

**THERESA MATTHEWS, Wisconsin
Mother of Ishmal Matthews,
murdered in Wisconsin in 2002**

Theresa Matthews's 23-year-old son was shot and killed in Milwaukee in 2002. The case remains unsolved.

Theresa has been active in efforts to oppose gun violence in Wisconsin, and in 2004 she participated in a bell-ringing ceremony at the state capitol commemorating victims of homicide. She is the organizer of a local event called Day of Peace, held each year on Ishmal's birthday, in which members of the community, homicide detectives, and members of the fire department and the sheriff's department come together to enjoy a peaceful day in memory of homicide victims. Through the organization The Children Are Crying, Theresa has also made a scholarship in Ishmal's name available to students at his former high school.

"A lot of people thought that I would want the person who did this terrible thing to my son to be executed, but that's not what I want. We keep our hope that the person will be found and held accountable, but who are we to say a life for a life? That's not what Ishmal would want. We don't need the death penalty in Wisconsin. We have enough violence, and I don't believe the death penalty would have prevented my son's murder. To me the death penalty is just legalized murder, and I'm not for that."



Theresa Matthews at the bell-ringing ceremony at the Wisconsin State Capitol