

5. Personal testimony

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To be delivered in **English**

Today is an anniversary for me. 12 years ago today, (the Friday before the American 4th of July holiday), my husband Charlie and I traveled across the country from California to New York City, to identify and claim the body of our son Matthew. Matthew, who was 21 years old, had been shot dead by young teenage robbers, wielding a firearm that had likely been bought in the south of the USA, in one of the states where guns are easy to obtain because of permissive gun laws. Sadly, a parent claiming the bullet-riddled body of their loved one is a daily scenario in cities across the world.

I am proud that my country has committed itself to implementing the UN Programme of Action. However, it is important for me to tell you that most of the positions taken so far by the U.S. at this conference do not represent the values *of* my family nor do they represent the values and opinions *of* the majority *of* the citizens *of* the United States. Most Americans would support common sense agreements and regulations of small arms to save the lives of children and young people around the globe and at home.

I want to thank each and every one of you for the work you have done in your own country and for your diligence at this conference.

Something new has happened in my life since I addressed this Conference in 2001. We have a precious 2 year old granddaughter, Kathryn Ann.

One day I will have to tell Kathryn Ann about her Uncle Matthew and what happened to him. I want to tell her about the love we had for this wonderful bright and loving young man. And I want to tell her about this conference of people who came from all over the world to New York, to make a difference in assuring that the lives of our young people around the globe will live to know the joy of being a grandparent.

All of us in this room are aware of the tragic stories that happen because of the proliferation of small arms and their diversion into the illicit market - 1000 deaths a day. Because we share this knowledge, I ask: is there not a moral obligation imposed upon each of us, to do all we can do to prevent small arm deaths?

This life-saving conference began five years ago. We now need to review and measure our progress and then we **MUST** continue, for **OUR WORK IS NOT DONE!** Please provide the mechanisms in this forum to keep addressing such critical issues as development, human rights, children, gender and survivor issues.

New, innovative and exciting technologies are surely on the horizon that will greatly help to curb the illicit trafficking, and these must be incorporated.

I say we owe it to Kathryn Ann and to all our children to continue our work.

It is my love for Matthew, and my hope for Kathryn Ann to live in a safer world, that emboldens me to plead with you to carry on with the UN Small Arms process until all lives are safe from small arms violence.

As I tell Kathryn about Matthew, it is with great hope that I will tell her that the whole world came together at the United Nations and did their very best to ensure that another uncle or loved one would not die such a death. And we were successful.

Thank you.