

We must teach our children about gun violence

Written by Deseria Galloway
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As parents we teach our children not to speak to strangers, to look both ways before crossing the street, not to use drugs and other common sense practices. But we don't teach them how to avoid being injured or killed by gun violence.

Homicide is the leading cause of death for African American males 15 to 24 years of age. Ninety percent of these young boys/men are killed with firearms. And gun violence is popping up all across the Twin Cities. Recently, a 14-year-old boy from Hastings Middle School who brought a .22 caliber loaded handgun to school; a 16-year-old Red Lake Senior High boy killed his family and proceeded to the high school to open fire and killed and injured 21 persons before turning the gun on himself. Two 17-year-old Somali boys shot three persons in a botched robbery. Minneapolis is not immune to this national epidemic of gun violence. Our youth are risking their lives, endangering others and facing years of incarceration, paralyzing injuries and violent death.

In answer to the growing epidemic of gun violence, The Twin Cities Anti-Violence Coalition and its many partners --Parents of Murdered Children, Alternative to Violence, Citizens for Safer MN, Minneapolis Department of Health & Family Support, African American Men Project, Acme & Smith Foundries, Shiloh Temple International Ministries, Gospel Temple COGIC, Oasis of Love, National Association of Black Social Workers and others have committed to hosting several Anti-Violence Weekend Events. Our County Attorney Michael Freeman, along with many other dignitaries, are in total support of our anti-violence efforts.

It has been determined that lack of education contributes to the increase in youth crime. There is also a strong correlation between bullying and criminal behavior. Thus, our coalition will focus on awareness on youth violence. We recognize that long term solutions lie in a multi-pronged, multi-faceted approach to poverty, drugs and lack of opportunities. However, holding meaningful activities in the communities most impacted by gun violence is just one way to address the youth violence.

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