

NEWSLETTER

July/Aug/Sept 2024
Volume III

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



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

Kingdom with
Church
Ministries

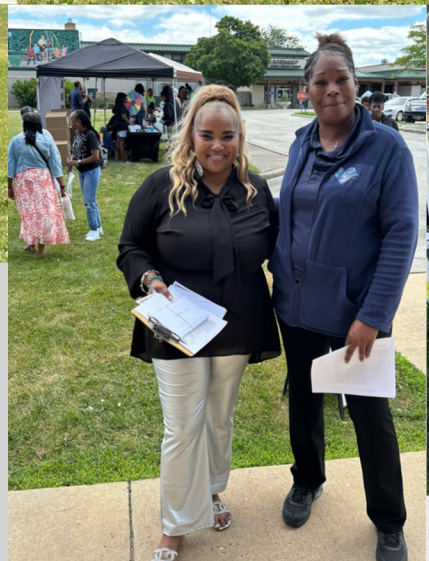
Pictured above and on pages 3 - 4:
Youth Summer Job Readiness & Life Skills Program

SAYF Gun Violence Prevention Event

In our Volume II Newsletter released in June 2024, we announced that our SAYF Gun Violence Prevention Drive-thru Resource & Food Giveaway was happening on June 30th. And boy, what a happening it was!



We were honored to have some of our community organizations join us to make this event a success!



Cherise Williams, the OAI Park Forest Richton Park Neighborhood Network Organizer (pictured above) provided gift bags with community resources and promo items along with \$2,300 in free grocery gift cards from the Health & Wellness subcommittee's budget, which is a committee that Pastor Kisia is the Chair.

Marie Johnson-Reynolds, with Reestablishing Hope, a Behavioral & Mental Health provider came out to support and provide resources. (middle picture with Pastor Kisia)

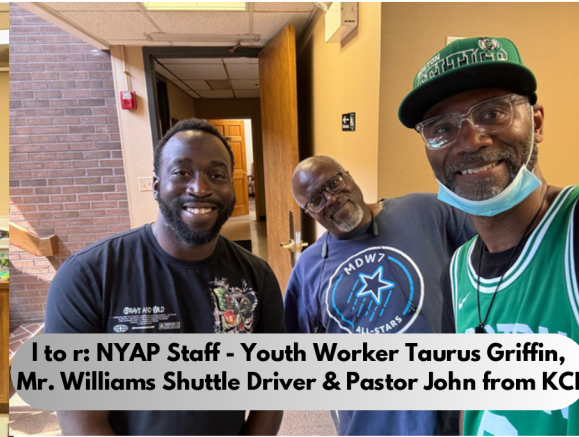
Sauk Village Trustee Debbie Williams and Mia Carter, with Congresswoman Robin Kelly's Office (below) stopped by to show their support.

Martialeena Reid, aka "Leena" (r) our Outreach Worker conducts a mini gun safety demonstration with a gun lock.





I to r: KCI Volunteer Staff Serving the Delicious CATERED Meal Provided to the Youth Every Session



I to r: NYAP Staff - Youth Worker Taurus Griffin, Mr. Williams Shuttle Driver & Pastor John from KCI



Pages 1, 3 - 4: Pictures of Youth & Staff @ Youth Our Summer Job Readiness & Life Skills Program



l to r: NYAP Staff - Videographer, Employment Specialist & Case Manager Shalinda Hall, Counselor Qiana Clay, Pastor John with KCI

We kicked the summer off strong as Kingdom Church International's SAYF (Significant Advancement of Youth & Families) and Y.E.S. (Youth Empowered for Success) programs partnered with NYAP (National Youth Advocate Program) to provide a Summer Job Readiness & Life Skills program hosted at our Empowerment Center. Eight sessions took place on Tuesdays and Thursdays: July 16, 18, 23, 25, and 30, and August 1, 6, and 8th. Over 30 young people ages 16-24 registered for the sessions with a total of 23 graduating and earning up to 60 credit hours to include on their resumes.

The sessions were led by Shalinda Hall, a Case Manager and Job Employment Specialist with NYAP. Every day the youth were greeted by SAYF & NYAP staff and treated to light refreshments for breakfast, afternoon snacks, and a catered lunch. Transportation was provided for many of the Youth during the course of the program. They had an opportunity to learn everything from day-to-day life skills including: time management, budgeting, and social etiquette to interviewing techniques, resume writing, and proper workplace behavior.



By the second week, the youth and staff were so well acquainted that a basketball rim was brought in for fun after their sessions. The youth even experienced real-life scenarios where they were provided income in the form of fake money based on the careers they chose. They were then challenged to live off their income and engage in personal and business transactions with our makeshift bank and banker.



