AGENDA

1. Call to Order

2. Introductions & Expectations

3. Discussion on CoChair

4. Meeting Schedule & Timeline

5. Mission & Vision Statements
   Mission Statement
   Number of Recommendations

6. Topics for Discussion
   a. Exercise: Strengths - Weaknesses - Opportunities - Challenges (SWOC)
   b. Inventory
   c. Information Gathering
   d. Additional Topics

7. Action Items

8. Public Comment

9/ Adjourn
TASK FORCE ON SAFETY AND CRIME REDUCTION

Meeting Notice

February 21, 2019
5:00 p.m.

TO: Task Force on Safety and Crime Reduction Subcommittee Members

Tom Geismer  Timothy Sloan
Phyllis Hall    Shamika Wright
Alicia Sitren  Mia Allen

FROM: Ellen Glasser, Chair

SUBJECT: 20190301 Meeting Notice Task Force on Safety and Crime Reduction Subcommittee on Family Engagement

Notice is hereby given that the Task Force on Safety and Crime Reduction Subcommittee on Family Engagement will meet Friday, March 1, 2019 from 9:00 AM – 10:00 AM. The meeting will be held in Conference Room A, 117 W. Duval St., 4th Floor, City Hall - St. James Building. For additional information, please contact Crystal Shemwell at cschemwell@coj.net or (904) 630-1404.

When attending Task Force meetings, members are to park in the parking garage located on the corner of Main and Duval Street (Library Garage) to receive free parking. Please see the Legislative Assistant for parking validation.

Pursuant to the American with Disabilities Act, accommodations for persons with disabilities are available upon request. Please allow 1-2 business days notification to process; last minute requests will be accepted, but may not be possible to fulfill. Please contact Disabled Services Division at: V(904) 630-4940, TTY-(904) 630-4933, or email your request to KLMcDan@coj.net.

CLB/cs
cc:    Cheryl Brown, Council Director
       Carol Owens, Chief of Legislative Services
       Jeff Clements, Chief of Research
       File
cityc@coj.net
Healthy Families Jacksonville is a free, voluntary, early learning and family support program designed to help parents be the best they can be, and to help children grow and develop during the most crucial first years of life. Services are provided to families right in their homes. Trained professional support workers visit pregnant and new moms to provide knowledge and support in several areas:

- Pregnancy and wellness (pre- and postnatal)
- Breastfeeding
- Parenting skills
- Parent-Child interaction
- Child development
- Screenings
- Importance of bonding and attachment
Staff help increase parents' confidence in parenting, reduce stress and teach about financial management and community resources. Healthy Families Jacksonville is a convenient way to improve the health and well-being of mothers, infants and young children of Duval County.

These support services are provided by The Northeast Florida Healthy Start Coalition Inc. and the Kids Hope Alliance, and begin prenatally or within three months of the birth of the child. Families who live in the following zip codes may be eligible to receive these services: 32202, 32204, 32205, 32206, 32207, 32208, 32209, 32210, 32211, 32216, 32217, 32218, 32219, 32220, 32221, 32226, 32233, 32244, 32246, 32250, 32254, 32256, 32257, 32277. To give your baby a positive start or to learn more about Healthy Families Jacksonville contact Mary Nash at the Kids Hope Alliance at (904) 630-7057. Or, visit the Healthy Families Florida website to learn about Healthy Families programs throughout the state.

Special Considerations

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you require an accommodation to participate in any of our activities, programs or services, please contact Mary Nash at (904)630-7057 or mnash@coj.net

711 for Telecommunications Relay Services

The Federal Communications Commission has adopted use of the 711 dialing code for access to Telecommunications Relay Services (TRS). TRS permits persons with a hearing or speech disability to use the telephone system via a text telephone (TTY) or other device to call persons with or without such disabilities. For more information about the various types of TRS, see the FCC's consumer guide, or visit the website of our Disability Rights Office (DRO).

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Copyright 2018 Kids Hope Alliance
1095 A. Philip Randolph Blvd, Jacksonville, Florida 32206 (904)630-3647

Click to Learn More About The Wallace Foundation
New Town Success Zone

The Mission: to provide a place-based continuum of services from prenatal to college, the military or some form of post secondary training for the children and their families living in the neighborhood.

In April 2007, Mayor John Peyton, members of the Jacksonville Children’s Commission board and staff, and other community leaders traveled to Harlem, New York to learn more about the Harlem Children’s Zone® (HCZ), and its HCZ Project. The HCZ Project is a “multi-year comprehensive community building initiative of the Harlem Children’s Zone®.” It assists parents and caregivers, business leaders, professionals, residents, teachers and other stakeholders in creating a safe environment and pipeline to success for children who reside in a 97-block area of Central Harlem (www.hcz.org).

Under the leadership of the Jacksonville Children’s Commission, a Steering Committee was formed to help develop a neighborhood project in Jacksonville that will use the strategies behind the success of the Harlem Children’s Zone in a unique and specific way that will reflect Jacksonville’s unique cultural, geographic and economic character. While the scale of the Harlem Children’s Zone and its ability to raise significant funding from the community around it are nearly impossible to replicate in Jacksonville, this project would use the combined strategies of powerfully linking and rigorously evaluating key services for children to positively change child outcomes.

