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## Sharing Bond In Face of Tragedy / Kin of slain victims from LI, Queens gather for vigil to honor loved ones: [NASSAU AND SUFFOLK Edition]

By **Nickolai Kralev**. STAFF WRITER. **Newsday, Combined editions; Long Island, N.Y.** [Long Island, N.Y.]27 Apr 1998: A18.

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Earlier, **Parker** had stood before the congregation to speak about her daughter **Laura**, whose body was found 14 years ago in the bushes near **Lindenhurst** High School, four months after the 15-year-old had mysteriously disappeared. **Parker** only had the strength to tell the congregation that **Laura**'s ashes are at the same church.

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"We come here as a big family to remember our loved ones together," said Dennis Holland, head of the 600-family-member Long Island chapter of the nationwide support group whose sister, Kathleen, was strangled to death in 1986.

While the somber melody of bagpipes played, the relatives of murder victims marked the end of National Crime Victims' Rights Week by talking about their loved ones and listening as the names of murder victims were read aloud by members of the congregation.

As she gazed at the people filling the small church, Martha Rago of Babylon, whose son was shot in the head last July, said, "There are more and more who join us each month."

Rago's 32-year-old son, Robert, went to return a beeper a colleague had left in his car. Ten minutes after he reached the colleague's house in Bay Shore, Robert was shot and killed. The murderer pleaded guilty to the crime but never gave police a motive for the shooting, she said.

"Since I joined Parents of Murdered Children, I learned that you don't have to be afraid of crying, of saying something wrong. Everyone here knows what you've gone through. All these people have walked in our shoes. They know exactly how we feel," Rago said.

The youngest of Robert Rago's six children never met his father. He was born six months after the tragedy.

One-year-old twins Sara-Jennifer and Elizabeth-Rose don't know their father, James Halversen, either. They were born a month after he died in January, 1997. Halversen, 30, was jogging as usual one night close to his Centereach home when two men, 19 and 21, shot him from a truck, his wife, Rosalie, said.

"There's something wrong with children killing people, but I don't know the reason for this," Halversen said, reacting to both her husband's murder and the recent cases of teenage violence across the country.

"This is the most horrendous thing - a child to lash out and kill someone," said Dennis C. Folk of Ridge, whose son was killed nearly five years ago. "I don't even know if they are children anymore. Their mindset is different. Life means nothing to them."

Folk's son, Dennis J., was shot in the head by two robbers who ran into a Getty gas station in Ridge where he was manager.

Halversen's and Rago's murderers were charged, and are both awaiting trials, the victims' relatives said.

But that day hasn't come yet for the Folks or the **Parkers**.

"After 14 years, we know as much as we did back then," **Parker** said.

"My main concern is that those murderers who were never caught don't do that to someone else's child or loved one, because they are out there," Folk said.

### Illustration

Newsday Photo by David L. Pokress-Caroline Carey of Seaford, foreground, yesterday remembers her sister Nancy Gschwend; Madelyne Olivieri of Dix Hills recalls her son Frank.