Silent Witness Event Planning Guide

November 3, 2026 · silentwitness.net

This guide works for any Silent Witness event, large or small. Fill in the blanks as you go and bring it to your first committee meeting.

How to use this guide

You don't need every page. Start with the program: once you know what will happen, the rest follows. Then use the sections that fit your event. A small or free event may need only a few of them. Holding a Virtual Vigil or Remembrance Table? Start with the Quick start on page 2.

Section	What it helps you do	Page
1. Start here		
The program	Decide what will happen, from a simple display to a candlelight vigil with speakers. Plan everything else around it.	3
Planning details	Your organization, the date, the place and the basic facts, all in one spot.	4
Who to involve	Committee roles and partners who can share the work and bring their own audiences.	6
2. Build it		
Making the shield	Who gets a figure, what goes on the shield, and how to work with families.	8
Fundraising worksheet	What the event will cost and where the money can come from. A Virtual Vigil costs almost nothing.	10
The ask	A sample letter and tips for asking a business, club or church for support.	11
3. Get ready		
Timeline	What to do and when, starting six months or more before the event.	13
Marketing	Getting the word out through partners, social media, flyers and the press.	14
4. The day and after		
Day of	The event kit, setup and jobs for volunteers.	16
Evaluation	What worked, what to change, and how to report your event to Silent Witness.	18
Word files	Every fill-in Word file in one list, with links.	20

Page numbers: in Word, right-click the table and choose Update Field if pages move.

Use it with the page for your kind of exhibit (some of these pages are still being written):

- **Full-size exhibit**: life-size red figures with shields.
- **Remembrance Table**: 10-inch red figures with gold shields on a table (page coming soon).
- **Virtual Vigil**: a slide show or video of the figures and shields (free packet on silentwitness.net).
- **Pull-up banners**: retractable banner figures that travel in a car (page coming soon).

Those pages tell you how to build and set up the exhibit. This guide covers everything around it: planning, partners, money, program, publicity, the day itself and what you learned.

Quick start: a Virtual Vigil or Remembrance Table

A small event can be ready in about three months. Hold either one alone, or both together: set the Remembrance Table near the screen that shows the Virtual Vigil. Follow these steps and use the pages listed. Skip the rest unless you need it.

1. **Decide who you are remembering.** Use the Who Are We Remembering? worksheet. (The program, page 3)
2. **Choose your program.** Display only, a short vigil, or a reading of names and/or stories. (The program, page 3)
3. **Fill in the basics.** Date, place, contact person, and who will come. (Planning details, page 4)
4. **Ask one partner.** Start with your local domestic violence agency: they can send an advocate and hotline cards. (Who to involve, page 6)
5. **Gather the information for the shields and get sign-off.** This takes the longest, so start now. (Making the shield, page 8)
6. **Make it.** Virtual Vigil: download the free packet from silentwitness.net, fill in the slides, and make the video as soon as you have all the names and shields. Remembrance Table: 10-inch red figures cut from 110 lb cardstock, gold shields, white tent cards and 4-inch clear stands (see the Remembrance Table page, being written).
7. **Spread the word.** Ask your partner to share it, and post a Facebook event. (Marketing, page 14)
8. **On the day.** Pack the kit, set up early, and have an advocate on site. (Day of, page 16)
9. **Afterward.** Thank people and report your event to Silent Witness. (Evaluation, page 18)

Cost. A Virtual Vigil costs almost nothing. A Remembrance Table costs cardstock, stands and printing. Most small events can skip the Fundraising worksheet and The ask.

You will need. Virtual Vigil: a screen, TV or projector, the video on a USB stick (two copies), and sound. Remembrance Table: a table with a cover, the figures and shields, and a sign explaining the exhibit.

See examples. Watch the sample vigil video on the Virtual Vigil page. Two short news stories show real exhibits: Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, at a hospital (about 2 minutes) and Toledo's Main Library (about 4 minutes).

