founded by Virginia’s own longtime activist against the death penalty, Marie Deans, following the murder of her mother-in-law. Marie founded MVFR to provide a national forum for murder victims’ family members, including family members of those executed by the state, who are opposed to the death penalty.

### Several members of MVFR and the kind of story each tells:

#### .....Sam Sheppard.....

At the age of seven, Sam lost his mother to murder. Five months later, the state of Ohio asked a jury to sentence his father to death. Instead, he received a life sentence. Twelve years later, his father was found innocent by the State of Ohio.

“I’m concerned about the children - the children of offenders and victims. The Journey of Hope helps us to focus on the death penalty and prison issues and lift up the fact that children are involved on both sides. The Journey of Hope is extremely important. “

#### .....Bill Pelke.....

Ruth Pelke, Bill’s grandmother was murdered in 1985. She was a seventy-eight year old Bible Teacher. Paula Cooper was sentenced to death for her involvement in the brutal crime and became the youngest female on death row in the United States.

“I had no problem with Paula being sentenced to death. Nana was a wonderful woman and I felt the severest of penalties was due. Four months later God used my grandmother’s life and death to turn me completely around.”

#### .....Marietta Jaeger.....

While on a family camping vacation in Montana, Marietta’s seven-year-old daughter, Susie, was kidnapped. Fifteen months later, the FBI arrested the man responsible. He later confessed to killing Susie.

“It is so important for as many people as possible to be present with us on this Journey - not only to lift up an alternative response to crime, but to focus public attention on an excellent educational forum to discuss the immorality and injustice of the death penalty.”

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*If Sam, Bill, Marietta and others can find peace and healing after being subjected to such unspeakable tragedy,*

*What about us?  
What can we learn from them?*

**Journey Speakers** will be available throughout San Antonio, June 9th and 10th, to share their stories with your class or group.

To make reservations and for more info call, FAX or e-mail  
**(210) 735-4988 - FAX (210) 725 -8937**  
**brcpeace@texas.net -**

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call (210) 735-4988**

**The Journey of Hope... *From Violence to Healing*<sup>TM</sup>** is led by murder victims family members and joined by family members of death row inmates, activists, and others. Speakers will be available to tell their stories at your schools, churches, businesses, etc.

**The Journey of Hope... *From Violence to Healing*<sup>TM</sup>** is two weeks of action and education for alternatives to the death penalty throughout Texas. Everyone is welcome.

**The Journey of Hope... *From Violence to Healing*<sup>TM</sup>** is looking for volunteers to help with all aspects of organizing this event. Please contact us for details, to volunteer, and/or to make a date with a speaker.

**Follow-up meeting  
June 22**

Grace Lutheran Church,  
504 Avenue E.

9 to 10:30a.m. **all are welcome to attend**

*For further information  
contact: peaceCENTER  
530 Bandera Road,  
San Antonio, Texas 78228  
(210) 735-4988  
<http://www.salsa.net/peace>*

*Join the Texas*

**Journey of Hope...**  
*From Violence to Healing*<sup>TM</sup>

As they pass through San Antonio, Texas

**Monday, June 8th - 7p.m.**  
Prayer Vigil for Reconciliation  
Milam Park

**Tuesday, June 9th - 6:30 p.m.**  
Informal Procession From the Alamo to San Fernando Cathedral  
**7:30 p.m.** Interfaith Service  
*Sister Helen Prejean, CSJ,*  
*author of Dead Man Walking*  
will be keynote Speaker

**Wednesday, June 10th - 6p.m.**  
Blessings for the Journey  
"Bring your own" Picnic  
Milam Park  
**7:30 Forum** - Open conversation between the public  
and family members. Bexar County Courthouse  
**Must RSVP - 746-9689**

