



JOSALEE THRIFT REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

Lisa Keyworth and Barbara Keidel hold signs for missing persons near Library Park in Waterbury on Saturday. A rally was part of the Road to Remember tour hosted by the Cue Center for Missing Persons. The homicide of Keyworth's granddaughter Jessica remains unsolved after two years.

Rally ensures missing are not forgotten

BY BRYNN MANDEL
REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

National tour makes local stop

WATERBURY — All Beth Profeta wants to do is bury her mother.

But 22 years after Profeta's mom, Mary Badaracco, vanished from her Sherman home, there is still no body. No one has been held accountable for her disappearance, reclassified by

police as a homicide in 1990.

"I'm kind of stuck," said Profeta. "I would just like to bury her."

The quest for answers is what drew a crowd whose numbers were small but whose stories were powerful Saturday afternoon to a rally in Library Park. There,

relatives of homicide victims mingled with families whose loved ones disappeared in an effort to bring renewed attention to their cases.

Saturday's event was part of the North Carolina-based nonprofit CUE Center for Missing Persons Road to Remember

Tour, which travels to 16 eastern states over the next week. In each, organizer Monica Caison raises awareness of cold cases, with the aim of generating renewed leads and interest. The first national tour of Caison's, in 2004, featured 33 cases. Five of those have since been solved, she said.

See RALLY, Page 2B

RALLY: Relatives gather to push action

Continued from 1J

In Connecticut, the organization chose to highlight the case of Billy Smolinski Jr., a Waterbury tow truck driver who vanished two years ago this August. His family puzzles over what happened to him and feels that it must have been something bad. Smolinski's mother, Janice, of Cheshire, insisted that the unsolved strangulation two years ago in Waterbury of her friend's granddaughter, 16-year-old Jessica Keyworth, also be a focus of the event.

As word spread, other families whose lives have been upended by violence and mystery started calling. So on Saturday, a handful of folding tables were strewn with reward posters for cases from as far away as New Jersey and Albany. On one table sat lollipops and Kleenex packages with stickers attached that noted Smolinski's disappearance and Web site, justice4billy.com. On another table, a dog-shaped planter with pink flowers hovered over fliers that read: "On Feb. 18, 2005 Sandra Ramos-Cuadrado was found stabbed to death in her Naugatuck apartment." No ar-

rests have been made in that case, which Naugatuck police continue to investigate.

"I feel like she doesn't even exist," said Ramos-Cuadrado's longtime friend, Denise Ramos of Waterbury. "I feel like she's been swept under the carpet and everything is at a standstill and it's not fair."

Jim Viola drove from Bogota, New Jersey, to spread word of his epileptic wife's disappearance more than five years ago. Wearing a T-shirt with a picture of his wife, Patricia, and the words "STILL MISSING," Viola explained the frustration of not knowing what happened — be it an abduction, medical issue or something else.

"You never stop thinking about it," said the father of two. "We're still trying. By no means am I ready to give up. That's why I'm here."

Two decades after her mother vanished, Profeta feels similarly.

"In a perfect world, no one would have to go through this," she said, holding a list of state children whose abductions have made news. "I just think it's sad. I don't forget these people, and neither should Connecticut."