

## **Sowers of Justice Network**



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Over 100 Murders in Louisville so far this year!

The Sowers of Justice Network continues to address the complex consequences and tragedies of gun violence in our city. In the Fall of 2015, we hosted a “Sowing a Non Violent City” conference and continued community actions, conversations and collaborative dialogue through the spring and summer of 2016. We continue to believe that it is of vital importance to show that people of faith in our city can and do support changing the culture of gun violence and continue to pursue a broad-based presence to engage the public on this topic.

***We convened conversations. We created art. We lobbied. We listened. We recorded stories of survivors. We marched. We wrote letters to the editor. We attended vigils. We partnered with other Civic and Faith groups. We prayed.***

In May, we joined with others to create an alternative voice to the 2016 National Rifle Association convention in Louisville and to the subject of gun violence in general.

Our Working Group on Gun Violence met on 7-24-16 at St. Williams Church to identify solutions. Please see the Attached Summary

# **Sowing a Non Violent City Gun Violence Mtg. July 24, 2016 Summary and Blueprint for Change**

## *What does it take to end gun violence in Louisville, Kentucky?*

### **Understanding.**

- Acceptance, inclusive and intentional
- Compassion, peace and non violence should overgrow violence.
- Need to sow a non violent city.
- Find out why people get into violence.
- Embrace diversity.

### **Legislation**

- Voters have to turn out the federal and state legislatures and get better laws.
- Common sense gun laws.
- Less availability of hand guns
- Allow ATF to keep electronic records.
- Stop the legislative control by the NRA and gun lobbies.
- Ban mass assault weapons.
- Allow local laws
- Harsher penalties for gun exchanges

### **Culture change.**

- Stop blaming others. Guns not solution.
- Stop the fear to stop the shootings.
- Need to be serious about being a compassionate city
- Need more faith communities take a stand for non violence.
- Speak out against the militaristic imperialism of nation that exalts violence.
- Breakdown the culture of violence.
- Watch language
- Spiritual peace.

### **System Changes**

- No justice, no peace.
- Need to look at systems and the intersection of all the issues.
- Collective willingness to dismantle system of oppression
- Better Police training on de-escalation and confronting people with mental health issues
- More opportunity for input from people in poverty and oppressed.
- Better education for all

## **Address Root Causes**

- Economic inequity issues
- Early trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences
- Racial Justice: Remove the cloak of invisibility of black people in this community.
- Start with the youth. Stop glorifying violence and toughness.
- Address anger management. Start at a young age.
- Invest in early childhood
- Teach conflict resolution
- Options for People leaving prison

## **Actions We Can Take**

- Mourn people shot as we do police. Vigils, marches
- Gather key players together
- Take time to engage folks on the street
- Display our nonviolence.
- Learn to listen to each other again. Return civility.
- Separate the conversation between those who use for harm and those who use responsibly.
- Need a comprehensive plan to address all aspects.
- More mental health and treatment options
- School conversations about trauma
- “Network of Sorrow” for kids
- Need good research and valid statistics: Numbers, messaging and visibility
- Smart guns
- Outreach and jobs to former felons
- Network and Support each other’s events
- Continue to keep the issue in front of the media
- Educate ourselves and others through books, films etc.

## **Who else needs to be part of this conversation?**

- Wealthy progressives are missing in action.
- Need to have people of power and privilege stand up.
- Families and survivors of gun violence
- Physicians, EMT’s, social workers
- Teachers, school counselors, JCTA
- Mental Health and addiction services
- Police, other law enforcement
- Metro Council
- Small business
- Black leaders, Pastors, NAACP
- Young People and youth leaders
- One Love Louisville
- Labor Unions

- Center for Women and families
- Urban League

### **Who are Community Partners in Addressing Gun Violence?**

- Mom's Demand Action
- Peace Education
- Little hands, Little feet program with Luther Brown.
- Street Peace with Dr. Eddie Woods
- Pivot to Peace to address shooting victims and provide options for change.
- First Unitarian: Black lives matter banner and once a month vigils.
- LSURJ
- Hands Across Louisville
- LMPD and community conversations
- Arms of Compassion
- St. Williams Mission Behind Bars
- One Love Louisville
- Hood to Hood
- Festival of Faith
- Forward radio
- Black Lives Matter
- Hope to Hope

### **What can Sowers of Justice Network do to Address Gun Violence?**

- Continue to pull people together to address the issue.
- Promote Non-Violence
- Continue to convene two or three times per year.
- Be a collecting calendar.
- Pay attention to MOM's legislative agenda
- Youth summit.
- Faith leader statements from various groups.
- Promote Understanding race and privilege.
- Continue collaborative approach; connecting and networking
- Support partner efforts