



SANTA CRUZ POLICE DEPARTMENT

155 Center Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

MEDIA RELEASE

Letter from Butler and Wu Families

On February 26th, life as we knew it ended. Our beloved Elizabeth Butler, daughter, sister, mother, partner, and police officer, lost her life suddenly, unexpectedly, and cruelly. Elizabeth was a ten-year veteran of the Santa Cruz Police Department. In her capacity as a detective in charge of sexual assaults, she was carrying out a somewhat ordinary interview along with Sergeant Butch Baker when the unthinkable happened. A man inexplicably exited his house with a gun. Elizabeth and Butch did not have a chance. After they were so heartlessly murdered, the future for their families was altered forever.

We ... Louise Butler, Elizabeth's mother, Peter Wu, Elizabeth's partner, and Alexis Butler, Elizabeth's sister... have just reached the one-month anniversary of Elizabeth's death, and we miss her terribly. Each day is filled with both tears and moments of deep sadness. Yet almost every day of the past month has also included moments of awe and amazement at the love and honor paid to Elizabeth's memory. We have so many people to thank from those that we know well to those that are complete strangers. We think of our relationships with the people around us as concentric circles, like the ever-widening circles that radiate out from a stone dropped in a pool of water. We have been helped by so many in so many ways that any attempt to thank everyone is doomed to failure, but here is our best attempt to say that we are humbled and touched by the thousands of people who told us that Elizabeth's life meant something.

First, we would like to thank Stellan and Joaquin Wu, Elizabeth's sons, for keeping us healthy. These young boys, age 2 and 5, have shown us what is really important: three good meals a day, sleep each night, and lots of playing. Sometimes playing is the real work of life. Second, we would like to thank our immediate neighbors and extended families who arrived within days of Elizabeth's death to hug us, remember with us, and cry with us. At these times, family and neighbors are so important. Third, we would like to thank the Santa Cruz Police Department who became like sisters and brothers to us. They protected us, advised us, shepherded us, and anticipated our every need. Specifically, we would like to acknowledge the help of Officer Karina Ceceña, our liaison with the SCPD. So many police officers met with us daily and so many did superhuman tasks unseen by us. The officers we got to know best were officers Joe Hernandez, Saul Rodriguez, Trevor Kendall, Wendy Bynes and David Perry. In addition, Police Chief Kevin Vogel met with us several times to talk about the details of Elizabeth's death. Both Chief Vogel along with Deputy Police Chief Rick Martinez gave us much support and attention. Thank you to the many SCPD police officers who came forward and told us specific stories about Elizabeth's time at her job. They made us laugh and also showed us how much they cared and remembered.

On March 7th, we left early in the morning in an amazing procession of vehicles headed north on Highway 17th to the HP Pavilion in San Jose where thousands of members of the public and law enforcement agencies from far and wide celebrated the lives of the two fallen officers from Santa Cruz. We had barely reached the end of our driveway when our tears started falling at the sight of neighbors

holding huge banners celebrating Elizabeth. As we traveled through the streets of Santa Cruz, the sight of hundreds of citizens with their hands over their hearts touched us deeply. At every overpass over Highway 17, firemen stood on fire trucks saluting Elizabeth and Butch. Community members and law enforcement officers

together crowded every intersection till we reached our destination. The acknowledgement of Elizabeth's and Butch's lives by dignitaries, friends, and officers helped us know that these two dedicated people would not simply cease to exist. Their lives and the sacrifice that they made would be recognized. They meant so much to us, and they also meant so much to others.

Since the service in San Jose, there have been so many people who have befriended us. Special thanks goes to Santa Cruz Memorial, the Santa Cruz Fire Department, the Santa Cruz Deputy Sheriffs, the California Highway Patrol, the Santa Cruz Metro, Holy Cross Catholic Church, Westside Parent Education Nursery School, Musical Me, Scotts Valley Market, Otoro Sushi Restaurant in Scotts Valley, and hundreds of people who have sent us cards, scholarship funds, and gifts. Throughout the last month, the Santa Cruz Police Department have continued to assist us in putting our lives back together.

Our hope is to do more than survive. We want to raise two young boys to be honorable citizens like their mother. We, Elizabeth's mother, partner, sons, and sister, want to become strong enough to someday give something back to this incredible community, a community that helped us so much when we were suffering. We want to put our lives back together to become people that Elizabeth would admire, the kind of people who make Santa Cruz and the cities around Santa Cruz such wonderful places to live. While everyone may experience sadness and possibly tragedy at some point in their lives, we have the special honor of having received a rare gift from you the community. We have glimpsed in the outpouring of support from the people of Santa Cruz and surrounding cities that goodness will prevail and small acts of love will redeem our aching hearts.

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