The program

A program can be as simple as the figures on display for a day, or as full as a candlelight vigil with speakers. Pick what fits your group and your volunteers.

First, decide clearly who you are remembering. Write it down before you choose speakers or start the shields: the area (campus, county, state), the years, and who is included. Use the worksheet Who Are We Remembering? (Word), which includes the New Brunswick Silent Witness Project's criteria as an example.

Kind of program (check one or more)

- ☐ Display only, with handouts and a resource table (tri-fold vigil handout, Word)
- ☐ Candlelight vigil
- ☐ Reading of names and/or stories
- ☐ Speakers
- ☐ Virtual Vigil video shown on a screen or by Zoom
- ☐ Walk or march with the figures
- ☐ Host a Witness: single figures placed around town
- ☐ Proclamation read at a council meeting (sample proclamation, Word)
- ☐ Educational program or workshop
- ☐ Music

Ideas for the program

- **Reading the names.** Each reader lights a candle, speaks the name and the story ("My name is… My name was…"), then puts the candle out. Readers can be students, officers, nurses, survivors or faith leaders.
- **Speakers.** Someone from the local DV agency, a survivor (with support), the prosecutor or police chief, the mayor, a faith leader.
- **Poems and music.** Poems read at Silent Witness events over the years (Poems for Silent Witness Events, Word); "Remember My Name" by Kimberly A. Collins (read it online); a quiet set by local musicians; "I'll Stand in the Rain" (permission granted) and the other permitted music in the Virtual Vigil packet.
- **Healing stones.** A bowl of water and stones; visitors place a stone for someone they lost.
- **Host a Witness.** During October, place single figures in businesses, schools, libraries and places of worship around town. Each one carries its shield and a small card naming the host. It reaches people who would never come to an exhibit.
- **Purple ribbons.** Purple is the color of domestic violence awareness.
- **The Unknown Victim.** A moment for those who cannot be named: people living in dangerous situations now, and those whose deaths went unsolved, were erroneously ruled accidental, or were never officially recognized.
- **A call to act.** End with what people can do: know the hotline number, sign a commitment card, volunteer, donate.

Sample order of service (about 45 minutes)

Time	What	Who

0:00	Welcome and why we are here	
0:05	Opening words or prayer	
0:10	Speaker: local domestic violence agency	
0:20	Reading of names and/or stories; candle lighting	
0:35	Poem or music	
0:38	Moment of silence for the Unknown Victim	
0:40	Where to get help; commitment cards	
0:45	Closing; invitation to view the figures and sign the guest book	

Care for people at the event. The exhibit can bring up painful memories. Have a counselor or advocate on site, tell people where to find them, and prepare student readers ahead of time. Do not photograph grieving family members without their consent.

Planning details

Your organization

Item	Fill in
Organization name	
Address	
Planner (lead contact)	
Phone and email	
Backup contact	

The event

Question	Fill in
What: name of the event	
Where: place, room, indoors or outdoors	
Weather backup (if outdoors)	
When: date, start and end time, setup and take-down time	
Why: the reason or theme (see below)	
For whom: who will come (students, patients, officers, the public, lawmakers, survivors, families)	
Who is remembered: area covered (campus, county,	

state), years, and who is included	
Expected attendance	

Kind of exhibit (check all that apply; many groups combine them)

- ☐ Full-size exhibit
- ☐ Remembrance Table
- ☐ Virtual Vigil (video on a screen, website or Zoom)
- ☐ Pull-up banners
- ☐ Clothesline Project: survivors and supporters decorate shirts that hang on a clothesline. Details: theclotheslineproject.org
- ☐ Walk a Mile in Her Shoes: men walk a short route in women's shoes to raise money and awareness. Details: walkamileinhershoes.org
- ☐ Other:

Why are you doing it? October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month and the traditional time. Other months let you hold a second showing or reach a certain audience. Check exact dates each year.

