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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 8, 2008

Mayor Dixon Announces Safe Streets Expansion

Baltimore, MD (August 8, 2008) – Mayor Sheila Dixon and Baltimore City Health Commissioner Dr. Joshua Sharfstein were joined by advocates, donors, and city employees to announce the plan to expand the community anti-violence program Safe Streets. The planned expansion is funded by private and public money, and will allow the program to operate through June 30, 2009.

“Safe Streets is helping us reduce shootings and homicides in Baltimore,” said Mayor Dixon. “By putting trusted community members on the streets late at night, working with those most at risk, and mediating disputes that could turn violent, Safe Streets helps to make these reductions permanent.”

Safe Streets is a community-based violence prevention initiative focused on reducing shootings and homicides in Baltimore City. Safe Streets is based on the highly successful CeaseFire model developed at the University of Illinois School of Public Health in Chicago, which is responsible for approximately 25% of the declines in shooting and homicides in targeted areas.

The model relies on credible outreach workers, community members, faith leaders and other community organizations to intervene in conflicts, or potential conflicts, and promote alternatives to violence. Along with cooperation from the Baltimore City Police Department, Safe Streets includes a strong public education campaign to provide the message that shootings and violence are unacceptable in our communities.

An independent evaluation of Safe Streets by Dr. Daniel Webster at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health is underway. Preliminary results will be available in December 2008.

The overall cost of the plan is \$2 million, of which \$1.655 million has been raised so far. The Mayor and City Council have committed \$1 million. Contributors include the Greater Baltimore Committee Foundation, the Abell Foundation, the Casey Foundation, the Goldseker Foundation, the Crane Family Foundation, the T. Rowe Price Foundation, the Leidy Foundation, and more than 15 individual donors. Efforts to raise the additional funding required are underway.

“Safe Streets is an innovative anti-violence program,” said GBC President & CEO Donald C. Fry. “The Greater Baltimore Committee strongly supports its expansion to make our city safer.”

Particular attention will be paid to communities in West Baltimore and Park Heights. The Safe Streets plan was developed by the Baltimore City Health Department and has been reviewed and endorsed by the CeaseFire Chicago team. Highlights of the Safe Streets expansion plan include:

- Expanding the work of the Living Classrooms Foundation to include approximately 24 city blocks in East Baltimore and three teams of outreach workers;
- Developing a hospital response component with Johns Hopkins Hospital;
- Adding a new site in Cherry Hill to be overseen by Family Health Centers of Baltimore and involve an extensive coalition of community organizations;
- Extra training in the Safe Streets model for the Park Heights community and the Southwest Baltimore site; and
- A media campaign in key hot spots in the city.

This plan sets out how the \$2 million in local funding will be spent through June 30, 2009. It supports two new sites in the city for Safe Streets teams – one in East Baltimore, to be run by the Living Classrooms Foundation, and the other in Cherry Hill, to be run by Family Health Centers of Baltimore. The local organizations will receive partial contracts, which will be extended through June 30 when the full funding is raised.

“Violence is an unacceptable behavior that can be changed,” said Dr. Joshua M. Sharfstein, Commissioner of Health. “Safe Streets empowers communities to reach out to those at the highest risk of violence and help them to choose a different path.”

Safe Streets is collecting individual and business contributions to the expansion. Donations can be sent to:

Baltimore City Foundation
Safe Streets Fund
Attn: Debbie Gigone
401 E. Fayette Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

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