



**Sheila Dixon**

*Mayor,*  
Baltimore

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Mayor Sheila Dixon Announces First Operation Safe Streets Grant**

Baltimore, MD (April 2, 2007) – Baltimore Mayor Sheila Dixon joined representatives of The Office of Youth Violence Prevention of the Baltimore City Health Department to announce the first of two planned sites for Operation Safe Streets, a community-based violence prevention program focused on reducing shootings and homicides in Baltimore City.

“Operation Safe Streets is a key piece of our overall gang activity and crime prevention strategy,” said Mayor Dixon. “I am pleased that so many agencies coming together as partners in this important initiative.”

This first award, totaling \$382,600, has been made to the Living Classrooms Foundation, to implement Operation Safe Streets in a to-be-determined target area of the Perkins/Middle East Community Statistical Area and adjacent neighborhoods in East Baltimore.

Operation Safe Streets is based on the highly successful CeaseFire model developed at the University of Illinois School of Public Health in Chicago. CeaseFire works with community-based organizations to develop and implement strategies to reduce and prevent violence, particularly shootings and killings. The model relies on outreach workers, faith leaders, and other community leaders to intervene in conflicts, or potential conflicts, and promote alternatives to violence. Along with cooperation from police, CeaseFire includes a strong public education campaign to provide the message that shootings and violence are not acceptable.

Police Commissioner Leonard Hamm said, “The Police Department is committed to partnering with community organizations in reducing violence. Operation Safe Streets will make it easier for police officers and neighborhoods to work together.”

“In Baltimore City, homicide is the leading cause of death in adolescents and young adults,” said Dr. Joshua M. Sharfstein, Commissioner of Health. “Operation Safe Streets is part of a public health approach to this serious problem.”

The Baltimore City Health Department will issue an RFP in the near future to provide funding for a second Operation Safe Streets site.

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