

Dear MEA family,

As many of you have heard, on Friday, August 13, 2010, the City Attorney's Office lost a very special coworker, legal secretary, City employee, fellow union member, friend, and a very very devoted mother to her son.

I sat right next to Avitha Rafael, and after a couple months of getting to know each other (she was very private) we ended up talking every day about life's obstacles, good and bad. We compared stories and talked about growing up in San Diego. Our favorite topic of discussion was our sons. Her life revolved around her son.

For reasons nobody will ever know, the father of their 10-year-old son drove to Avitha's house early in the morning, stabbed her to death, and then drove off to be found later that night, dead from a gunshot wound. Their son called 9-1-1 after witnessing this horrific event. While this story is enough to shock anybody who hears it, it is most devastating for her parents, her brother, her entire family, her boyfriend, her friends, her coworkers, and mostly, her son.

I am having a hard enough time getting through this myself so I can't imagine what could be going through a 10-year-old's mind. I wanted to do something proactive that will help Damien, the son that Avitha loved so much, and also bring the community together to help lift the spirits of the family and show our support. Avitha loved the beach and I grew up there, so I thought of having a walk on the beach, in Pacific Beach, in honor of her life.

While the flyer does not state how long the walk is or where we're going, the walk is as long or short as the walker would like it to be. The course will be from the south side of Crystal Pier to the South Mission jetty and back. I am guessing this is approximately three miles. For those who don't want to walk as far, you are welcome to walk under the pier and walk north to Tourmaline beach. That walk may be about a mile and a half. Or, you might decide not to walk at all, but just show up for support.

I hope you are able to join us on October 2 for the Avitha Rafael Memorial Walk. The support will mean a lot to Damien and his family and to Avitha, who was one of us.

I would like to thank MEA for all their support and the hours they have spent helping me organize this event.

Blessings to all,

*Alina Taylor*