



## Vigil Guide: 10 Years After Sandy Hook

# Empty Chairs: 10 Years After Sandy Hook

Add Event Date & Time Here

Add Location Here



A decade ago, the massacre at Sandy Hook took the lives of 20 children and six educators. Millions joined together to demand our leaders #EndGunViolence. While we've made progress, there will be too many empty chairs at the table this holiday season: 15,000 empty seats in Pennsylvania.

We invite you to join CeaseFirePA Education Fund, survivors, and partners across the Commonwealth as we remember those lost over the last decade and take the next steps to ensure there is not another #EmptySeat. We will honor **ALL** victims as we push to reduce gun deaths.

## OVERVIEW

[Across the country](#), allies are coming together to hold remembrances and events. In Pennsylvania, we are planning a series of events for 10 years of loss since Sandy Hook. These events are critical to helping survivors heal and honor those we've lost by demanding not another person be lost to gun violence.

This year's theme in Pennsylvania is #EmptyChairs. We will through vigils and visuals remind the world that too many people were taken from us too soon. Our efforts will acknowledge without action to #EndGunViolence, more people will have an empty chair around their holiday table in 2023.

There are so many allies working to end this crisis. We encourage you to work with partners in your area to plan an event – or connect with those already in the process. [You can find a complete list here](#). The below events are already planned, and others are in process:

- 1. Allegheny County (North Hills):** Thurs, Dec 1st, 7:00 PM, at St. Paul's United Methodist Church. Sign-up page [HERE](#). Graphic [HERE](#). Contact: [josh.fleitman@ceasefirepa.org](mailto:josh.fleitman@ceasefirepa.org).
- 2. Chester County:** Sat, Dec 10th, 2:00 PM, at Unitarian Congregation of West Chester. Sign-up page [HERE](#). Graphic [HERE](#). Contact: [carol@ceasefirepa.org](mailto:carol@ceasefirepa.org).
- 3. Delaware County:** Wed, Dec 7th, 7:00 PM, at Reformation Lutheran Church. Sign-up page [HERE](#). Graphic [HERE](#). Contact: [carol@ceasefirepa.org](mailto:carol@ceasefirepa.org).
- 4. Erie:** Thurs, Dec 8th, 7:00 PM, at Temple Anshe Hessed. Sign-up page [HERE](#). Graphic [HERE](#). Contact: [josh.fleitman@ceasefirepa.org](mailto:josh.fleitman@ceasefirepa.org).
- 5. Montgomery County:** Wed, Dec 14th, 7:30 PM, at Congregation Beth Am Israel. Sign-up page [HERE](#). Graphic [HERE](#). Contact: [carol@ceasefirepa.org](mailto:carol@ceasefirepa.org).
- 6. Philadelphia:** Wed, Dec 14th, 5:30 PM, at Broad Street Ministry. Sign-up page [HERE](#). Graphic [HERE](#). Contact [Roz@ceasefirepa.org](mailto:Roz@ceasefirepa.org) for more info.
- 7. Pittsburgh:** Thurs, Dec 15th, 7:00 PM, at Bidwell Presbyterian Church. Sign-up page [HERE](#). Graphic [HERE](#). Contact: [Beth@ceasefirepa.org](mailto:Beth@ceasefirepa.org).

# HOW TO ORGANIZE

If there isn't an event in your area, you can help plan your own. [You can submit information regarding your vigil here](#). We will set up an RSVP page to help you organize and recruit people, including CeaseFirePA members. We'll also add to the [national vigil website coordinated by our partner](#), Newtown Action Alliance.

## STEP 1: Choose a location, date and time

- *Date:* December 14th, the anniversary of Sandy Hook, is ideal but anytime in December before the holidays can work.
- *Location:* Vigils are commonly held in places of worship, outdoors in peaceful areas, or in the center of a community. Find a place easy for everyone to access through public transportation or driving (with parking). Ensure it is accessible for everyone including those with ambulatory restrictions. And remember, the weather may be bad so think about a backup location if you plan it outdoors.
- *Time:* If it's on a weekday, consider holding it around lunch or in the evening to make it easier for everyone to attend.

## STEP 2: Planning the Event

Once you have a date and time, you need to plan the agenda for the event. Key things to consider:

- *Master of Ceremonies:* Who will be the primary speaker that day, helping to coordinate the vigil and ensure it runs smoothly? It should be someone from your organization at ease talking in front of a crowd.
- *Inviting Family Members Directly Impacted by Gun Violence:* You should include survivors or family members of people lost to gun violence in your event. Not everyone will want to share their story so offer them a time to speak, but accept if they only want to attend.
- *Local Officials & Allies:* Think about inviting local officials and allies to attend the event and potentially speak. This can include elected officials, faith leaders, business leaders, doctors, nurses, and other partners.

- *Agenda*: On the agenda, you'll want to sketch out times for each speaker. Keep people focused and short especially if you end with a long agenda and think about pausing between speakers to share names of those lost over the last ten years.

### **STEP 3: Logistics**

We strongly encourage you to work with local partners and chapters. Once you add it to our list, we'll also reach out to help connect you with allies and survivors in the region. If it is a vigil, you'll need to supply candles and set up visuals for the event.

- *Sound System*: Depending on the venue, you may need to get a sound system or ensure you can use theirs.
- *Visuals*: In addition to the candles, we plan to setup dinner tables to remember those we've lost. This will be symbolic and should include an empty table with 5 6 place settings. You can bring some food to make it look inviting. One chair should be empty except for images of those we've lost.
- *Ordering Electric Candles*: Make sure to order the candles at least two weeks before the event to ensure they are delivered.
- *Materials*: CeaseFirePA staff can provide content including information about gun violence, sign in sheets, petitions and other content to help share at your vigil. Expect information on this 2 weeks before your event.

### **STEP 4: Getting the Word Out**

Now it's time to spread the word. There are a number of ways to spread the word.

- Create a customizable social media image. You can find one we created here that can be [edited with local images, time, date and other language](#).
- Send out an email: Invite friends, family, and partners in the area to join your vigil. You can find sample language [here](#). Make sure to include a link to your vigil once you receive it.
- Contact relevant community and religious groups. Here are some people think about:
  - Religious institutions including churches, mosques, and synagogues.

- Community groups including local survivor groups, local civic organizations such as the Rotary Club and other partners.
- Public health allies at the local hospital, doctors you know or other medical professionals.
- Word of mouth is also an important and valuable source of contact. Tell as many people as you can about the upcoming vigil or remembrance event, and ask them to tell anyone they know who might be interested in attending.
- Press Content: COMING SOON

MORE CONTENT COMING SOON INCLUDING SAMPLE MEDIA CONTENT,  
SUGGESTED AGENDA AND REMARKS.