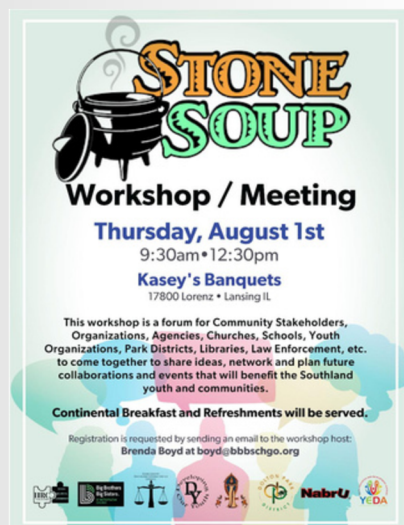
~ PARK FOREST YOUTH COMMISSION YOUTH DAY, JULY 27, 2024 ~



We did it again! Our VPCC staff and outreach volunteers participated in the *Park Forest Youth Commission Youth Day Event*, where we hosted our VPCC booth. We helped distribute over 500 backpacks to Youth attendees and their families. As we collected names to add to our Council list, we were also able to distribute hundreds of free household products, including thirteen IDPH gun locks, while conducting mini gun safety sessions.

~STONE SOUP NETWORKING EVENT~

On August 1st we were introduced to another way of networking after attending the Stone Soup Community Networking Event sphereheaded by Brenda Boyd of *Big Brothers Big Sisters*. The concept was to share ideas, network, and plan future collaborations and events, to benefit Southland Youth and communities. There was attendance from several dozen community stakeholders, and organizations. We were happy to make new connections and enlarge our VPCC sphere of influence!




STONE SOUP
Workshop / Meeting
Thursday, August 1st
9:30am - 12:30pm
Kasey's Banquets
17800 Lorenz • Lansing IL

This workshop is a forum for Community Stakeholders, Organizations, Agencies, Churches, Schools, Youth Organizations, Park Districts, Libraries, Law Enforcement, etc. to come together to share ideas, network and plan future collaborations and events that will benefit the Southland youth and communities.

Continental Breakfast and Refreshments will be served.

Registration is requested by sending an email to the workshop host: Brenda Boyd at boyd@bbbschgo.org



~ Martialeena Reid, Outreach Worker with Mayor Joseph Woods of Park Forest

National Night Out 2024

National Night Out was established in 1984 and was created to encourage residents to spend time with their neighbors and local police and to build a partnership between the community and the police. Over the years, it has become an annual tradition for us to partner with our local police at this event by sponsoring the ice cream and a vendor booth. This year, we chose Zarlengos Italian Ice and rented their cart to pass out free Italian ice to attendees. Those who stopped by our booth received free products sponsored by ComEd. We also hosted our VPCC "Spin the Wheel Game," collected new signups for the VPCC list, and distributed information about our programming. As always, we conducted mini gun safety trainings and gave away eleven IDPH gun locks.





Pastor Kisia and Leena attended the 2024 *Mental Health Response to Mass Firearm Violence (MHRMFV)* Summit held all day on August 8th at the University Illinois Chicago Dorin Forum. This event was for VPCCs, Conveners, 590 Teams, DMH/OFVP employees and their partners, and people offering mental health services and support to communities and individuals affected by firearm violence.

l to r - Leena & Pastor Kisia (Kingdom Church Intl.), Rachel Jacolby (Lake County State’s Attorney), Kaitlin Soriano (Kane County Health Dept.), Rev. Eugene (Duane Dean Behavioral Health Center - Kankakee) All are VPCCs.

It was great being able to spend some time with some of our colleagues involved in the cause with whom we normally only collaborate via online meetings or on the phone. Our collective efforts in continuously showing up during our in-person and online consortium meetings are playing a pivotal role in creating a response to mass firearm incidents within the State of Illinois.



l to r - Dorin “Pastor Mac” McIntyre (What About Us Charitable Enterprises Inc.), Joseph Thomas (Grand Prairie Services, Mobile Crisis Unit), Gloria Kennedy, (Duane Dean Behavioral Health Center), Pastor Kisia, Rev. Eugene, Leena



Friday, August 30th, we hosted a Youth empowerment event, “An Evening of S.E.N.” to discuss mental health, peer pressure, substance use and more. Twenty-eight Youths attended and ten adults hosted the event.

Youth were fed, participated in games and contests, and received prizes and reflective drawstring backpacks with snacks, free products, and Bombas socks. The event was used as a catalyst to kick off our Youth Violence Prevention Council & Creative Arts Initiative programs.

It was a wonderful treat to be a part of Joliet Township Government (RPSA Grantee) REIL's Violence Prevention Anniversary celebration and "Show Me the Money Grant Writing" event on September 4th. It was also a pleasure to see Makayla Buford, one of the consortium team members of the UIC MHRMFV facilitators, present as well.

Fresh Grocery Giveaway (Pictures Below)



Saturday, September 7th, we were blessed to host a free grocery giveaway where 125 bags of fresh food were provided to drive-thru attendees. The food was donated by *Meals in the Meantime* and partially funded by the Park Forest Richton Park Neighborhood Network. The event started at 10 am. However, recipients started arriving as early as 8 am. There were even walk-up attendees.

