



Another victim of hate

Editorial – December 10, 2008

In July, Luis Ramirez was beaten to death by a gang in Shenandoah, Pennsylvania. In August, a Staten Island man rammed his vehicle into the storefronts of three Latino merchants. Last month, a gang hunted and stabbed Marcelo Lucero to death in Patchogue, Long Island.

This list of hate attacks has now grown with the brutal beating of yet another Latino immigrant.

Jose Sucuzhanay, a Bushwick business owner, was with his brother Romel on Sunday when he was beaten by a group of men using a bat. He was reportedly declared brain dead yesterday. Romel had come from Ecuador to visit his brother, not bury him.

Witnesses heard the cowardly attackers shout anti-gay and anti-Hispanic slurs at the brothers, according to police. They mistook Jose and Romel cozing up in the extreme cold as a sign that they were gay.

This hate and violence is anything but isolated. In 2005, the FBI documented more than 1,200 hate crimes against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) persons. But this is a vast undercount, according to the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

On top of inaccurate data tracking, hate crimes overall are under-reported. Undocumented immigrants are the least likely of all victims to report these crimes.

Hate does not emerge in a vacuum. With a hostile anti-immigrant campaign targeting Latinos, the number of hate crimes against Hispanics has increased by a shocking 40 percent since 2003. More than 62 percent of crimes motivated by bias against ethnicity or national origin are committed against Hispanics.

Suczhanay's attackers must be brought to justice. We commend the leaders who quickly denounced the hateful attack. We also urge them to remain relentless in drawing attention to the trend of hate and the attitudes and fear-mongering giving rise to it.