

Rowlett

News Release

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Rowlett community comes together to host prayer vigil for "Hope Against Violence"

ROWLETT, TX – The Rowlett community will come together on Friday evening June 25 at 7:30 on the steps of the Rowlett Chamber of Commerce on Main Street to pray for **Hope Against Violence** in Rowlett following multiple violent incidents in just a few months that have taken the lives of four Rowlett citizens.

The most recent family violence incident has left the Rowlett community in shock as friends, family and co-workers mourn the death of 52-year-old Juvenile Court Judge Belinda Loveland. Just last Sunday, on Father's Day, Judge Loveland was shot and killed by her husband, 59-year-old Richard Loveland. Police learned of the shooting from the couple's grown son Dustin when he called Police to report that his father had texted a message to him admitting he had killed his mother.

Mayor John Harper said, "Rowlett is a very tight-knit hometown community and we must come together to pray for hope...Hope against violence in our city. We must take action now."

The Friday evening vigil will include opening remarks from Mayor Harper followed by a very powerful message presented by Mayor Pro Tem Todd Gottel addressing the urgency of community unity against crime and violence.

Pastors from **Pray Rowlett**, a local group of pastors who regularly meet to pray for Rowlett and its leaders, will have an opportunity to speak to those in attendance. There will also be music, quiet time and a time of prayer.

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Hope Against Violence Vigil – page 2

Below is an excerpt from the message from Mayor Pro Tem Gottel:

“The message I want to deliver to our community is a message of Hope. A message of hope for the victims to have the courage to stand up and get out; hope for families of those victims to cope with the situation; hope for our first responders to mentally handle these situations; and hope for our city to deal with these tragedies. We have two options. We can lie down or stand up and fight. That is the question at hand. I choose to stand and fight,” says Gottel. “That fight means we must come together in numbers to pray together to have HOPE to stand up against violence in our City.”

Judge Loveland leaves behind a legacy of providing hope to the youth of Rowlett who might otherwise have not succeeded finishing school. Seeing an influx of juvenile offenses in 2003, Judge Belinda Loveland created an after-school mentoring program teaching life skills to at-risk boys and girls called Reaching Our Community's Kids (ROCK). The ROCK program has provided hundreds of Rowlett Junior High students the training and encouragement necessary to succeed in school and stay out of the juvenile justice system, while advocating the benefits of living substance-free. Many of those young people will be represented at the vigil and at the funeral service wearing their blue ROCK T-shirts. The service will take place on Saturday, June 26 at 12:30 p.m. at the Lake Pointe Church in Rockwall.

Other violent incidents in Rowlett recently included the following:

On April 20, Veronica Galaviz, 36, was confronted in her home by her estranged husband Jacque Eagon, 42, as he approached her with a gun and threatened to kill her. Her boyfriend, 23-year-old David Canmann, struggled with the gunman and was shot in the hand but was able to escape the home with Veronica. Eagon then started a fire in the home and his body was later found inside the burned home.

On April 22, Dana Swindle, 29, was shot and killed by Paul Gillam, 39, who was the husband of the victim's ex mother-in-law.

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