

It Did Not Have To Be!

Beautiful Lives Cut Short

February 14, 2018

**Marjory Stoneman
Douglas High School
Parkland, Florida**



**May the memory of
their lives forever be a
blessing.**



A Prayer in Response to Gun Violence

God, we have every reason to become numb,
to become used to this blasphemous trend,
to barely even register
that Your Images are being erased
by guns, weapons intended to protect our freedom
And our lives.

God, we know we must act,
and we know that, in order to act,
we must feel the urgency - Your Urgency.
We must channel Your pain
at the deaths of Your children
and remind our lawmakers to choose life.

We've been too quiet,
Our nation has endured
the epidemic of Gun Violence
for far too long.

And so, God,
as we feel the beginnings of our own weariness
we remember the wisdom of Your Prophet,
who taught that:

"...those who hope in God will renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles;
they will run and not grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint." (Isaiah 40:31)

We pray to You for renewal
as we spread our protective wings over one another again,
running to justice,
refusing weariness,
and choosing life.

May we sing louder than weapons
and merit to see You in each other's eyes,
sanctifying Your Name

Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida Tuesday, February 13, 2018—A Tragic Day of Loss and Grief



Alyssa Alhadeff, 14

Alyssa was a student at Stoneman Douglas and a soccer player for Parkland Travel Soccer. Lori Alhadeff, Alyssa's mother, told HLN she dropped her daughter off at school Wednesday and said "I love you." When Lori Alhadeff heard about the shooting, she hustled to school, but was too late.

Alyssa was a beautiful, smart, talented, successful, awesome, amazing soccer player.

"Alyssa Alhadeff was a loved and well respected member of our club and community," [Parkland Travel Soccer said on Facebook](#). "Alyssa will be greatly missed."

Alyssa also attended Camp Coleman, a Jewish sleepaway summer camp.

Scott Beigel, 35

Scott Beigel, a geography teacher, was killed as he tried to usher students back into his classroom when the shooting broke out. Kelsey Friend, one of Beigel's students, told CNN in an emotional interview that he was shot outside the classroom door and that he saved her life.



Martin Duque Anguiano, 14

Miguel Duque mourned the loss of his younger brother, Martin, and set up a Go Fund Me page to help pay for funeral expenses.

"He was a very funny kid, outgoing, and sometimes really quiet. He was sweet and caring and loved by all his family. Most of all he was my baby brother,"



Jaime Guttenberg, 14

"My heart is broken. We lost our daughter and our son Jesse lost his sister.

"I am broken as I write this trying to figure out how our family will get through this. We appreciate all of the calls and messages and we apologize for not reacting to everyone individually. Hugs to all and hold your children tight."

Jaime Guttenberg danced nonstop. Sometimes she went on for hours, her aunt, Ellyn Guttenberg, said. Jaime was warm, too, always taking Ms. Guttenberg's son, who has special needs, under her wing.



Aaron Feis, 34

Feis, an assistant football coach, was killed when he threw himself in front of students to protect them from oncoming bullets, according to football program spokeswoman Denis Lehtio. Feis suffered a gunshot wound and died after he was rushed into surgery.



"He died the same way he lived -- he put himself second," she said. "He was a very kind soul, a very nice man. He died a hero."

He was a hard worker. He worked after school, on the weekends, mowing lawns, just helping as many people as possible," Haab added.

Chad Lyons, a student and football player, said Feis was there for him when Lyons was going through leukemia treatments. "He guided me through them. He would send me prayers. He would send me Bible scripts and just stuff to cheer up my day.

Nicholas Dworet, 17

Nicholas Dworet, a promising high school swimmer, took a recruiting visit to the University of Indianapolis a few weeks ago. After a group dinner, he pulled the coach aside and said he wanted to compete there after he graduated this spring. "He was an instant part of our family," said Jason Hite, the university's swim coach. Mr. Hite said Nicholas, 17, had received an academic scholarship and planned to study physical therapy.



University officials and a youth swim team in Florida said Nicholas was among those killed on Wednesday. A post on the Facebook page for [TS Aquatics](#), the Florida club where he swam, described Nicholas as an amazing person who had been "on a major upswing in his life."

Nicholas had improved academically and athletically since starting high school, Mr. Hite said, and his mentors in Florida "felt like the best was still to come for him." "We were going to continue to groom him to be a future leader for our team," Mr. Hite said.

"The saddest thing to me is how much life this kid had and how hard he had worked to change directions and change paths," Mr. Hite said. "He was really going in the right direction and he had really created some opportunities for himself."



Christopher Hixon, 49

Christopher Hixon, the school's athletic director, was a well-known figure in Florida high school sports. One man, Jose Roman, posted on social media that Mr. Hixon was "a great coach and an awesome motivator" when he was a freshman athlete years ago.

Mr. Hixon was named athletic director of the year in 2017 by the Broward County Athletics Association.