The New Town Success Zone continues to be a valued partner and funded program provider of the Kids Hope Alliance.
Guiding Stars of Duval & Quality Child Care

What is Quality?

Personal ideas about quality child care differ greatly in today's society. Our very own values, beliefs, cultures, backgrounds, and environments contribute to how we determine what quality looks like.

Studies show that these particular areas have positive impacts on a child's development:

- Highly-Skilled Staff
- Small Class Sizes
- Language-Rich Environments
- Age-Appropriate Curriculum and Stimulating Material
- A Safe Physical Environment

What is Guiding Stars of Duval and How Does it Measure Quality?

Guiding Stars of Duval (http://www.elcdual.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/guiding_stars_brochurev2.pdf) is THE quality rating improvement system for child care providers in Duval County. Both, child care centers and family child care homes can volunteer to be a part of this program. Participants in Guiding Stars commit to not only meeting the basic requirements for licensing set by the State of Florida, but they also agree to hold themselves accountable to higher standards by providing quality education and by helping children prepare for school.

Through participation in Guiding Stars, child care programs are measured on important indicators and standards, such as teacher education and training, teacher-child interactions, child screenings, and curriculum. Ratings range from 1 star to 5 stars. The chart below explains what each level represents.

Free Child Care Resource and Referral

Free Child Care Resource and Referral to all families seeking information on quality child care and education programs in Duval County.

Call (904) 206-2044

Monday-Thursday from 7 am-6:00 pm or on Fridays from 7:00 am-12:00 pm

Click Here for a List of Current GUIDING STARS PARTICIPANTS

What Should I Look for in a Child Care Provider?

Choosing a child care provider for your family is one of the most important decisions you will ever make as a parent. Therefore, the link below contains a quality checklist to help guide you in your decision-making process.

Since the Department of Children and Families is charged with monitoring licensed child care centers, it is also important to review their DCF record before making a decision. Click on the link below to check past inspection reports.

**Quality Checklist**

**Inspection Reports**
(http://cares.myflfamilies.com/PublicSearch)

Where Can I Find a List of Child Care Providers that Contract with the Early Learning Coalition of Duval?

**Child Care Database**
(http://www.elcduval.org/child-care-provider-database/)

Faith-based Licensed Exempt Child Care Centers: The Department of Children and Families (DCF) DOES NOT have to monitor these providers. If they have School Readiness children, DCF does conduct monitoring or the Center must provide proof they are monitored by their faith-based affiliated agency.

Licensed & Accredited Child Care Centers & Private Schools: DCF monitors these providers and issues their licenses. A Florida recognized accrediting agency must issue any accreditation.

Licensed & Accredited Family Child Care Homes: DCF monitors and issues all licenses to these providers. A Florida recognized accrediting agency must also issue any accreditation. The provider can have no more than 15 children in their care.

Licensed Child Care Centers & Private Schools: DCF monitors these providers and issues their licenses.

Licensed Family Child Care Homes: DCF monitors these providers and issues their licenses. The provider can have no more than 15 children in their care.

You can also click on the box above to see all child care options.

What if the child care workers tell me my child is aggressive?
(http://www.elcduval.org/faq/childcare)

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ELC Duval programs are funded in part or made possible by:
Florida's Office of Early Learning (https://familyservices.floridaearylearning.com/) | United Way of Northeast Florida | City of Jacksonville

(https://familyservices.floridaearylearning.com/)
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<td>32201</td>
<td>507-699-6473</td>
<td>ANGIE REESE</td>
<td><a href="mailto:angie.reese@adams.com">angie.reese@adams.com</a></td>
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<td>32204</td>
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<td>1423 E. 89TH ST</td>
<td>32201</td>
<td>507-379-7216</td>
<td>LAKESHA McDOUGLAS</td>
<td><a href="mailto:lakeshamcdouglass@gmail.com">lakeshamcdouglass@gmail.com</a></td>
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<td><a href="mailto:dave.jones@bellsouth.net">dave.jones@bellsouth.net</a></td>
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<td>461 FREDERICK DALE BLVD NORTH</td>
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<td>RONNIE JONES</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ronnies@email.com">ronnies@email.com</a></td>
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<td>STEPHANIE GOAD</td>
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<td>507-400-0031</td>
<td>RONNEE WADDLE</td>
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<td>5724 DEVONSHIRE BLVD</td>
<td>32201</td>
<td>507-675-8003</td>
<td>JAYNE WRIGHT</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jaynewright@bellsouth.net">jaynewright@bellsouth.net</a></td>
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Parent & Family Resources


Looking for VPK information? ([http://www.elcduval.org/?page_id=105](http://www.elcduval.org/?page_id=105))

Need help paying for child care? ([http://www.elcduval.org/?page_id=586](http://www.elcduval.org/?page_id=586))

Need help choosing a quality child care provider? ([http://www.elcduval.org/?page_id=186](http://www.elcduval.org/?page_id=186))


Looking for more ways to enhance your child’s education? ([http://www.elcduval.org/?page_id=594](http://www.elcduval.org/?page_id=594))