When	Observance	Good fit
January	National Stalking Awareness Month; Human Trafficking Prevention Month	Police, prosecutors, advocates
February	Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month; Wear Orange day	High schools, colleges
March	Women's History Month	Colleges
April	Sexual Assault Awareness Month; Child Abuse Prevention Month; National Crime Victims' Rights Week	Children's figures; prosecutors, police
May 5	Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons Awareness Day	Tribal and regional partners
June 15	World Elder Abuse Awareness Day	Senior centers, hospitals
September 25	National Day of Remembrance for Murder Victims	Families; victim-witness offices
October	Domestic Violence Awareness Month; Purple Thursday	Everyone
Nov 25 to Dec 10	Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women; 16 Days of Activism	Faith groups, colleges
Any time	A local anniversary; Take Back the Night; start of the school year	Local

Other details

Question	Fill in
Booklet with victims' stories? (a printed copy of every shield for visitors to read)	Yes / No
Guest book? (visitors may write reflections without signing their names)	Yes / No
Commitment cards? (visitors sign a pledge and drop it in	Yes / No

a basket) Sample: pledge cards (Word)	
Food or beverages? Who provides them? Any rules at the site?	
Candles: real or LED? (LED indoors, in hospitals, and where fire rules apply)	
Counselor or advocate on site? Name:	
Accessibility: parking, ramps, seating, large-print handouts	
Languages needed (Spanish handouts or slides?)	
Will families of those remembered be invited? Private gathering first?	

Who to involve

Start with a core committee of 3 to 30 people. Then bring in partners: they share the work, lend their names and expertise, and bring their own audiences.

Committee roles

Role	What they do	Name
Chair	Runs meetings, keeps the timeline	
Story and shield lead	Researches and drafts shields	
Family liaison	A trained advocate who contacts families	
Publicity	Press release, social media, flyers	
Materials	Figures, candles, ribbons, handouts	
Fundraising	Sponsors, donations, budget	
Program	Speakers, readers, music, order of service	
Day of	Setup, volunteers, take-down	
Follow-up	Thank-yous, evaluation, report to Silent Witness	

Partners to ask (check the ones you contact)

- ☐ Local domestic violence agency or shelter (ask first; they can supply speakers, advocates, hotline cards)
- ☐ State domestic violence coalition (find yours on the NNEDV list of state and territory coalitions)
- ☐ Police or sheriff, and their victim advocates
- ☐ Prosecutor's victim-witness office or Attorney General's office (can confirm case facts for shields)
- ☐ Mayor, city council, county council (ask for a proclamation)
- ☐ Faith communities: churches, synagogues, mosques, women's and social-justice groups
- ☐ Clubs and service groups: Rotary, Lions, Kiwanis, Junior League, women's clubs, knitting groups
- ☐ Schools: high school counselors and health teachers

- ☐ Colleges: women's center, counseling, Title IX, social work, nursing, criminal justice, art department, Greek life, athletes, residence life
- ☐ Public library
- ☐ Hospital or health system: social work, forensic (SANE) nurses, chaplains
- ☐ LGBTQ center or group
- ☐ Local businesses: printing, candles, refreshments, sponsorship
- ☐ Workplaces: human resources and employee assistance programs
- ☐ Veterans and military families: VA social work, base Family Advocacy Program
- ☐ Senior centers, and Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes (OLLI), about 125 programs for older adults at colleges and universities (list of OLLIs)
- ☐ Hair salons and barbershops (people confide in their stylist; leave hotline cards)
- ☐ Animal shelter (some people stay because they fear for their pets)
- ☐ Survivor speakers, with support
- ☐ Families of those remembered, if they wish
- ☐ Local news: newspaper, radio, TV
- ☐ Other Silent Witness groups nearby (see the exhibit list on silentwitness.net)

Partner contact list

Partner	Contact person	Phone or email	What they will do	Asked (date)

A tip from the old college brochure: ask a group to sponsor a figure. When groups invest money, time and their name, they come back for future events.