Luke Hoyer, 15

Luke spent last Christmas with his extended family in South Carolina, where he bowled, joined in a big holiday meal and swapped stories with relatives.

Luke was a basketball player who was ambitious about the sport and admired N.B.A. stars like LeBron James and Stephen Curry. "I know Luke loved his family," a cousin said. "I know he did. He had a huge heart." "He was quiet, but a very happy individual," he said.



Cara Loughran, 14

Cara Loughran loved the beach. She adored her cousins. And she was an excellent student, her family said.

"We are absolutely gutted," by her death, her aunt, Lindsay Fontana, wrote in a [Facebook post](#). "While your thoughts are appreciated, I beg you to DO SOMETHING. This should not have happened to our niece Cara and it cannot happen to other people's families."

Cara danced at the Drake School of Irish Dance in South Florida. "Cara was a beautiful soul and always had a smile on her face," the dance studio said in a statement. "We are heartbroken as we send our love and support to her family during this horrible time."

"It is with a heavy heart and much regret that I write these words. Our next-door neighbor's daughter was one of the lives taken (too) soon by a senseless act of violence at Stoneman Douglas High School.



Gina Montalto, 14

Gina was a member of the winter guard on the school's marching band. One of her middle school color guard instructors told The Miami Herald that Gina "was the sweetest soul ever." "My heart is broken into pieces. I will forever remember you, my sweet angel," Manuel Miranda told the paper.

Joaquin Oliver, 17

Joaquin was born in Venezuela, moved to the United States when he was 3 and became a naturalized citizen in January 2017.

People often spelled Joaquin Oliver's first name wrong, so he went with a snappy nickname: Guac.

He played basketball in the city recreational league — his jersey number was 2 — and he loved to write, filling a notebook with poetry.

His interests: football, basketball, the Venezuelan national soccer team, urban graffiti and hip-hop," An Instagram post dated December 31 was his final social media post -- a message to his girlfriend, the paper said. "Thank you lord for putting a greater blessing than I could ever imagine into my life this past year," he said. "I love you with all my heart."



Alaina Petty, 14

Alaina's family said she was vibrant and determined. She had volunteered after Hurricane Irma hit Florida in September. She was a member of the junior ROTC at her school, a leadership program taught by retired Army personnel.

"Alaina loved to serve," the statement from her family said. She was also a part of the "Helping Hands" program of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.



Meadow Pollack, 18

Meadow had been accepted at Lynn University in Boca Raton. "Meadow was a lovely young woman, who was full of energy. We were very much looking forward to having her join our community in the fall,"

"Please say a prayer for the family of an amazing girl I got to call my best friend growing up Meadow Pollack ... her life was taken way too soon and I have no words to describe how this feels. Rest In Peace my beautiful angel.

"She was a very strong-willed young girl who had everything going for her." Her father described his daughter as smart, beautiful and caring. She worked at her boyfriend's family's motorcycle repair business. "She just knew how to get what she wanted all the time," Mr. Pollack said. "Nothing could ever stop her from what she wanted to achieve."

Helena Ramsay, 17



Helena Ramsay was a smart, kind hearted, and thoughtful person. She was deeply loved and loved others even more so. Though she was some what reserved, she had a relentless motivation towards her academic studies, and her soft warm demeanor brought the best out in all who knew her. She was so brilliant and witty, and I'm still wrestling with the idea that she is actually gone."

Page, Helena's cousin, said he hopes others can be inspired by Helena's "life well lived, no matter how short."

Alex Schachter, 14

Alex participated in the school marching band and orchestra, playing baritone in the former and trombone in the latter, the Sun-Sentinel reported. "I felt he really had a bright future on the trombone," Alexander Kaminsky, director of bands at the Parkland high school, told the paper.

He was proud to have participated in winning a state championship last year.

A freshman at the high school, he often played basketball with friends and was "a sweetheart of a kid," his father, Max Schachter, said. Alex loved his mother, who died when he was five years old. Alex "just wanted to do well and make his parents happy," his father said.

A Go Fund Me page was set up by Alex's family as a scholarship fund.

"In an effort to continue his memory, this scholarship is being created to help other students experience the joys of music as well as fund increased security at schools. Please help keep Alex's spirit alive," the page said. "The money raised will be sent to the Stoneman Douglas Marching Eagles."





Carmen Schentrup, 16

Carmen Schentrup, a [2018 National Merit Scholarship semifinalist](#), was the smartest 16-year-old that her cousin, Matt Brandow, had ever met, he said in a [Facebook post](#). “I’m in a daze right now,” he wrote.

Rest In Peace Carmen Schentrup ☐ [@Schentrump](#), your family is forever in my thoughts and prayers. I'm so sorry.

Peter Wang, 15

Kelsey Friend, who shared a culinary class with Peter, said "It's hard to not have him in the hallways anymore because me and him used to laugh with each other. He used to make me smile. And now he's gone."