Encourage learning before birth! ([http://www.elcduval.org/?page_id=597](http://www.elcduval.org/?page_id=597))

Is your child’s development on track? ([http://www.elcduval.org/?page_id=599](http://www.elcduval.org/?page_id=599))

What should your child learn? ([http://www.elcduval.org/?page_id=601](http://www.elcduval.org/?page_id=601))

Need special services for your child? ([http://www.elcduval.org/?page_id=603](http://www.elcduval.org/?page_id=603))

Need info on other financial help? ([http://www.elcduval.org/?page_id=605](http://www.elcduval.org/?page_id=605))

Need to find a doctor? ([http://www.elcduval.org/?page_id=607](http://www.elcduval.org/?page_id=607))

Keep your child healthy and safe! ([http://www.elcduval.org/?page_id=615](http://www.elcduval.org/?page_id=615))

After School Information ([http://jakskids.org/afterschool-summer/](http://jakskids.org/afterschool-summer/))


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Caring4OurKids ([http://caring4ourkids.com/](http://caring4ourkids.com/))


Parents are also encouraged to contact the [UNITED WAY OF NE FLORIDA’S 2-1-1 PROGRAM](http://www.uwnefl.org/) for more community resources.
Get a FREE developmental or behavioral screening for your child. Call:

Success By 6

What is Success by 6?

Success By 6 is a program of the United Way of Northeast Florida and is operated in Jacksonville by ELC of Duval.

Success By 6 offers 2-year scholarships to a 4 or 5 star center that has signed a contract to partner with the Success By 6 Program.

Click here for a list of partnering Success By 6 Centers and Schools.

ELC of Duval determines "Star Ratings."

"GUIDING STARS" CENTERS.

Eligible children must be 3 on or before September 1st of the program year. To be eligible, families must be between 120-200% of the Federal Poverty Level.

How do I apply for Success by 6?

Your child must turn 3 before September 1st of this program year.

You must work at least 20 hrs per week and/or enrolled in school full time.

Families need to apply through the FAMILY PORTAL.

If you need help applying or have questions, contact Tinesha Byrd at 904-208-2044 x 285 or by email at tbyrd@elcduval.org.

Once you apply, a staff member will review your application to determine your eligibility. If you are eligible, you will be placed on the Wait List until enrollment takes place, depending on availability of funding.
Guest column: New Town Success Zone looks for 10 more years of progress

By Jim Crooks
Posted Feb 4, 2018 at 2:01 AM

At its recent quarterly gathering, New Town residents and Success Zone partners came together to reflect upon 10 years of experience in this Northwest neighborhood.

The achievements have been many since then-Mayor John Peyton took a small group of community leaders to New York to observe the Harlem Children’s Zone. Transferring the vision and practices of its leader, Geoffrey Canada, to one of Jacksonville’s most needy neighborhoods, they chose New Town to create opportunities for inner-city children and adults.

Under the leadership of Edward Waters College President Nat Glover, volunteer extraordinaire Pam Paul, Children’s Commission Executive Director Linda Lanier and Executive Director Irwin PeDro Cohen, the community partnership got to work focusing on neighborhood safety, health care, education, housing and jobs.

Progress was slow. After all, 10 years of a program does not get a kindergarten youngster through high school. Still Chief Deloris Patterson, Zone One commander from the Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office, reported at the gathering that crime rates are down substantially, community policing is working and other neighborhoods want to follow New Town’s example.

It’s similar with health care. Results are mixed but as Monica Albertie from Mayo Clinic’s 18-month long “Wellness RX” program said, preventive and restorative efforts have attracted more than 200 participants, saving at least one life.

Additionally, the struggling baby university for prenatal, postnatal and early childhood care has received grant funding, resulting in a flourishing program involving moms, expectant moms, some dads and their little ones.
For older youngsters who are struggling at S. P. Livingston Elementary School, an intensive reading program takes trained tutors beyond school hours into their homes. Early results have shown substantial gains in reading comprehension for the 8- and 9-year-olds.

The focus, says current Executive Director George Maxey, is if you want to “fix” the children, you have to “fix” the families. Parents and their children have to be involved whether reading books, doing other school assignments, or simply learning to grow together.

Along with education, health care and public safety, New Town has welcomed Habijax to build or rehabilitate more than 200 houses over the past 10 years. Meanwhile following a neighborhood survey, the city has begun to tear down abandoned, derelict housing — seven to date — to reduce physical blight in New Town.

Besides housing, other new construction over the past 10 years serving New Town residents are the sheriff’s substation and the Center for the Prevention of Health Disparities, both on the Edward Waters campus.

Most recently LISC and Operation New Hope have come to New Town beginning programs to help adults acquire GEDs, find jobs and encourage wise money management practices. They even have fostered three small start-up businesses.

Clearly much is going on in New Town. Undergirding the efforts are 75 partner organizations, big and small, and a community organization, Vision Keepers. Its leader, Brenda Ford reports there are three participating members concerned for the well being of their neighborhood.

