

Ceremony at Garden of Peace recalls victims

TONY LEE - SEPTEMBER 19, 2008 - BOSTON METRO

BOSTON. When Kim Odom began to address a crowd gathered at the Garden of Peace Thursday evening, she made a point of saying it was her first time at the annual ceremony to honor homicide victims.

While the tragic death of her young son - caught in crossfire while walking through his Dorchester neighborhood last October - was what brought her here, she felt fortunate to be part of "a place of such serenity and comfort."

"I am a survivor," said Odom, whose son, Steven, was just 13 at the time of the killing. "We have realized that in our lives we were touched by an angel."

Forty-six new stones were commemorated in the Garden Thursday, representing 46 more homicide victims with Massachusetts connections. None of the families left behind would choose to go through the pain of losing a loved one, but none, too, seem willing to go on without the support of this growing garden.

"Even though we are not blood related, we are all family," said Melissa Gauthier, whose father was fatally shot in 2002. "You are not in this alone."

There are now 565 homicide victims memorialized in the Garden, which began offering solace in 2004.