Peter Wang, a freshman, helped his cousin, Aaron Chen, adjust when he settled in Florida. “He was always so nice and so generous,” Aaron, 16, said, adding that even though Peter was younger he had worked to be sure Aaron didn’t get bullied when he first arrived.



Peter was last seen in his gray uniform for the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps, or J.R.O.T.C., on Wednesday. “He was the kid in school who would be friends with anyone,” said the other cousin, Lin Chen, 24. “He didn’t care about popularity.”

A Petition

Written by Andy Pelosi of The Campaign to Keep Guns off Campus and distributed by MoveOn to be delivered to The Florida State House, The Florida State Senate, Governor Rick Scott, The United States House of Representatives, The United States Senate, and President Donald Trump.

OUR SCHOOLS MUST BE HAVENS FOR LEARNING WHERE STUDENTS CAN FEEL SAFE AND NOT HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT BEING GUNNED DOWN IN THEIR OWN CLASSROOMS OR ON THE PLAYGROUND. MILITARY-STYLE ASSAULT WEAPONS ARE WEAPONS OF WAR AND HAVE NO PLACE IN OUR COMMUNITIES.

On February 14 another mass shooting took place in a school leaving 17 people dead and many others severely injured.

The shooter used an AR-15, a military-style assault weapon with large capacity magazines. This type of weapon was also used in previous mass shootings, including Aurora, Colorado; Newtown, Connecticut; San Bernardino, California; Umpqua Community College, Roseburg, Oregon; Sutherland Springs, Texas; and Las Vegas, Nevada.

We do not want to hear our state and federal officials offering their thoughts and prayers for this latest tragedy – we want action now! Military-style assault weapons and large capacity magazines have no place in civilian society and are only designed to kill and injure large numbers of people in a short period of time.

We cannot allow the daily carnage in our country to be the new normal.

Tell the President, Congress and various state legislatures (including Florida) to act now to ban military-style assault weapons and large capacity magazines.

To Sign the petition to: <https://petitions.moveon.org/sign/ban-military-style-assault-2akid=198998.34426283.A9hnBR&rd=1&source=mo&t=13>

A Message from: NYAC—New Yorkers Against Gun Violence

We CAN prevent mass shootings.

On Wednesday, February 14, in Parkland, Florida, innocent high school students and teachers were massacred by a gunman with an AR-15 assault weapon and multiple rounds of ammunition. Once again, easy access to guns caused senseless death, trauma and grief. The "thoughts and prayers" of elected officials have done nothing to prevent mass shootings and they won't prevent the next massacre. Or the next. Or the next.

The truth is, much can be done to stop the carnage that Americans fear each day, whether they're in school, at church, at work, or on the street. We grieve for the victims and their families. And we must demand action from our lawmakers.

Please take action today on these measures suggested by Show Up Long Island (SULI)

I. Join the Mom Demand Action Movement to end gun violence: Text ACT to 644-33.

II. Join the Gun Sense Action Network - Voter Outreach TEAM.

Amazing opportunity to call residents of key states and explain the need to oppose dangerous bills and then connect them directly to their senator's office. <https://moms.ngpvanhost.com/onlinea.../RvQymTQk-E-Eyw-jFksSHg2>

III. Consider making a donation to

- 1)Everytown for Gun Safety at <https://everytown.org/>
- 2)Sandy Hook Promise at <https://www.sandyhookpromise.org/>

IV. CALL: YOUR REPRESENTATIVES!!!

GOP officials in Congress and elsewhere are sending "thoughts and prayers" to the victims' families but still oppose common sense gun regulations that could help PREVENT these tragedies. And they're STILL taking money from the NRA!

NOW is the time to call your elected officials and demand common sense gun regulation to keep people safe. Words are not enough---we need regulation NOW.

+Find your senators: <http://bit.ly/2tx8vuh>

+Find your representative: <https://www.house.gov/representatives/find/>

SCRIPT:

Hi, my name is _____ and I'm a constituent from _____. I am devastated by the death toll from the shooting yesterday and I want the congressman/senator to take action to enact common sense gun regulation IMMEDIATELY. I'm asking for him/her to support:

1. H.R.3999 (House) and S.1916 (Senate) to ban the use and sale of bump stocks, which effectively circumvent restrictions on automatic weapons
2. H.R.3464 and S.1923 - Background Check Completion Act of 2017, which closes a loophole that allows a gun sale if a background check is not completed after 72 hours, even if the buyer is not legally allowed to purchase a gun. This loophole was used by Dylann Roof to purchase the gun he used to kill nine people at Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, SC.
3. H.R.3987 - Protecting Americans from Gun Violence Act of 2017, which is a far-reaching and comprehensive bill that closes private sale and online sale loopholes, implements uniform background checks, funds research into gun deaths, and provides funding for police training and mental health care resources.

(Senate only) I also want him/her to vote AGAINST S.446, The Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act, which would endanger law enforcement and civilians. Will the senator be voting against this bill?