In the Chicago Heights Cluster, food insecurity is a significant issue. Approximately 28.3% of the population in poverty live below the poverty line, a number that is higher than the national average of 12.5%. The largest demographic living in poverty is Females 6 - 11, followed by Females 25 - 34 and then Males 25 - 34.

Respond Now - Chicago Heights Career Fair

September 14th, staff hosted our VPCC table at Respond Now's Career Fair in Chicago Heights. We collected attendee information for our mailing list and shared information regarding our programs and services, and passed out free products. We conducted mini gun safety sessions and gave away two gun locks. Our Outreach Worker Leena, was glad to see NAMI (National Association of Mental Illness) Chicago South Suburbs President, Marianne Bithos, who regularly supports our VPCC (pictured right and below with Leena) .





l to r - Cherise Williams (PRNN Organizer), Dr. Carleta Alston (PRNN steering committee member and Health & Wellness Co-Chair), and Pastor Kisia (PRNN steering committee Co-Chair and Health & Wellness Chair).

The annual Rich Township Senior Resource Fair took place at the Matteson Holiday Inn on September 19th. There were over 90 vendors representing local and state agencies. Pastor Kisia attended on behalf of the Health & Wellness committee of PRNN. There was a wealth of resources to glean from and a projected over 300 people in attendance.



The October 16th meeting included a segment focused on violence prevention with guest speaker Justice Eileen O'Neil Burke and several organizations chiming in including street outreach worker, Andre Thomas of Integrity and Fidelity, Inc.

Every third Wednesday of the month, the Southland Ministerial Health Network (SMHN) hosts a breakfast for community stakeholders to share community information and resources. A myriad of guests including elected officials, heads of businesses, social service agencies and community organizations attend this monthly meeting.

Book Us! Our Youth Violence Prevention Council & Creative Arts Initiative programs are well underway. We are available for free performances (donations accepted) on matters related to violence prevention. Contact us at 708.252.DOIT or vpcc@trykci.org.



YOUTH VIOLENCE PREVENTION COUNCIL

JOIN US!

The YVPC's vision is to create opportunities for Youth ages 8 - 18 and 19 - 28 (2nd Tier) to engage in civic duties and positive activities centered around violence prevention with an emphasis on firearm violence prevention through various means with creative arts being a key component for messaging.

Includes Youth Violence Prevention Initiatives, Civic Engagement, and Public Speaking:

1. Prevention Programs - SAYF groups for the entire family.
2. Response Activities - Civic Involvement and Community Engagement
3. Intervention Resources - Referrals & making the connections on behalf of other Youth
4. Messaging through Creative Art
5. Social Skills Training & Mentoring Collaboration with Partners

CREATIVE ARTS PROGRAM:
Communicating the Message of Mitigating Gun Violence with the Arts Acting, Public Speaking, Dance, Poetry, & Musical Instruments

SIGN UP: 708-252-DOIT | Info@trykci.org | 202 Forest Blvd., Park Forest, IL 60471



SAYF (SIGNIFICANT ADVANCEMENT OF YOUTH & FAMILIES) PRESENTS

THE SAYF ZONE 2024

COMMUNITY-WIDE DRIVE-THRU TREAT & RESOURCE GIVEAWAY

The Empowerment Center
202 Forest Blvd., Park Forest, IL
(Old Chase Bank, At the Corner,
Across from the Police Station.)

THURSDAY Oct. 31st
5-7 pm
(Or until first 200 bags are gone!)

- BAGS FULL OF GOODIES @ ONE STOP!
- GAN ACCESS TO VALUABLE PROGRAMMING!
- LEARN ABOUT HELPFUL SERVICES IN YOUR COMMUNITY!

All Treats! No Tricks!

FREE EVENT

REGISTER [QR Code]

MORE INFO - TRYKCI.ORG
CALL - 708.252.DOIT

-Gun Locks-
-NARCAN-
-Violence Prevention & Mental Health Resources-

EMPOWERED by Kingdom Church Ministries | THE EMPOWERMENT CENTER

(Pictured above.)
October Community Wide Drive-Thru Treat & Resource Giveaway

Upcoming Events

ONGOING -

- Youth Violence Prevention Council (YVPC) & Creative Arts Initiative (CAI) - Every Wednesday, 6:30 pm - 8 pm @ the Empowerment Center

NOVEMBER -

- Nov, 26th, VPCC Zoom Meeting @ 11 am
- Thanksgiving Food Giveaway (TBD)

DECEMBER -

- Community Stakeholders Holiday Breakfast
- Christmas Toy Giveaway



SIGN UP TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR VPCC

trykci.org/vpcc
Call 708-252-DOIT
info@trykci.org

Our Violence Prevention Coordinating Council (VPCC) Serves the Below Municipalities

