

# NEWSLETTER

**Violence Prevention Coordinating Council  
(VPCC - Chicago Heights, Park Forest, & Sauk Village)**

**JUNE 2024**



**Pictured above: Gun Violence Prevention & Mental Health Workshop Highlights**

**Violence Prevention Coordinating Council Program  
Coordinator & Newsletter Editor, Dr. Pastor Kisia L. Coleman**

**Kingdom** with.  
**Church**  
**Ministries**

## VPCC & Staff in Action...

Pastor Kisia Coleman, our Program Coordinator for our Violence Prevention Coordinating Council serves as the Co-Chair for the Park Forest Richton Park Neighborhood Network. On March 18th she met with Congresswoman Robin Kelly and her staff to address the food insecurity issue in our area. It is important that we maintain relationships with our elected officials to see how we can partner together and help our communities thrive. A subsequent meeting took place on April 8th with Representative Anthony DeLuca to address the same issue. ***Food insecurity is a social determinant of health and its prevalence in our communities is “both a cause and a consequence of violence, contributing to a vicious cycle” based on research conducted by Illinois State University.*** We will continue to work with our elected officials to improve our communities and help mitigate violence in any way possible. Congresswoman Kelly has been a strong advocate in the fight against gun violence. Her “2024 Kelly Report - Vision for a Safer America” is a tremendous eye-opener with a wealth of information that highlights the progress made against gun violence and the work yet to be done.



Any opportunity that we can share our story and increase our Council's visibility is taken seriously and is greatly appreciated. On March 20th the **League of Women Voters for Park Forest, Illinois** welcomed Pastor Kisia as their guest speaker at their monthly meeting to share the vision of our Chicago Heights Cluster VPCC. The meeting was informative and engaging. Ultimately, it garnered a lot of attention and interest and served us well with exposure and more community connections.

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The flyer has a yellow background with a dark blue and black graphic at the top. It features the LWV logo and text: "LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF PARK FOREST AREA PRESENTS VIOLENCE PREVENTION COORDINATING COUNCIL'S RESOURCES". Below this, it says "We can STOP BAD things from happening when GOOD people refuse to be silent! Let's Silence the Violence!". A central question asks "ARE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT VIOLENCE IN THE SOUTHLAND?". It then invites people to "Join us for our ONLINE COMMUNITY-WIDE INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS". A photo of Rev./Dr. Kisia Coleman is shown with the text "REV./DR. KISHA COLEMAN, SPEAKER". The date and time are "WEDNESDAY MARCH 20, 2024 7:00 PM TO 8:30PM". At the bottom, a small text box explains the LWV's mission: "The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy." There are also decorative stars and a hand graphic at the bottom right.

# GVPMH WORKSHOP HIGHLIGHTS

We conducted our first **“Gun Violence Prevention & Mental Health (GVPMH) Workshop”** on April 13, 2024, from 10 am - 2 pm at our Empowerment Center. Overall, we had a good crowd that stayed throughout the day, with a total of 72 people in attendance. Lunch was provided by Panera Bread ensuring there was something for everyone, whether you were vegan or had a sweet tooth. Most importantly, our expert speakers and their topics were on point and impactful:

- **Sauk Village Police Chief Malcolm White** started us off with his talk on “Our Safety & Security - How Does Gun Safety Look?” He also led a brief training on using gun locks, their importance, and other safety information.
- **Sherise Harris, a Sauk Village Resident and Department of Human Services Caseworker** gave a heartfelt presentation on “Silence the Violence - How Domestic Violence and Gun Violence Affect Our Community.”
- We found the best fit for our youth engagement was **William Anderson** of Aunt Martha’s Health Care facility in Park Forest, IL. William has served our youth and families in our community extremely well for decades. His topic on “Youth & Us - Youth & Justice - How Comprehensive Community-Based Youth Services and a Juvenile Justice Reporting Center Can Have a Positive Impact on Gun Violence and the Mental Well-being of Our Community” was a source of enlightenment. His time included information regarding Aunt Martha’s new Empowerment Program YOUTH4WARD.



*(Street Outreach Workers Enjoying the Workshop)*



*(Sauk Village Police Chief Malcolm White)*



*(William Anderson of Aunt Martha’s Health Care Facility in Park Forest, IL. - center)*



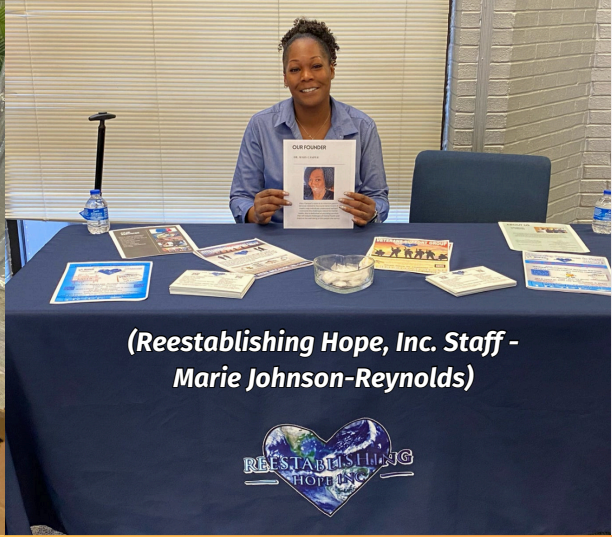
*(Sherise Harris, Sauk Village Resident & Department of Human Services Caseworker)*



