

Documentary Screening of When Black Women Go Missing and the 2024 Annual Candlelight Vigil

Documentary Screening of When Black Women Go Missing and Annual Candlelight Vigil for Missing and Murdered Women and Girls of Color

BRONX, NY, UNITED STATES, December 20, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Girl Vow, Inc. proudly presents the two events which just concluded. The Documentary Screening of "When Black Women Go Missing" and the 2024 Annual Candlelight Vigil.

The documentary screening of "When Black Women Go Missing" took place on October 31, 2024, at the Moot Court of John Jay College of Criminal Justice. This documentary sheds light on the disproportionate rates at which Black women are reported missing and the inadequate attention and support given by law enforcement and media. It highlights the systemic neglect faced by victims and their families, showcasing real stories of loss and resilience.



The event began with a warm welcome by Program Assistant Ananya Roy and Girl Vow Person of the Year 2024, Christa Ofuakwa. Professor Dawn Rowe PhD, the Executive Director of Girl Vow, Inc., followed with a special thank-you message, acknowledging the dedication and support from

attendees.

The screening featured impactful words and reflections from distinguished speakers and guests who are the Brooklyn Deputy Borough President Kim Council, Anamaria Rodriguez, Director of Programs and Community Partnerships, Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence; and Assembly Member Yudelka Tapia, and the Members of the Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence: Yuandri Morillo, Joanna Pusey-Brown, and Jillian Torres.

Following the screening, a thought-provoking panel discussion was moderated by Prof Dawn Rowe PhD., focusing on the challenges and necessary systemic changes to address the issue. Panelists included Shadira Smothers of Abused & Bruised, Dr. Elesondra Deromano of STARS Inc., Mary Murphy, former PIX11 News journalist, Rose Muckenthaler, Retired NYPD Detective First Grade. These speakers delivered compelling messages, sharing their expertise and experiences that resonated deeply with the audience.

In a powerful reflection on the recent event at John Jay, Mary Murphy shared her experience on the panel, stating, "I felt honored to be on the John Jay panel put together by Dr. Rowe. I felt a responsibility to share my reporting experience on sex trafficking. I learned a lot by listening to the powerful voices of experts and survivors who have witnessed the crisis of Black women and girls who are missing or murdered." Adding to this, Shadira inspired attendees with her call to action, saying, "We will look for ours when they don't! We will fight for ours when they won't!" Ms. Muckenthaler echoed the energy in the room, expressing, "Everyone in the event, whether Dr. Rowe, Shadira, Ms. Murphy, Ms. El, and everyone, has that voice to raise, and everyone has experience raising that voice. I can feel that—wow—I am surrounded by powerful women." Professor Duro, who attended the event with her students, reflected on its profound impact, stating, "No real words can describe the impact this event had on our students, many of whom either work in law enforcement or are entering policing or other criminal justice-related professions. In my 20+ years of researching sex trafficking and serving on the human trafficking national task force, this is the first time I've seen John Jay College of Criminal Justice and other institutions offer an educational program that specifically addresses how law enforcement practices affect the investigation of missing and murdered Black girls and women. This is historical! This is a real change." Their words resonated deeply, capturing the collective strength and urgency of the event's mission.

Last November 1, 2024, the City Hall Park was illuminated with the Annual Candlelight Vigil, a solemn event held to honor the memories of missing and murdered women and girls and to support victims of gender-based violence. This gathering served as both a tribute and a powerful call for continued advocacy and action.

The vigil commenced with an opening prayer led by Minister Norman Coleman, setting a reflective and unifying tone. Dr. Dawn Rowe followed with opening remarks that emphasized the significance of remembrance and advocacy. The vigil featured speeches from various advocates and community leaders, including Shadira Smothers, Dr. El DeRomano, Mary Murphy, Laura

Mullen from the Survivor Advisory Board, Co-Founder & President, Anamaria Rodriguez, Flore Baptiste, Staten Island Program Coordinator, Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence and the Girl Vow participants also spoke, courageously sharing their messages aligned with the event's mission.

A poignant moment was the reading of the names of missing and murdered women and girls, sourced from various trusted accounts. This act of recognition reinforced the importance of visibility and remembrance for those often overlooked by mainstream narratives.

Adding energy to the vigil, the Flex Dance Program performed an energetic and dynamic piece, celebrating the strength, unity, and resilience of women and girls impacted by violence and systemic neglect. Their lively choreography brought a sense of hope and empowerment, creating a unique form of storytelling that honored the spirit of those they represented.

A significant element of these events was highlighting the use of mannequins as a symbol for the silent crisis of missing and murdered women and girls of color. The mannequin project stands as a visual and tactile representation of the loss and invisibility suffered by affected communities. This initiative aims to humanize the statistics and foster empathy and action.

We urge communities and policymakers to recognize mannequins as a national symbol for missing and murdered women and girls of color. This symbol serves as a powerful reminder of the enduring impact of their disappearance and the need for justice and systemic change. Our collective effort is to ensure that these women and girls are seen, heard, and remembered.

Thank you to everyone who participated, supported, and shared in these meaningful events. Your voices and actions bring hope and strength to our continued fight for visibility, justice, and change.

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