While much has been achieved, much remains to be done. The Duval County Public Schools transformed two neighborhood schools into magnets, one elementary and one middle school, making tracking local children more difficult. Teenagers attend a variety of high schools outside of New Town and are difficult to track. The goal, of course, is high school graduation for all and preparation for college, the military or another vocation.

Listening to outgoing President Glover, City Council members Garrett Denis and Sam Newby, and executive director Maxey along with many of the partners present, one heard the commitment to continue building on the first 10 years. Everyone wants New Town residents to achieve their goals of living fuller lives in their safer and healthier community.

Jim Crooks is UNF professor emeritus of history.
Jacksonville Sheriff Announces 'Operation Ceasefire' In Response To Increase In Gun Crimes

By KAREN FEAGINS | PEOPLE/KAREN-FFAGINS * MAY 21, 2014


Email (mailto:"

subject=Jacksonville%20Sheriff%20Announces%20'Operation%20Ceasefire"

Jacksonville Sheriff John Rutherford, along with Mayor Alvin Brown, City Councilwoman Denise Lee and other city leaders, revealed at a Tuesday press conference the details of an anti-crime initiative called Operation Ceasefire, which began at the start of May.
The effort is a response to the uptick in gun crimes in Northwest Jacksonville in the first part of the year, particularly the violent month of April when guns were used in 60 aggravated batteries and assaults. Rutherford said his officers plan to knock on 18,000 doors in an effort to reach out into the community to ask people to help them solve these crimes.

"We know the key to solving and preventing this activity is connecting with the community," Rutherford said.

Since the program began, Rutherford said, officers have already knocked on 4,000 doors, seized 10 illegal firearms and taken 381 grams of cocaine and 156 grams of marijuana off the streets.
Councilwoman Lee explained another aspect of the program which will involve the installation of surveillance cameras in targeted high-crime areas.

"To let the thugs know we are not playing with you," Lee said. "We will no longer tolerate it, stand for it or put up with it."

Rutherford said JSO will finance Operation Ceasefire with overtime money budgeted for summer, when crime rates typically go up. But he said they'll also have to shift officers from other parts of the city to beef up enforcement in the focus area, which is mostly patrol Zone 5.

*The area of Northwest Jacksonville where the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office will focus Operation Ceasefire efforts.*

CREDIT JACKSONVILLE SHERIFF'S OFFICE

The sheriff said he will ask the city to restore 40 police officers and 40 community service officer positions.
'Cure Violence' program may be answer to Jacksonville's crime problem

I-TEAM sees firsthand how program has reduced crime in Philadelphia


Posted: 5:35 PM, February 14, 2019
Updated: 11:21 PM, February 14, 2019

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. - With 18 murders in the city of Jacksonville in the first six weeks of 2019, city leaders are looking for solutions to make the violence stop.

In recent years, the city has invested in ShotSpotter technology [https://www.news4jax.com/news/investigations/jacksonville-getting-new-technology-to-battle-gun-violence] and a bullet comparison database [https://www.news4jax.com/news/investigations/new-system-could-help-solve-crimes-faster-save-lives], which leaders say have helped reduce the number of shootings: after 443 people were shot in Jacksonville in 2017, the number of victims dropped to 380 in 2018.

As police and prosecutors search for the shooters, the community looks for answers.

“You need the right combination of strategies in a neighborhood to make sure you can get ahead of some of the challenges overall,” explained Jacksonville Sheriff Mike Williams [https://www.news4jax.com/topic/Mike-Williams] during a recent interview.

As one key factor in these crimes is gang violence, the I-TEAM [https://www.news4jax.com/topic/I-TEAM] found that the sheriff, state attorney and mayor are turning to a program that has been successful in some of the nation’s largest cities.
The program, known as Cure Violence [http://cureviolence.org/], has worked in cities including Chicago, New York and Philadelphia. It treats crime as a public health issue, sending highly trained ex-cons who the program calls “violence interrupters” into dangerous areas. Their task: to identify those at risk for being a shooter, or getting shot.

The I-TEAM traveled to one of those cities using the program -- Philadelphia, a city that has struggled with crime for decades -- to see how Cure Violence [https://www.news4jax.com/topic/Cure-Violence] is implemented and see its impact.

**Philadelphia CeaseFire**

“This whole strip right here, it goes down. This is a hotspot for murders,” said Colwin Williams, one of the program's violence interrupters in Philadelphia. “A young woman got murdered right here over an argument,” he continued.

“You've got to be credible. I'm an O.G. They respect me,” Williams told us, explaining the respect came from the fact that he previously lived a life of crime, spending 19 years in prison for robbery & kidnapping.

Now out of prison, he works full-time for Philadelphia CeaseFire [http://philaceasefire.com/index.html], the Cure Violence program there. The program treats crime as a public health issue, and the ex-con Williams used medical terms to describe the program's approach.

“You take part of the germ, part of the virus, you culture it and you shoot it back into the community. You build the immune system up,” Williams said. “You can’t keep putting Band-Aids on something that needs surgery.”

Williams and other members of the Philadelphia [https://www.news4jax.com/topic/Philadelphia] CeaseFire team reach out to young men in dangerous communities, mentor them, and guide them away from guns.