*(National Youth Advocate Program & River Edge Mental Hospital Collaborating)*



~ (Dr. Mary Camper, Founder of Reestablishing Hope - left)



(Reestablishing Hope, Inc. Staff - Marie Johnson-Reynolds)



- Dr. Mary Camper, Founder of *Reestablishing Hope* in Hazel Crest took time out of her busy schedule to spend the day with us and provided some much-needed therapy as an on-site counselor in our counseling room and during her segment on “Good Mental Health Is Your Wealth - How Certain Strategies and Skills Can Bring Stability to Your Soul.”
- Our work in violence prevention has to be a team effort and LeShae Hudson, the Joliet Township VPCC was not without her team to help present her topic on “Help & Hope - How Should a Violence Prevention Organization and Community Respond When a Gun Violence-Related Incident Happens?” Joliet knows all too well the importance of responding efficiently and effectively to gun violence-related incidents and LeShae’s team has been at the forefront in responding.

(l to r, Joliet Township Supervisor Angel Contreras , Prevention First TTA Gigi Moore, Joliet Township VPCC LeShae Hudson, Chicago Heights Cluster VPCC Pastor Kisia, Chris Sherrod, Peace Over Violence)



We closed our workshop out with an impactful session presented by Shelley Williams, Exec. Director of *In Tandem, Inc.* in conjunction with Andre Thomas of *Integrity & Fidelity (I & F) Inc.* Along with members from the violence prevention outreach team, a presentation entitled, “Boots on the Ground Is How We Get Down - How Effective Community Outreach and Violence Prevention in the Streets Should Look.” It was a remarkable look into the day-to-day activities of those in the violence prevention space who are closest to it, have lived experiences with it, and know how best to deal with it.

~ Shelley Williams, Exec. Director of *In Tandem, Inc.* (back left), Andre Thomas of *Integrity & Fidelity (I & F)* (front center), Kingdom Church Intl. Outreach Workers, Joliet Township VPCC, Trajectory Changing Solutions and Prevention First TTAs, Reestablishing Hope, Inc. RPSA, National Youth Advocate Program, Chicago Heights Cluster VPCC members.



We had great organizations in attendance who provided free gifts, products, information, and resources on gun violence, domestic violence, mental health, and youth and family-oriented initiatives. Our VPCC provided attendees with gun locks and resource bags full of everyday essentials and information on our SAYF - *Significant Advancement of Youth & Families* and YES! - *Youth Empowered for Success* initiatives.

**THE RESOURCE TABLES AND REPRESENTATIVES FROM VARIOUS ORGANIZATIONS INCLUDED:**

1. **Reestablishing Hope, Inc.** - Marie Johnson-Reynolds
2. **Birth to Five Illinois** - Leah Armor
3. **Aunt Martha’s Health & Wellness** - William Anderson & Robert Clasby
4. **Department of Human Services** - Sherise Harris
5. **Anew: Building Beyond Violence & Abuse** - Rachel Forsyth
6. **Riveredge Hospital** - Chene’ Weems
7. **Big Brothers Big Sisters** - Kaleb Taylor
8. **Trajectory Changing Solutions, LLC** (Violence Prevention TA) - Tracey Lee

## ~ April Food Day (United Way), April 24th

April Food Day is United Way's annual food collection event and awards luncheon that addresses food insecurity in the south-southwest suburbs, a region facing high levels of poverty and systemic education, health, and wealth inequities. On April 24th we had the honor of attending this year's event at the Tinley Park Convention Center which was geared towards replenishing ten pantries and advancing equitable access to food throughout the south-southwest region!



## ~ Reimagine Public Safety Act

On April 30th, 50 street outreach organizations from the Chicagoland area went to Springfield to lobby for permanent financial support for the Reimagine Public Safety Act.



Our organization had representation and one of our team members co-organized the effort. It is important that the funding received through IDHS and ICIJA continue to support the organizations that are making the strongest impact against violence in our communities.



~ Pre-Mother's Day Jewelry & Accessories Pop-Up Fundraiser

May 4th, 2024



There is so much that needs to be done in the violence prevention space especially as it relates to gun violence. These efforts cannot be realized without adequate funding and support from the community. On May 4th, Kingdom Church International hosted its first **“Pre-Mother’s Day Jewelry & Accessories Pop-up Store Extravaganza.”** This fundraiser initiative was created to help further our programs and services. In total, we raised over \$1,200.

