

Executive Summary

On Sunday, July 14, 2019, Senator Sharif Street partnered with Mr. Darryl Shuler of the organization Put It Down in hosting a community summit to discuss the ongoing epidemic of gun violence in Philadelphia.

Held at the The Met located at 858 N. Broad Street in North Philadelphia, several community leaders, state officials, and hundreds of citizens from different neighborhoods of Philadelphia joined together to formulate solutions to a problem that has seemingly become a way of life for some members of the community.

The tone of the meeting was set by members of clergy who opened the program. After a Welcome by Senator Street, Darryl Shuler lead a discussion of Community Voices, where key community members from all walks of life presented on what they believe needed to be addressed.

Then the floor was open to the public. 36 community members rose to have their voices heard, and their comments have been documented below. From input by these community members, we recorded 35 suggested "Community Solutions" which are also documented below.

After hours of community input, we heard our elected officials respond. Elected officials from the City and State sat in the audience to listen to the conversation amongst the community members, and waited until the end to comment on what they heard. Those officials will take what they learned at this summit and work collectively to implement some of the community solutions recommended here to address the epidemic of violence in our community.

Meeting Minutes:

Senator Street Opening Remarks

- Emphasis on this gun violence event serving the community
 - Citizens' perspective
 - Community leaders' response
 - Addressing the concerns of the community

Guest Community Speakers

- Need strategies to combat the violence
- Change can happen
 - Begins with us -> individuals of the community
 - Consistency & accountability
- Younger generations
 - Cannot be influenced if they are not involved
 - Provide education and resources
 - Address the trauma that has affected them
 - Intervention & prevention!
 - Offer opportunities of employment
 - Motivation/assistance
 - Talk TO the youth, not AT them
- Contributions to the problem

- Lack of guidance and attention
- Oppression/Difficulties in becoming successful
- Origin of the firearms/guns
- Belief that it is a “black” problem, not “community” problem
- Necessities to begin healing the community
 - Awareness of the communities’ interconnectedness
 - Early prevention and empowerment
 - Rehabilitation
 - Accountability
 - Communication

Members of the General Public Speak Out

- Citizen 1
 - Generational involvement
 - Missing communication
 - Invest in non-profit organization
 - Fund the community
- Citizen 2
 - Cannot be afraid to talk to the youth
 - The Creator is in control of life and death
- Citizen 3
 - Eliminate the guns being brought to communities
 - Utilize social media
 - Reallocate the funding to support change in gun violence
- Citizen 4
 - Clean up the streets/blocks/city
 - Create jobs completing this
- Citizen 5
 - Need an increase of love and respect
- Citizen 6
 - Become a foot soldier
 - Have the “higher-ups” out in the community as foot soldiers
- Citizen 7
 - Be involved with the lives of your sons and daughters
 - Give support to the mothers of the community to heal families
- Citizen 8
 - Recognize that witnesses are NOT snitches
 - Fight to make change!
- Citizen 9
 - Provide jobs at gas stations
 - Require licenses for bullets
 - Give and share love
 - Create positive activities for youth (arts, recreation, etc)
- Citizen 10

- Research and implement mentoring programs
- Citizen 11
 - Unity
 - Community needs to know community
 - Patience!
- Citizen 12
 - Organize a collaborative effort within the community
 - Mental health services
- Citizen 13
 - Financial literacy
- Citizen 14
 - Come from a place of love
 - Men, love your children
 - Remind them of their worth
- Citizen 15
 - Recognize the value of life
- Citizen 16
 - Hold the police accountable for obsessing in these communities
- Citizen 17
 - Support local community members that have created youth-oriented support organizations
 - Treat children as “VIPs”
- Citizen 18
 - Stop the separation of families by DHS
- Citizen 19
 - Men must step up, take responsibility
 - Speak to the youth directly
- Citizen 20
 - Police should work alongside the community
 - Development of trust between police and citizens
- Citizen 21
 - Find a way to involve the youth
 - Give the youth a voice
 - Offer educational workshops
- Citizen 22
 - Increase level of thinking
 - Move outside the problems to see clearly
 - Change the perspective of the youth from seeing it as a way of life to a problem
 - Be the model, be a role model
- Citizen 23
 - School programs targeted toward the youth
 - Trauma-based programs
 - Prepare the youth (literacy, resources)
- Citizen 24

- Need solutions to emerge from a feeling of being stuck
- Citizen 25
 - Resources to treat trauma
- Citizen 26
 - Direct support for trauma in schools
 - Acknowledge the lost jobs from possible closure of Hahnemann
- Citizen 27
 - Fund solutions for murder epidemic
 - Community policing
- Citizen 28
 - Continue fighting for change
- Citizen 29
 - Love, patience, care and understanding
- Citizen 30
 - Youth to youth communication
- Citizen 31
 - Family is the answer
 - Work on the pain with the family
- Citizen 32
 - Contact ward leaders/committees
- Citizen 33
 - Eliminate the divides within the community
- Citizen 34
 - Change the narrative
 - Fix media bias and negative perspective of African Americans
 - Give hope back to the community
- Citizen 35
 - Investigate DHS
- Citizen 36
 - Fix the system and take action

Official 35 Community Solutions

1. Improve communication and conflict resolution skills
2. Encourage honest communication between generations
3. Increase funding to prevent the influx of guns into our communities
4. Collaborate with local businesses to employ the youth
5. Teach love and respect
6. Be a “foot soldier” – do your part to help your neighborhood
7. Elected officials need to walk the streets themselves to see what is happening in their communities
8. Be proactive and take the initiative to strengthen the family
9. End the stigma around “snitching”

10. Implement gas stations jobs (similar to New Jersey)
11. Create regulations to reduce the ease of buying bullets
12. Increase funding for after-school programs to keep children busy and engaged
13. Establish mentorship programs for returning citizens and formerly incarcerated people
14. Never forget the power of unity and community
15. Encourage collaboration between community organizations to ensure the most efficient use of resources and to ensure the greatest number of youths are being helped
16. Increase funding for mental health services
17. Teach financial literacy
18. "Men carry children" – men must take more responsibility to be active participants of their children's lives
19. Value life
20. Treat our children like V.I.P.s
21. Stop family separations (Resolution No. 190346)
22. Increase funding for job training and trade schools
23. Improve community and police relations
24. Bring formerly incarcerated citizens to speak to our youth in the schools
25. Mandate youth programs in the public schools
26. Work with other cities to find creative solutions to the violence
27. Remember that each of us are a model to the youth
28. Include trauma-based programs in schools
29. Promote literacy to prepare youth for their futures
30. Add more direct support for at-risk youth in the schools
31. Create a youth to youth mentoring program
32. Solutions start in the home
33. Work on addressing the divide within our communities
34. Be honest about and stand up against media bias regarding violence in our communities
35. Create city run programs led by returning citizens