Chris Long, 15, is one of the teens on the program’s list.

“There’s too much crime and stuff,” Long told the I-TEAM. “To have somebody come and get me and try to talk to me and help me be better at my life, I appreciate that.”

Robert Warner is the program manager for Philadelphia CeaseFire.
“We do this every day. All day, every day. Like, people really look up to us,” Warner said. “And if they see that we’re doing good, they want to do the same thing.”

The team of violence interrupters from Philadelphia CeaseFire not only work the streets, they respond to hospitals, for every person who gets shot. In the case of a homicide, they talk with friends and relatives of the victim.

“We out here every day,” Warner said. “Every day. Even on our off days. If we get calls, we still gotta go.”

The same model is used in other Cure Violence programs across the country, each funded with local, state and federal grants, as well as donations. Independent studies have shown success in targeted areas in some of the other communities: a 56 percent reduction in killings in one Baltimore neighborhood, and a 73 percent reduction in shootings in a Chicago neighborhood.

In Philadelphia, gun violence is down 30 percent, just two years after the program started.

“Guys like us, we’re not afraid to talk to the guys that are doing the shooting,” Warner said. “Because we once were the shooters. We’re not afraid to push them the right way.”

“I did a lot of things in this community to hurt it,” said Quinzel Tomone, a supervisor with Philadelphia CeaseFire. “So I wanna give back to the younger guys. I was actually out selling drugs at the age of 13, 14.”

Tomone offered what he saw as the reason behind much of the violence in his city.

“The majority of the killing that’s going on here doesn’t have a lot to do with drugs,” Tomone said. “It has to do with beefs.”

Jermaine McElveen is fresh out of prison after serving decades for murder in an armed robbery. At the time, he was only 16. Now, he volunteers with Philadelphia CeaseFire, to show teens there’s another way.

“Enjoy being a kid. Enjoy being a teenager. Have fun,” McElveen said.

The I-TEAM asked Warner, the program manager, if the Cure Violence model could work anywhere.
“Yes,” Warner responded. “You just have to get the right training and the right guys to be willing to go out on the streets to talk to people.”

As we walked through the city with Williams, neighbors we spoke with were willing to support anything proven to stop the violence.

“It’s a community thing. We all gotta work together, man,” said Roosevelt Davis, a community activist. “And half of the kids running around are our neighbors, sons, nephews. It’s not hard to get ahold of them. We just all gotta stand up together.”

Despite support like that from the community, it’s still an uphill battle on dangerous terrain, and the work of the violence interrupters isn’t always well-received by the people they target.

“It’s not easy; we’re not perfect,” Williams said. “But we show them that struggle builds character.”

These former criminals feel they can give back, and that people like them can make a difference even in the most deadly neighborhoods.

“The major piece is being able to identify their trauma, their pain, and what they are up against,” Williams said.

We asked Williams if it is hard to get people to listen and cooperate.

“At the end of the day, nobody wants to die,” he responded.

**Can it work in Jacksonville?**

Following the visit to Philadelphia, the I-TEAM met with State Attorney Melissa Nelson and showed her what we found when we looked at the Philadelphia CeaseFire program.

Nelson and her team of prosecutors believe young men who are members of violent gangs are behind a large number of shootings in Jacksonville. The I-TEAM wanted to know what Nelson thought was at the root of the killing and violence in the city.

“Disrespect for life, a lack of hope for their own lives,” Nelson said. “The kids who are involved in this group violence, those who we’ve sat down with and talked with, they themselves admit they don’t expect to live themselves past 18 or 19 years old.”
In fact, Nelson said many of the gang members her team investigates wind up dead before they can be prosecuted.

Others, such as Henry Hayes, who was convicted of killing toddler Aiden McClendon in a drive-by shooting, will be spending the rest of their lives behind bars [https://www.news4jax.com/news/local/jacksonville/emotions-run-high-at-sentencing-for-2-teens-convicted-of-killing-toddler_]. Hayes is one of the gang members who has been seen in videos posted on social media talking about, and displaying, guns.

“We see these drill videos, essentially rap videos, homemade videos being made and the lyrics are related either to a past homicide and/or are threatening a future shooting,” Nelson said. “We’re actually able to connect shootings to those videos and they are both inciting violence and igniting violence.”

Nelson, along with Mayor Lenny Curry and Sheriff Mike Williams, recently released a gang violence reduction strategy [https://www.news4jax.com/news/crime/mayor-sheriff-state-attorney-release-plan-to-reduce-gang-violence] with a number of potential solutions, including an implementation of the Cure Violence program. Nelson is meeting with members of the Cure Violence team next week to see if it is the right fit for Jacksonville.

“The pride they have in the work they’re doing and the difference they’re making was very encouraging to me,” Nelson said. “The people on the ground in Philadelphia where you visited clearly believe they are making a difference. They said the folks they work with trust them, and that matters. And so that’s very encouraging.”

**VIDEO: Could ‘Cure Violence’ program work in Jacksonville?**
[https://www.news4jax.com/video/-cure-violence-program-may-be-answer-to-jacksonville-s-crime-problem-1]

**UNCUT: Vic Micolucci’s interview with Melissa Nelson**

The I-TEAM asked the state attorney if that trust is something that might be hard to achieve if you’re wearing a suit and tie, or a badge.

