



Sheila Dixon

Mayor,
Baltimore

250 City Hall · Baltimore Maryland 21202
410-396-3835 · Fax: 410-576-9425

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 9, 2007

CONTACT:

Anthony McCarthy
(410) 869-6079 (Cell)

Mayor Dixon Announces New Operation Safe Streets Site

Baltimore, MD (August 9, 2007) – Mayor Sheila Dixon was joined by Baltimore City Health Department Commissioner Joshua Sharfstein to announce the launch of the second of two planned sites for Operation Safe Streets, a community-based violence prevention program focused on reducing shootings and homicides in Baltimore City.

The \$382,600 award is being made to Communities Organized to Improve Life, Inc. (COIL, Inc.), to implement Operation Safe Streets in Southwest Baltimore. COIL, Inc. has extensive experience in providing community outreach, education, and violence prevention services to at-risk adolescents and young adults in Southwest Baltimore.

“I am glad to see this promising anti-violence effort expanding in Baltimore,” said Mayor Sheila Dixon. “Operation Safe Streets focuses on strengthening communities so that they have the capacity to exercise informal social control and response to issues that affect them.”

OSS is based on the 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. The model incorporates a focus on individual behavior change, working with individuals to develop alternatives to the use of violence and providing connection to services. Along with cooperation from police, CeaseFire includes a strong public education campaign to provide the message that shootings and violence are not acceptable.

Since its launch in 2000, Ceasefire has been successfully operating in 15 of Chicago's high-crime neighborhoods. With the collaboration of community groups, outreach teams, law enforcement and clergy, communities experienced reductions in shootings up to 68% in the first year of implementation.

In June 2007, Baltimore launched the first SafeStreets site in a portion of the McElderry Park and Madison East neighborhoods. The operations were overseen by the Living Classrooms Foundation. Funding for the initiative comes from a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice.

###

Please visit our website at www.baltimorecity.gov