**For Immediate Release**

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**Local Disability Community Commemorates Lives of Disabled Filicide Victims**

EDISON, NJ - As part of a nation-wide Day of Mourning, disability rights advocates in the Edison area will be holding a vigil on March 1st, to honor the lives of disabled people murdered by their families and caretakers.

The Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN), which tracks these cases, has compiled a list of over 1300 reported murders of people with disabilities by relatives or caregivers over the last 39 years. The total number of killings is likely higher than the amount which are reported in news media.

This problem is made worse by irresponsible news coverage which presents these murders as the sympathetic acts of loving and desperate parents, by a justice system which often gives a lighter sentence to a parent who kills a disabled child, and by the dangerous cultural prejudice that says a disabled life is not worth living.

The Alliance Center for Independence (ACI) has been having vigils since 2014. The first Day of Mourning was organized by ASAN in 2012 as a response to the murder of George Hodgins, a 22-year-old autistic man from California, by his mother.

Little public attention is paid to the disabled victims of these violent acts. Media coverage and public discourse about such killings frequently justifies them as “understandable” and sometimes “merciful,” rather than appropriately condemning these crimes and those who commit them. The national Day of Mourning is a time for the disability community to commemorate the many lives cut short. By honoring disabled victims of murder and celebrating the lives that they lived, these vigils send a message that disability is not a justification for violence.

ACI’s vigil will be held in front of 629 Amboy Avenue in Edison and begins at 6 PM. Participants will honor the victims by reading their names and sharing personal reflections. All are welcome to attend and join afterwards for conversation and coffee.

ACI offers a support group for parents of adult children with disabilities. For more information about this group and other services of ACI, please contact 732-738-4388 or visit adacil.org.