“Well, they have a lot of credibility because these are people who have shared life experiences and that matters.”
Nelson said she is cautiously optimistic that Cure Violence may be the prescription the city of Jacksonville needs.

"Man, if this works here..." Nelson said, ending the sentence with a smile.

Read more:

- Cure Violence [http://cureviolence.org/]

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32209 ZIP code proves to be Jacksonville’s killing fields year after year

By Dan Scanlan
Posted Dec 31, 2016 at 1:44 PM

The day still seems unreal to Pamela Williams, and serves a horrible reminder of another one seven years earlier.

Across from the Cleveland Arms apartments and within a Jacksonville ZIP code where 28 of the 120 homicides in 2016 occurred — the 104th, 105th and 106th were added to the list Nov. 13.

Williams’ 18-year-old daughter, Xacia Mikia Burnem, was one of them. In the same shooting, bullets struck 11-month-old Tedashii Noel Williams and his mother, 22-year-old Kadejah Monae Williams, killing both in a car. Two others were wounded.

Those additional casualties were no relation to Pamela Williams, but in 2009 her 19-year-old son, Bilal Kwame Shaw, died on Franklin Street when shot while he waited for a bus to school. She has a portrait tattoo memorializing him on one of her arms.

Although her son was killed in a different part of town, her daughter was victimized in the city’s 32209 ZIP code. Almost one of every four homicides in 2016 occurred in this pie-shaped wedge of the city bordered by Soutel Drive, Beaver Street, North Old Kings Road and West Moncrief Road.

“It seems unreal still to this day knowing that was my daughter and a baby and another young lady,” Williams said. "... It should have been adults who resolved it and never went that far. That is something you never get over no matter how you look at it.”

“Be aware of your surroundings,” Williams tells her children.

Those surroundings are a killing field that produced almost three times the homicides in 2016 as Jacksonville’s next deadliest ZIP code — 32210. The trend has continued for years and is documented in the Times-Union’s database at Jacksonville.com/homicides. From the start of 2008 until Dec. 28, 2016, unofficially 190 homicides were reported in 32209, well more than double the closest second ZIP code’s total of 80 homicides in 32208 during the same time.
City leaders say programs now under way and more spending on police should start tamping down the carnage in 32209.

Neighborhood leaders offer another option — more jobs. They say employment is the big carrot that will give people hope they can escape poverty and avoid becoming a statistic.

Frustration over deaths

Talk to community leaders, residents and city officials, and frustration is the one word heard most often about the violence.

Sheriff Mike Williams said 32209 is part of police Zone 5, where homicides overall went up by 12 as of Dec. 12, compared to the same date in 2015. He said Zone 4, which also shares part of that ZIP code, saw nine more homicides. When he sees the high 32209 homicide rate, it gives his officers “more drive and resolve” to do all they can to stop it.

“The kids are the most tragic. That wears on you the most. They are truly, truly innocent victims in this whole equation,” he said. “Not that others aren’t. But you know a child, especially an 11-month-old baby, is an innocent victim of something like this. ... It does wear on you.”

Discussing the high numbers in 32209, Mayor Lenny Curry paused in thought before calling it “outrageous” as well as sad. That is why he said he has committed substantial resources to public safety and the Sheriff’s Office in his term’s first two budgets, including programs for children and added enforcement. He’s even asked JEA to install brighter LED street lighting in communities that need it.

“I did overtime last year, significant overtime in JSO’s budget, because you have to enforce. You have to get in there where this is happening and make sure the bad guys know there’s a presence,” the mayor said. “I will continue to provide overtime as needed and will continue to add resources and manpower and what’s needed specifically in those ZIP codes. I walked that ZIP code numerous times to talk to people to understand what their needs are.”

Parked dead center in the ZIP code is the Grand Park neighborhood along Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway, where the head of its community association said a solution has to be found.

Lloyd Washington’s neighborhood had its share of homicides over a few weeks in mid-2014, including the shooting death of 16-year-old Johnathan Thomas on Detaille Drive off Cleveland Road. The violence across the city was so bad police launched Operation Ceasefire to curb the
violence.

While it’s been blessedly quiet of late, it hasn’t been nearby, Washington said.

“This cannot continue to happen,” he said. “I can’t tell you what the solution is. If I did know, tomorrow it would be fixed. All we can do is keep trying. In Grand Park, our crime has dropped considerably, and maybe we can get what is happening in Grand Park to work in the rest of 32209. We are going to continue to try. We will put the effort out, and that goes for all of us — community leaders, ministers and people in general. We all would like to know what it will take to solve this problem, and it is a hell of a problem.”

The residents care about where they live, want a solution and appreciate what the police are doing, said District 9 City Councilman Garrett Dennis, adding the police can’t solve it themselves. “They notice that it is not a police issue that’s marking all the killing. It’s a lack of hope from no jobs, no way out,” he said. “They understand that people are turning to crime.”

The historic Edward Waters College campus on Kings Road is at the southern end of the ZIP code.