Making the shield

The shield is the heart of the exhibit and the part most likely to cause harm if done carelessly. The full shield guidelines are also on their own page: Guidelines for Making the Shield. These are suggested guidelines from Silent Witness, not legal advice. Your organization may add to or change them as needed. Check with legal counsel for your own state and agency.

Who gets a figure. Silent Witness has always included only people killed in a domestic violence homicide: women, men and children killed by a partner, former partner or family member, and others killed because of a domestic dispute. Consider one figure for the Unknown Victim (see below).

What goes on the shield

- Name, or first name only, or no name if the family prefers ("A woman, 34, Wythe County, 2024").
- Age, town and year of death.
- Who she or he was: mother, nurse, singer, loved by... Lines written by the family are the most powerful.
- A short, factual account from public records. Graphic detail is not needed.
- Present tense to open, past tense to close: "Remember my story. Remember my name."

What stays off the shield

- The name of the person who caused the death, unless there is a conviction. If charges are pending, say "charged with," never "killed by." If the case ends without a conviction, the name comes off.
- In a murder-suicide, only what police or the medical examiner reported.
- Names of surviving minor children.
- Opinions, or descriptions of the perpetrator beyond the court record.

Getting the facts. Use local news stories, court records and your state Attorney General's office. Ask nearby Silent Witness groups first; the shield may already be written.

Sign-off path

1. A committee member drafts the shield from news stories and court records.
2. The prosecutor's victim-witness office (or AG office) confirms the case status and facts.
3. A trained advocate contacts the family. The family chooses full name, first name or no name, and may edit the wording. Avoid asking while the case is in court or near an anniversary. Ask the victim's own next of kin.
4. Tell the family plainly who may see the shield: the public, news media, schools, lawmakers, and anyone who sees it online. Ask separately about website, video and social media use.
5. The host organization signs off; check with local legal counsel.
6. File the final wording with the signed permission. Recheck every year, since a conviction can be overturned.

If a family cannot be reached, use public-record facts only and no photos. Add a note to the program that families may ask for changes, and honor them promptly.

Shield sign-off sheet (copy one per person)

Step	Name, date, notes
Person remembered (as it will appear)	

Source documents (news, court records)	
Case status confirmed by (office, person, date)	
Family contacted by (advocate, date)	
Family choice: full name, first name or no name	
Family approved wording (date, signed form on file)	
Uses approved: exhibit, website, video, social media	
Host organization approval (name, date)	
Legal review, if used (name, date)	
Next yearly recheck (date)	

One figure for the Unknown Victim. Since the beginning, Silent Witness has included one figure for those never counted. The Unknown Victim stands for people living in dangerous situations now, and for those whose deaths went unsolved, were erroneously ruled accidental, or were never officially recognized. It names no one, so it needs no family approval. Keep the wording general and do not describe a real case.

Fundraising worksheet

Fill in the costs from your own quotes, then decide what to raise. A Virtual Vigil costs almost nothing; full-size figures cost the most. Get quotes from more than one supplier (see the Exhibit Resources page on silentwitness.net).

Step 1: What will it cost?

Item	How many	Cost each	Total	Donated by
Figures (full-size, banner, or Remembrance Table cardstock)				
Shields				
Stands or bases				
Storage bags or boxes				
Printing: handouts, programs, flyers, signs				
Hotline wallet cards				
Candles (LED or real)				
Purple ribbons and pins				
Guest book, commitment cards, pens				
Screen, projector or TV (borrow if you can)				
Room or site fee (library and church rooms are often free)				
Sound system or microphone				
Food and beverages				
Speaker gift or honorarium				
Postage and invitations				
Advertising or boosted posts				
Other				
Total cost				

Step 2: Where will the money come from?

