

Possible Trans Woman Murdered in Detroit
By Melissa L. Pope, Director of Victim Services

On the morning of February 4, 2008, a person who runs a daily lunch truck notified the Detroit Police that he discovered a dead body in a lot on Ellery and Canfield in Detroit. We believe this victim is transgender. While the Detroit Police have identified the victim they are not, at the time that this article was written, releasing the legal name of the individual. An official in the Detroit Police Department reported to me that they have notified the victim's family.

Triangle Foundation is working with a network of individuals, GLBT organizations including the Ruth Ellis Center and Transgender Detroit, as well as the Detroit Police Department, to bring the killer to justice. We are all also in the process of trying to reach out to the victim's family.

There are few details at this time about the specifics of this murder. An official with the in the Detroit Police Department has stated the following: the victim was not killed where her body was found; that the cause of death was a gunshot wound to the back of the head; and that the victim was a sex worker. We do not know, however, the motive for the crime, including whether this was an anti-transgender hate crime.

We are sending out a special plea to sex workers and any other community members who patronize businesses in and around Palmer Park (McNichols through Seven Mile and Woodward) to exercise extreme caution until this killer is caught. Our primary concern is the safety of all members of our community.

As many of you know, this story was first reported by WDIV. WDIV used insensitive language in its reporting, to which many members of the community have responded. However, I also want to share that the staff at WDIV made extra efforts to assist me in gathering information about this murder.

But we need more information to solve this crime. If you have any information, please contact me at 313-537-7000, extension 313. Calls will be forwarded directly to me during this critical time. If I cannot take your call when received, I will get back to you as soon as possible. All calls are confidential. I will also be available via this extension throughout Creating Change if anyone is the victim of an anti-GLBT crime.

We at the Triangle Foundation, like so many others in the GLBT community, are here for both our Michigan residents and our Creating Change visitors as we grieve the loss of a member of our community and advocate for all victims of bias crime.