



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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DC Trans Coalition Grieves After Violence Claims Yet Another Transgender Woman's Life
Group Calls for Solidarity in Response to Violence in Our Communities

Washington, DC – In the early hours of Wednesday, July 20th, 2011, Lashai Mclean, a 23 year old transgender woman, was murdered in Northeast DC. The murder took place near the Wanda Alston House, a housing program for homeless LGBTQ youth operated by [Transgender Health Empowerment \(T.H.E.\)](#). Another trans woman was present during the attack and, thankfully, escaped. The Metropolitan Police Department has no leads or possible motives, and has not classified Lashai's murder as a hate crime.

Lashai was a friend to many people in the community – including several [DC Trans Coalition \(DCTC\)](#) organizers who offer our sincerest condolences to those grieving this loss. We must stress once again the absolute necessity for the police and media to respect Lashai's gender identity. The least we can do to honor her memory is to respect her chosen, lived identity.

While nothing can bring back those we have lost or undo the suffering, we can and should confront the daily terror and anxiety that trans and gender non-conforming people face. We can do this by building networks of mutual support and solidarity that sustain our efforts to feel safe and make change. Together, we must challenge the institutional racism, poverty, transphobic attitudes, lack of social services, criminalization of sex work, and other policies that jeopardize our security.

We demand that MPD make finding Lashai's killer a top priority, lest she become a repeat of [the unsolved 2009 lethal stabbing of Tyli'a "NaNa Boo" Mack](#) in broad daylight, or [the 2010 assault of Chloe Moore](#) by an off-duty MPD officer who has not been charged in the case. "Lashai's murder is yet another visceral reminder that transgender women are consistently placed in dangerous situations. These acts of violence are not isolated incidents. The recent findings of the DC Trans Needs Assessment show trans [communities in DC have overwhelming concern](#) for our physical safety," said Sadie Ryanne Vashti, a DCTC organizer who knew Lashai. "Regardless of the individual motive in this case, our lives are institutionally marginalized and regarded as expendable. This makes trans women – especially women of color and those involved, or presumed to be involved, in the sex industry – far more susceptible to violence."

We continue to hope for a future where there are no more senseless and violent deaths in our communities. Lashai's memory will strengthen our resolve to continue surviving, supporting one another, and struggling for a better world. There will be a vigil July 23rd at 7pm on the 6100 block of Dix Street NE, the site where Lashai was killed.

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The DC Trans Coalition (DCTC) is a volunteer, grassroots, community-based organization dedicated to fighting for human rights, dignity, and equal access for transsexual, transgender and gender-diverse people in the District of Columbia. To learn more, please visit our website at www.dctranscoalition.org. You can also find us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).