Source	Contact	Amount asked	Amount received
Host organization budget			
Partner organizations			
Sponsor a figure (business, church, club)			
Local businesses (cash or in-kind)			
Service clubs and women's groups			
Faith communities (special offering)			
Small grants (community foundation, United Way)			
Donation basket at the event			
Total raised			

Fundraising ideas

- Sponsor a figure: a business, church or club pays for one figure. Its name can go on a card beside the figure, never on the shield.
- Ask partners first. Many have printing, candles or a meeting room already.
- Ask a print shop to donate handouts in exchange for a thank-you on the program or last slide.
- Ask hardware and paint stores for in-kind donations (an old Silent Witness tip).
- Start small: a Virtual Vigil or a single figure beside a screen shows what the full exhibit will look like and helps raise money for more.
- Check whether your organization has rules for asking for or accepting donations.

For three sample letters (general public, businesses and faith groups) and more ideas, see the Fund Raising page on silentwitness.net.

The ask

Use this short letter or email to ask a business, club or church for support. Change the words to fit. To copy and paste, download the sponsor letter (Word).

Dear [Name],

[Organization] is holding a Silent Witness exhibit on [date] at [place]. Silent Witness remembers people in our community who were killed by a partner or family member. Each red figure carries a shield with one person's story.

The exhibit helps people recognize domestic violence and learn where to find help. In [year], [number] women in [state] were killed by a partner.

We are asking local businesses and groups to help with [a gift of $___ / printing / candles / refreshments / sponsoring one figure for $___].

With your permission, we will thank you by name in our program [and on our Facebook page]. Sponsors' names never appear on the shields.

Could we talk this week? I can be reached at [phone or email].

Thank you for considering this.

[Name]
[Title, Organization]

Tips for the ask

- Ask in person or by phone when you can; send the letter as a follow-up.
- Ask for something specific, with a dollar amount or an item.
- Use your state's number from the Make Your Own Report page on silentwitness.net.
- Send a thank-you within a week of the event, with a photo.

Timeline

Gathering the information for the shields takes the longest, so start them first. A Virtual Vigil or Remembrance Table can be done in about three months; new full-size figures need six months or more (check with your supplier for the lead time on silhouettes).

6 months or more before

- ☐ Form the committee and assign roles
- ☐ Decide who is remembered and who the event is for
- ☐ Choose the kind of exhibit
- ☐ Pick the date and reserve the place (get permission in writing)
- ☐ Start shield research; contact the victim-witness office
- ☐ Contact the local DV agency and other partners
- ☐ Draft the budget; get supplier quotes; order full-size figures

3 months before

- ☐ Family contact through a trained advocate
- ☐ Send sponsorship asks
- ☐ Ask speakers, readers and musicians
- ☐ Ask the mayor or council for a proclamation (sample proclamation, Word)
- ☐ Order or make figures, shields, candles, ribbons
- ☐ Ask the site about screens, sound, candles, signs, security

6 weeks before

- ☐ Shields final and signed off
- ☐ Make the Virtual Vigil slides and video (MP4), if used, as soon as you have all the names and shields
- ☐ Send invitations (mail or email)
- ☐ Post save-the-date on Facebook and Instagram
- ☐ Print flyers; give them to partners
- ☐ Write the program and order of service
- ☐ Line up a counselor or advocate for the day

2 weeks before

- ☐ Send the press release; call newspaper, radio and TV
- ☐ Print programs, handouts, hotline cards, signs with QR codes (tri-fold vigil handout, Word). Have someone from your local domestic violence support organization review the handout wording first.
- ☐ Confirm speakers, readers, volunteers and food
- ☐ Make the volunteer schedule
- ☐ Test the Virtual Vigil video on the site's equipment, if used

1 week before

- ☐ Rehearse the program; time it
- ☐ Pack the event kit (see Day of)

- ☐ Remind volunteers and speakers
- ☐ Second press reminder and social media posts
- ☐ Check the weather backup plan

After

- ☐ Thank-you notes to partners, sponsors, speakers, volunteers and the site (within a week)
- ☐ Evaluation meeting (see Evaluation)
- ☐ Send photos and a short story to the newspaper
- ☐ Report the event on the Tell Us About Your Exhibit form at silentwitness.net
- ☐ File shields, permission forms, slides and contacts in one shared folder
- ☐ Put next year's date on the calendar
- ☐ Where else could you hold a vigil or show the display this year?