Anthony Carl Whitley, 37, was the city’s 80th homicide. He was found shot to death Sept. 4 on Dot Street, a few blocks south of the campus. Police received a report of shots fired in the area of Dot and Fourth streets, then a college security officer found a car with Whitley dead inside and a wounded passenger.

That’s about as close as the violence has come to campus, said Nat Glover, the college’s president, who knows crime all too well. He graduated from that school in 1966, joined the Sheriff’s Office and was sheriff from 1995 to 2002. He said younger members of the community have to be turned around, and that means they must have a future — a job, not jail.

“We have to invest in these young people now or we are going to have to pay a tab later, a bill that is three, four or five times as much,” Glover said. “Either pay now or pay later, and we will have to provide jobs for them and we are going to have to provide a mechanism to provide educations for them. ... We have to stay here and just be good at what we do, and be better at what we do and that is the reason I am here and why we are making it safe on campus.”

Means are available
The ZIP code is a multilayered community of homes, businesses and schools dissected by major roads. The area features the city’s highest rates of family poverty, infant and child deaths, teen pregnancies and unemployment, according to city records.

Sitting in the east end is where many of its victims end up — UF Health Jacksonville’s TraumaOne center.

The Johnson Family YMCA is inside this ZIP code as well as many public schools from George Washington Carver and Rufus Payne elementary schools on up to Stanton College Preparatory and Raines High School. Lonnie Miller Sr. Regional Park, named after a Sheriff’s Office detective murdered in 1995 on North Pearl Street, is at the north end. Next door is the Bob Hayes Sports Complex, named after the Jacksonville Olympian and pro football player who died in 2002.

Dozens of churches exist within the ZIP code’s borders, from Mount Ararat Apostolic and Greater New Mount Moriah to St. Paul African Methodist and Greater New Mount Zion. So do many apartment complexes where police are a regular presence.

Multiple groups, from the Better Living Community Association and College Gardens Neighborhood Watch to the Myrtle Moncrief Business Association and Northside Pride Neighborhood Association, also call the area home.

Along with them are numerous programs designed to help children who live in the inner city.

Stationed in the middle is the Police Athletic League at 2165 W. 33rd St., which offers after-school and summer sports, tutoring, leadership and mentoring programs for youths.

The MaliVai Washington Youth Foundation on Payne Avenue has 188 children in kindergarten through high school in after-school programs featuring a Tennis-n-Tutoring program, math and reading skills classes, life skill lessons and leadership programs for middle and high school students.

Executive Director Terri Florio is well aware of the crime and how it impacts children. Gunfire is “normal, for lack of a better word,” she said.

Florio said she’s attended several funerals involving children, including one where a girl’s stepfather was killed. In the middle of an event they were hosting, a shooting occurred a block or so away.
“Our middle school kids came running in, knowing it was gunfire” and worried where the bullets might go, Florio said. A few years ago, someone was shot right outside, and that victim lost a leg from the injury, she said.

What can be done to stem the violence may be beyond the capacity of what Florio’s organization can do, other than to support the children and offer a safety net, she said. Long-term solutions must change the mentality of those who commit crimes, expose children to more education and life lessons so ultimately the choice is theirs.

Florio and her staff learned that when they spoke to a former student, now serving life for murder, who left the foundation when he was 9 and never found another mentoring program.

“He said to me, and it stuck with me for years, ‘I always thought I would be dead or in jail by 25,’ and it is changing that mentality,” Florio said. She said her program has a man, now 24, who is going to school and able to graduate from high school. In his family, he is the only one without a criminal record. It is changing that mentality. ... He said I did not want to be a statistic and this program helped.”

Another organization works with about 100 young men who need direction and role models. They come from homes where parents desire a better future, said the Rev. John Guns, who founded Operation Save Our Sons in 2013. He said he is frustrated by the high homicide rate in 32209, angry and “confused as to how we got here.” He said one partial solution is a partnership with Cleveland Arms.

“We are actively engaging in that community, and one of the things I am discovering is that from a systematic standpoint, many people really don’t see how they can rise above their present condition,” Guns said. “There is a profound sense of hopelessness and resignation that this is and will be my life. You have to deal with jobs and also deal with the mental-health issue facing the community. A lot of our young people are suffering from post-traumatic stress.”

Bringing in job development programs is one way to help, but Guns said ultimately someone has to “re-establish a moral center” and return to some basic values that give residents hope as the city looks to create job opportunities.

Jobs, training, education can help
Council member Dennis said he supports the good work of such organizations. The focus, he said, is on real jobs with living wages, giving people the chance to take care of their families and own homes.

“We need to start looking at job training, the skills that our kids and even middle-aged people can go into,” he said, adding that could blunt people from hanging out on a corner and turn to crime.

Dennis said he is putting together a business council to push for job training and business development. He said the area of Beaver and Stockton streets in his district feature close to 400 businesses with almost $3 billion in sales.

“We can’t police our way out of crime or incarcerate,” he said. “There is hope through employment.”

