**Press Release**

**For Immediate Release**

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Local Disability Community Commemorates Lives of Disabled Filicide Victims EDISON– As part of a nation-wide Day of Mourning, disability rights advocates in the Edison area will be holding a vigil on Wednesday, March 1st to honor the lives of disabled people murdered by their families and caretakers.

“As part of a nationwide Day of Mourning,” Over 50 such murders have been reported in the United States in the last five years, over 20 in the last year alone. The total number of killings is likely higher than the amount which are reported in news media. We must address violence against people with disabilities and speak out against the dangerous cultural prejudice that says a disabled life is not worth living said Carole Tonks, Executive Director of the Alliance Center for Independence.

The Autistic Self-Advocacy Network, Not Dead Yet, and the National Council on Independent Living held the first Day of Mourning in 2012 as a response to the murder of George Hodgins, a 22-year-old autistic man from California, by his mother. Day of Mourning is a national event, with around fifteen participating cities each year. 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. The Alliance Center for Independence vigil will be held at 629 Amboy Avenue, Edison, in front of the building and begins at 6pm.

**The Alliance Center for Independence** (ACI) provides information and referral services and develops and implements educational programs and innovative activities that promote activism, peer support, health and wellness, employment and independent living skills for people with disabilities and their allies. ACI supports the philosophy of independent living for all persons with disabilities.

ACI recognizes disability as a natural and beautiful part of human diversity. They are a 501(c)(3) community-based, grassroots organization that supports and promotes independent living for people with disabilities in Middlesex, Union and Somerset counties in New Jersey.

**Autistic Self-Advocacy Network (ASAN)** is an inclusive international non-profit organization run by and for autistic people. ASAN seeks to advance the vision of the disability rights movement in the world of autism. Drawing on the principles of the cross-disability community on issues such as inclusive education and community living, ASAN focuses on organizing the community of autistic 15 adults and youth to have our voices heard in the national conversation about us. In addition, ASAN works to advance the idea of neurological diversity by furthering the view that the goal of autism advocacy should not be to create a world without autistic people. Instead, it should be to create a world in which autistic people enjoy the same access, rights, and opportunities as all other citizens.

**Not Dead Yet** is a national, grassroots disability rights group that opposes legalization of assisted suicide and euthanasia as deadly forms of discrimination against old, ill and disabled people. Not Dead Yet helps organize and articulate opposition to these practices based on secular social justice arguments. Not Dead Yet demands the equal protection of the law for the targets of so-called “mercy killing” whose lives are seen as worthless. The National Council on Independent Living is the longest-running national cross-disability, grassroots organization run by and for people with disabilities. Founded in 1982

**National Council on Independent Living (NCIL)** represents thousands of organizations and individuals including: Centers for Independent Living (CILs), Statewide Independent Living Councils (SILCs), individuals with disabilities, and other organizations that advocate for the human and civil rights of people with disabilities throughout the United States.