We have been diligently working with *Big Brothers Big Sisters* to bring their program to our Empowerment Center. On May 5th, they attended our worship service to increase efforts in recruiting 20 adult mentors for one-on-one mentoring with 20 youth mentees. **Please contact us if you are interested in more information about becoming a mentor: [info@trykci.org](mailto:info@trykci.org).**



**Social determinants of health (SDOH)** have a major impact on people’s health, well-being, and quality of life. SDOH examples include safe housing, transportation, and neighborhoods. On May 14th, we hosted a special meeting and tour of our facility highlighting our VPCC and vision with Joliet Township’s Supervisor, Angel Contreras, VPCC LeShae Hudson, and members of their REIAL-POV (Racial Equity Impact Assessment League - Peace Over Violence). Other guests included Cherise Williams (not pictured) representing Opportunity for Advancement, Inc. Workforce and PRNN’s (Park Forest Richton Park Neighborhood Network) violence prevention’s component.



On May 23rd, Pastor Kisia attended the *Mental Health Response to Mass Firearm Violence (MHRMFV)* Consortium hosted by the University of Illinois at Chicago's Institute for Healthcare Delivery Design and Population Health Sciences Program. It was a breath of fresh air for the VPCCs, Conveners, and 590s, to provide our thoughts, reactions, and ideas on our learnings around awareness, collaboration, and continuity as they relate to Providers, Communities, and Individuals. One of the most impacting parts of the day was the ideation activity where we compiled high-urgency and low-effort ideas as it relates to the topic.



**Above l to r, VPCCs - Pastor Kisia, Daniel Ware (Urban Male Network), Steve Spagnolo & Rachel Jacoby (Lake County States Attorney), Kaitlin Soriano (Kane County Government)**

**~ #Wear Orange**



**Martialeena Reid, KCI Outreach Worker & Pastor Kisia**

**~ June is National Gun Violence Prevention Awareness Month**

On January 21, 2013, 15-year-old Hadiya Pendleton marched in President Obama's second inaugural parade. One week later, Hadiya was shot and killed on a playground in Chicago. Soon after this tragedy, Hadiya's friends commemorated her life by wearing orange, the color hunters wear in the woods to protect themselves and others. Wear Orange is now observed every June during National Gun Violence Awareness Month.

Thousands of people wear the color orange to honor Hadiya and the more than 43,000 Americans who are killed with guns and approximately 76,000 more shot and wounded every year. This year, National Gun Violence Awareness Day fell on June 7th.



## “Get a Clean Slate Expungement” Event

On June 8th, our VPCC partnered with OAI, The NDICA, and the City of Harvey Alderwoman Colby Chapman for this event at Transformation United Methodist Church in Harvey, IL. Thanks to Dr. Phyllis West, the Director of Governor’s State University Social Justice Initiative, Host Pastor Linny Hartzell, and Legal Aid Attorneys, participants were able to expunge Cook County misdemeanors, non-violent felonies, and certain marijuana offenses from their public records. As always, we were excited to represent and wear our orange on behalf of gun violence awareness. It was also great teaming up with our street outreach partners *In Tandem, Inc.* and *Integrity & Fidelity, Inc.* once again.



(l to r - Dr. West, Pastor Linny, Pastor Kisia, Legal Aid Attorney, Alderwoman Chapman)



(*In Tandem Workforce, Inc.*, *Kingdom Church Intl.*, *Integrity & Fidelity*, *Opportunities for Advancement, Inc.*)

June 30, 2024, **SAYF Gun Violence Prevention Drive-thru Resource & Food Giveaway** featuring free food, gun locks, and community resources taking place at the Empowerment Center!

# SAYF Gun Violence Prevention Drive-thru Resource & Food Giveaway

**SUNDAY \* JUNE 30, 2024 \* 1 - 3 PM**

**Everything is FREE!**

**\* Gun Locks\* Household Products \* Food \*  
Youth-Oriented & Family Services, Resources & Information**

**THE EMPOWERMENT CENTER**

**(AT THE CORNER. \* ACROSS FROM THE POLICE STATION.)**

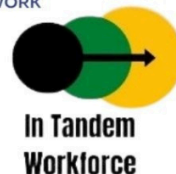
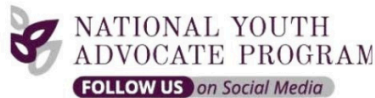
**202 FOREST BLVD. \* PARK FOREST \*IL \* 60466**

**In Conjunction with the Chicago Heights Cluster Violence Prevention  
Coordinating Council & Other Community Organizations**

**Chicago Heights  
\*  
Park Forest  
\*  
Sauk Village**

**INFO@TRYKCI.ORG \* 708-252-DOIT**  
SAYF - Significant Advancement of Youth & Families

**Pastors D. John & Kisia Coleman  
Event Hosts**



**~ Coming July & August 2024, Youth Job Readiness,  
Tutoring, Mentoring & More for Ages 16 - 24**

**In Conjunction with**



**NATIONAL YOUTH  
ADVOCATE PROGRAM**

**FOLLOW US** on Social Media



**SAYF!**





**Our Violence Prevention Coordinating Council (VPCC) Serves the Above Municipalities**

**SIGN UP TO LEARN  
MORE ABOUT OUR  
VPCC:**

**[trykci.org/vpcc](http://trykci.org/vpcc)  
Call 708-252-DOIT  
[info@trykci.org](mailto:info@trykci.org)**

