“I have no answers, no profound statements, no theories. I have passion, anger, grief, hope and faith. This gathering is the beginning of something that needs to continue. We need to work towards taking away the stigma, the fear and the stereotypes that surround those we have lost and those that are here with us struggling. When people can be honest, treated with respect, given treatment, support, or an ear when they need it, maybe then we will stop losing our loved ones. This list will stop growing and our hearts will stop bleeding. Thank you all for your courage, your hope and your desire to remember those that are all too often forgotten.”

- 1st Overdose Vigil – Mary Wheeler – Lynn, MA 2005
Have an Overdose Vigil: A How-To Workshop

Harm Reduction Conference
Portland, OR
November 17, 2012

Mary Wheeler
Program Director, Healthy Streets * Lynn, MA

Joanna Berton Martinez
Project Manager + Consultant * Boston, MA
Vigil History

- First vigil in January 2003
- Cambridge, MA
- 20 people in attendance
- Boston and Cambridge NEX staff and volunteers
- Cambridge NEX participants
- FREEZING and WINDY!!!!
- Beautiful night…bad season

- Idea came after a training at Cambridge Cares About AIDS
- Couldn’t wait until warmer weather, had to do it NOW!
Not One More Anonymous Death
N.O.M.A.D.
Overdose Prevention Project

Design created by Deborah Perry and Mary Wheeler in Haverhill, MA
N.O.M.A.D. Project
Not One More Anonymous Death Overdose Prevention Project

- Created in 2005 at Healthy Streets Outreach Program
- Idea based loosely on the New South Wales Overdose Management Strategy
- Project gained support from agency
- Logo created
- Second overdose vigil but the first N.O.M.A.D. vigil in Lynn, MA
The Stuff to Have

- A permit to use the space if it is public
- Candles and wind protectors (flameless if indoors)
- Sound system
- Seating
- Something for people to take (cards, flowers, bracelets, etc)
- Paper and pens for the names
- Someone to help write the names
  - So people don’t write their own name
  - So the reader knows how to pronounce the names
  - Make sure writing is legible
- Light to read names
More Stuff

- Trash bags
- Rubber gloves
- Tape
- Scissors
- Paper weights
- Information to give away if you choose
- Volunteers to give away candles, read the names and answer questions
- Coffee, smokes, water, cell phone that is not on silent 😊
- Water for your speakers
- Police detail if required by your town/city or if you have a large attendance
Music

- Live music?
- DJ?
- Ipod?
- CD?
- We have different music every year
- Never the same musician, always someone special

Buick Audra – “The Pizza Dream Tour”
Handmade dress for her first stop at the Lynn Overdose Vigil
Share the Stories

• Not a recovery meeting
• Share for 1–4 minutes
• No “drugs are bad” messages
• Strictly discuss the loved one lost
• Your experience with the loss and after
• Ask speakers to put their talk into writing so you or one of their family or friends can take over should they get upset or nervous.
• Don’t be afraid to set boundaries
• Remind speakers press is welcome at the event
Through the Years…

2005 Prayer Card – Created by graphic designer Deborah Perry
Overdose Vigil
August 3rd, 2007
Lynn, MA

May you find serenity and tranquility
in a world you may
not always understand.

Make me a channel of peace
that where there is hatred, I may bring love
that where there is wrong,
I may bring the spirit of forgiveness
that where there is discord,
I may bring harmony
that where there is error, I may bring truth
that where there is doubt, I may bring faith
that where there is despair,
I may bring hope
that where there are shadows,
I may bring light
that where there is sadness,
I may bring joy
I may seek others to comfort
than to be comforted,
to understand than to be understood:
to love than to be loved.
For it is by self-forgetfulness that one finds
It is by forgiving that one is forgiven.
With its branches reaching into the sky, and roots deep in the earth, it dwells in three worlds— a link between heaven, the earth, and the underworld, uniting above and below.

Overdose Vigil
August 1st, 2008
Lynn, MA

May the stars carry your sadness away,
May the flowers fill your heart with beauty,
May hope forever wipe away your tears,
And, above all, may silence make you strong.
Chief Dan George*
Drawn by Healthy Streets program participants for the 2009 vigil

Overdose Vigil
August 7, 2009
LYNN MA.

Never forgotten...
Always Remembered
For the ones who died
Before their time...

Russell L.
Christine H.
2010

Made by residents at a local halfway house in Lynn, MA
• White arm bands

• Dressed gazebo

• Mexican tissue flowers made by program participants

• *Ofrenda* table evolved

• Prayer card drawn by Massachusetts tattoo artist, Joshua Glantz
In Memory of those we've lost
• Butterfly theme

• T-shirt project

• Pink tissue flowers made by teenage girls at neighbor agency

• Prayer cards laminated by hand, Healthy Streets Staff

• Big butterflies hoisted by volunteers at Ryan House
Night of Remembrance

8th Annual Overdose Vigil
Friday, August 3rd

Lynn Commons Gazebo
Near the Public Library

Lynn, MA

Bring photocopied pictures of your loved ones to hang on our remembrance wall.

7:30 Signing of the Names
8pm Event Begins
8:30 Lighting of the Candles

For information or directions (781) 592-0243 MWheeler@nebhealth.org

Healthy Streets Outreach Program, Northeast Behavioral Health 2012
• Star theme (kinda:)

• Ofrenda

• No gazebo!

• Stage built

• Less tables

• Prayer card by Joanna Berton Martinez
Aug. 10, though the years it's been tough
Some time. I never really stuck up
The fact you died, and left
A wife, son, and step son.
I'm not sure what you bottled it
I'm not even sure you want
It better, I know God,
I love you,
I miss you, but you smile.
Dig the Process!

- Brainstorming is art
- Interactive is good
- Simple is good
- Keep the help community minded
- Bring duct tape, baby wipes, and cheap-o plastic table cloths
- Pack it in Pack it out
- **Document** This is an incredible thing y’all are doing😊
Thank you for attending this presentation😊

For more information, a copy of this ppt or to send us fotos of your Vigil,

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