Marketing

Ask every partner to share the news with its own members. That reaches more people than anything you post yourself.

Checklist

- ☐ Facebook event and posts (one shield a day in October, with family permission)
- ☐ Instagram posts and a short Reel from the Virtual Vigil video
- ☐ Flyers to partners, libraries, churches, salons, coffee shops
- ☐ Invitations by mail or email to families, partners, officials, members and friends
- ☐ Press release to newspaper, radio and TV
- ☐ Community calendars (newspaper, TV station, library, chamber of commerce)
- ☐ Church bulletins and club newsletters
- ☐ Ask city hall, a hospital or a bridge to light up purple
- ☐ Ask for a mayor's or council proclamation (sample proclamation, Word)

Tips

- Every post points to one place: your event page, the Virtual Vigil, or the Safety page.
- Put a QR code and the web address on every flyer and sign. Ready-made Silent Witness codes and how to make your own: QR codes (Word).
- Include a hotline number on everything you print. The tri-fold vigil handout (Word) has a panel for local crisis lines and where to report.
- Use your state's numbers from silentwitness.net in the press release and opening remarks.

Press release (send 2 weeks before, again 2 days before)

To copy and paste, download the press release (Word).

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact: [Name], [phone], [email]

[Organization] to Hold Silent Witness Exhibit on [Date]

[City, State] — [Organization] will hold a Silent Witness exhibit [and candlelight vigil] on [day, date] from [time] to [time] at [place, address]. The event is free and open to the public.

Silent Witness remembers people killed by a partner or family member. Each life-size red figure carries a shield telling one person's story. [Number] people from [county or state] will be remembered.

"[A short quote from your chair or a partner about why this matters.]"

The program will include [speakers, reading of names, candle lighting, music]. Advocates from [local DV agency] will be available.

In [year], [number] women in [state] were killed by a partner (source: CDC). Silent Witness began in Minnesota in 1990. In 1997, Silent Witness figures from all 50 states came to Washington, D.C.

Anyone in need of help can call [local hotline] or the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233.

Partners include [list].

###

Check facts in the last paragraphs before sending; numbers change each year.

Day of

Arrive early, give every volunteer a job, and keep one person free to handle problems.

Event kit (pack in one box)

- ☐ Figures, shields, stands (or USB stick with the MP4 video, two copies, and an HDMI cable)
- ☐ Programs, handouts, hotline wallet cards
- ☐ Signs with QR codes and the web address
- ☐ "Please Read Before Viewing" sign (Word) in a clear stand-up holder
- ☐ "About This Exhibit" handout (Word)
- ☐ Candles (LED or real), lighter, drip guards
- ☐ Purple ribbons and pins
- ☐ Guest book and pens
- ☐ Commitment cards and basket (sample pledge cards, Word)
- ☐ Donation basket
- ☐ Booklet with victims' stories (a printed copy of every shield)
- ☐ Tape, scissors, zip ties, extension cord
- ☐ Name tags for volunteers
- ☐ Contact sheet: site contact, advocate on call, committee chair
- ☐ Hand counter (clicker) to count visitors
- ☐ Camera or phone for photos

Setup

- ☐ Check in with the site contact
- ☐ Set up the figures or screen; test sound and video
- ☐ Set up the resource table, guest book and sign-in
- ☐ Show volunteers where the advocate or counselor will be
- ☐ Place weather backup (tent, indoor room) if outdoors
- ☐ Walk the space once as a visitor would

During

- ☐ Greet guests; point them to the guest book
- ☐ Count visitors
- ☐ Take photos (no grieving family members without consent)
- ☐ Welcome the press; have a spokesperson ready
- ☐ Watch for anyone who is upset; walk them to the advocate