Warren Jones, the area’s former city councilman, is now a Duval County School Board member. He said cuts in the Jacksonville Journey, a $31 million project begun in 2009 in response to the rising violent crime rate that offered crime prevention and intervention programs, hurt. Its after-school programs and re-entry initiatives for those just out of prison who can’t find work helped people.

Journey suffered serious budget cuts in recent years and needs to come back because of its success cutting crime, Jones said. “We cannot afford to be the murder capital of the state of Florida. It is a city problem. It is not just isolated to that neighborhood. Unfortunately, we are paying for some of the painful cuts that the city made in the Journey.”

He said many agree part of the problem in 32209 is that the area is an economic desert. “There are those who feel like it is isolated and only affects those in the drug trade. But I grew up in Jacksonville and what bothers me is that the people of less means have always turned to illegal means to make money,” Jones said. "... What is doubly troubling to me is in addition to the murders, which are the worst, is all the people who have been shot and shot at and we are not counting these.”

Life’s hard-core reality

Jones related a conversation he heard from a police officer at a recent public forum, where she talked about a murder scene in a city park where children played. None of the children was hurt, but the officer returned to the park the next day and the children were playing around the
bloodstained concrete.

"She said that had to impact those children, but what counseling did those kids get who witnessed that murder?" Jones said. "That is something we need to look at in this community. When a young person is killed in schools, they have grief counseling. We don’t do that around a murder scene when they witness a murder. That is an initiative that the city needs to look at, too, through the Journey or Children’s Commission. That may be what is driving the murder rate in 32209 and it will take a lot to chip away at this."

Edward Waters College offers another option to keep the peace, namely having a Sheriff’s Office Zone 5 Substation on campus. About 150 officers use it for roll calls and victim meetings and a criminal justice program where students study alongside officers.

"The campus is a small part of the ZIP code, but we are in the middle of it," Glover said. "... Conversations have been made to me about moving the college out of this community, and I would not be one who would support or encourage that."

Glover points to one program in 32209 that could help in the New Town area. The Second Chance program works to get higher education and jobs for men and women 18 to 24. While it isn’t aimed specifically at ex-offenders, they are not excluded, Glover said. He said his staff is also looking at installing some kind of campus fence to keep out people who “migrate” through and could be potentially a threat.

Edward Waters also is the first site in the city to install a ShotSpotter on campus — a network of high-tech microphones designed to spot shootings and quickly alert police. "We are just waiting for a time when the bad guys realize every time they fire a weapon, police will respond so quickly they will be afraid to do anything," Glover said. "That is the great deterrent."

Meanwhile, Sheriff Williams said his department is aggressively investigating homicides, including a Violent Criminal Apprehension Program where the team includes detectives from homicide, gang team, narcotics and aggravated batteries units working together.

"The challenge is, who is going to look at the big picture to say which of these are connected and what string of events has led to all these," Williams said. "Here’s what works: You put more policemen in the right place at the right time and you can prevent a lot of that."
The mayor agreed, saying the Sheriff’s Office was gutted during the previous administration, but he’s changed that. “If you look at budget year 2015-16, I put about $25 million in between Jacksonville Journey, the 40 cops, the 40 community service officers, mobile radios, body armor, et cetera,” he said. “And in the last budget year, it’s about $36 million, which includes another 40 and 40 with cops and CSOs, the updated 911 system, fingerprinting, helicopters and ShotSpotter. I have put the city’s money where my heart and mouth is on this issue.”

Programs are good, but they need to be layered with a police presence, Williams said. While 80 more officers in the academy will graduate this summer and community service officers will return, Williams said his force is 400 to 600 short of where it should be.

Williams said he is cautiously optimistic about the groundwork done in the past year with more community involvement, more officers and the continuity of existing programs.

For some like the still-mourning Pamela Williams, it is too little too late.

Dan Scanlan: (904) 359-4549
'Boots on the Ground' tries to stem tide of violence

Northside Coalition of Jacksonville focuses on 32209 ZIP code

By Brittany Muller - Reporter

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JACKSONVILLE, Fla. - An advocacy group determined to "stop the violence and increase the peace" walked some of Jacksonville's most troubled neighborhoods Saturday.

About a dozen members and supporters of the Northside Coalition left the Clanzel Brown Community Center in Moncrief, walking as a group, knocking on doors and speaking with neighbors.

The group began its boots on the ground campaign six months ago in the 32209 ZIP code -- the part of town where the most murders have occurred for the past few years. Northside Coalition President Ben Frazier said the group has reached 2,000 households.

"It's time for this neighborhood to be turned around," Frazier said. "It's necessary for us to have a clear line of communication with the people that we claim to be advocating for."

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People in the community said they are primarily concerned about economics, jobs, social injustice and their relationship with law enforcement.
One 19-year-old resident said he is all too familiar with the sound of gunshots but doesn't see much else happening in his community.

"People getting shot and getting robbed, and that's the main problem," the young man said. "I don't see too much of anything else -- jobs or education."

Frazier said attitudes about these neighborhoods must change.

"We've got to do something to help these people," Frazier said. "They're crying out for help. The question is, will the city of Jacksonville listen and act on their concerns?"

Frazier said that while much more needs to be done in Moncrief, the group's campaign will be expanding to the Eastside, as well.

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