Take-down

- ☐ Pack figures and shields carefully
- ☐ Collect guest book, commitment cards, donations and leftover handouts
- ☐ Leave the site as you found it; thank the site staff

Volunteer schedule

Time	Job	Volunteer	Phone
	Setup		
	Greeter and guest book		
	Resource table		
	Photos and press		
	Take-down		

Evaluation

Meet within two weeks while memories are fresh. Write a one-page "how we did it" report and keep it with your shields and contacts, so the next chair can start where you left off.

The numbers

Measure	Count
People who attended	
Guest book entries	
Commitment cards signed	
Handouts and hotline cards taken	
Donations collected	
Volunteers	
Partners involved	
News stories (paper, radio, TV)	
Social media reach (views, shares)	
QR code or website visits	

Questions for the committee

Question	Notes
What went well?	
What needs improvement?	
What did guests say? (guest book, comments)	
What did partners and the site say?	
Did we stay on budget?	
Did anyone need the advocate? Were we ready?	
Which publicity brought people?	
Who should we invite next time?	
Will we do it again? When and where?	

Finish up

- ☐ Write the one-page report

- ☐ Report the event on the Tell Us About Your Exhibit form at silentwitness.net, with a photo and one tip for other groups
- ☐ Put next year's date on the calendar

Word Files to Download

Every fill-in Word file from this guide and the website, in one place. Change the words in [brackets] to fit your event. All are free to download from silentwitness.net (Exhibits, then Exhibit Resources).

Planning

Who Are We Remembering? — A worksheet to decide where, when and whom your exhibit includes before you start the shields. It includes the New Brunswick Silent Witness Project's criteria as an example.

Guidelines for Making the Shield — Suggested guidelines for who gets a figure, what goes on the shield and how to work with families, with a sign-off sheet. Your organization may add to or change them.

Fundraising

Sponsor Letter — A short fill-in letter asking local businesses and groups for money, printing, candles or refreshments.

Fundraising Letter: General Public — A longer letter for individuals and community groups.

Fundraising Letter: Corporate Sponsors — A letter inviting a business to become a community partner.

Fundraising Letter: Faith-Based Groups — A letter asking a congregation for prayer, awareness and, if possible, a gift.

Publicity

Press Release — A fill-in news release. Send it 2 weeks before the event and again 2 days before.

Sample Proclamation — Ask your mayor or council to proclaim Domestic Violence Awareness Month and a Silent Witness Day.

QR Codes for Your Exhibit — Ready-made codes for Silent Witness web pages, and simple steps to make your own for signs, flyers and programs.

At the exhibit or vigil

Please Read Before Viewing — A sign for the entrance that tells visitors what they will see before they walk in.

About This Exhibit — A sign or handout explaining Silent Witness, with room for your photo and your organization's details.

Tri-fold Vigil Handout — A fold-in-thirds handout with your sponsor, the program, the names, local help lines and what anyone can do. Have your local domestic violence support organization review the wording before printing.

Silent Witness Pledge Cards — Cards visitors sign, pledging to help heal abuse in their own lives, families and communities, then drop in a basket.

Poems for Silent Witness Events — Poems submitted to the original Silent Witness website that may be read at events. Keep the poet's name with the poem.

Make something

- A Simple Shawl — Theresa Gaffey's knitting pattern, written for Sheila Wellstone (older Word format, .doc).

Prepared November 2, 2026 (updated November 3, 2026) with the help of Claude, an AI assistant made by Anthropic, from Silent Witness planning documents (New Exhibit Guide draft, Shield Guidelines ideas, October 2026 planning notes, the old college brochure and the 2002 Virginia media advisory). Awareness-month dates change; check them each year. Clothesline Project: theclotheslineproject.org. Walk a Mile in Her Shoes: walkamileinhershoes.org.