



Stephanie Rawlings-Blake

Mayor,

Baltimore City

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

Better Schools. Safer Streets. Stronger Neighborhoods.

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CONTACT

Ryan O’Doherty

(410) 818-4269

ryan.odoherty@baltimorecity.gov

Mayor Rawlings-Blake Kicks Off Youth Violence Prevention Week

BALTIMORE, MD. (March 21, 2010) – Today, Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake was joined by community, religious and city leaders to kick off Youth Violence Prevention Week, and urged Baltimore residents to “Stand Up and Speak Out” against violence. Youth Violence Prevention Week—held March 21-27, 2011—is a national public education initiative featuring activities and events to spotlight the issue of youth violence, identify strategies to combat this epidemic, and promote the positive role youth may have in making their communities and schools safer.

“Reducing youth violence requires a collaborative approach joining City and State agencies, community-based organizations, and our residents in a common goal,” said Mayor Rawlings-Blake. “We must work together to provide youth in all communities with positive opportunities to ensure their success.”

The primary goal of Youth Violence Prevention Week is to raise awareness and to educate the public on effective ways to prevent or reduce youth violence. This year’s theme is “Stand Up. Speak Out.” More than 70 events for youths and adults have been scheduled by the departments of Health and Recreation and Parks, as well as community organizations, including several peace rallies, a basketball tournament, and dance and poster contests. To see a full list of activities, visit <http://www.baltimorehealth.org/yvpweek.html>.

In 2010, Baltimore had a 25 percent reduction in juvenile homicides and a 40% reduction in juvenile shootings. This progress is due to stronger collaboration between agencies, opportunities for youth such as summer employment through the YouthWorks program, and supportive services provided to at-risk youth to prevent them from becoming perpetrators or victims of violence.

“Recent reductions in juvenile crime are not a cause for celebration—they are a call for further action,” added Mayor Rawlings-Blake. “This week, I encourage people throughout Baltimore to find a way to become part of the solution—become a mentor, teach a youth how to resolve conflicts peacefully, or engage youth in a conversation about tolerance.”

Highlighted Youth Violence Prevention Week events include:

- The Circle of Restorative Justice Presents the Documentary, “Concrete, Steel and Paint”
Wednesday, March 23, 6:00 p.m.
Waverly Library, 400 East 33rd Street

The film, featuring Philadelphia’s internationally recognized Mural Arts Program, raises important questions about crime, justice and reconciliation—and dramatically illustrates how art can facilitate dialogue about difficult issues. Panel discussion to follow the viewing. View the trailer online at <http://concretefilm.org/>

- Baltimorephosis Recognition Ceremony
Thursday, March 24, 4:00 p.m.
City Hall, North Gallery

Recognition of those who Stand Up and Speak Out against violence. Recipients include adults working towards teaching kids nonviolent ways to resolve their problems and youth who are making a difference in their community, neighborhood or school.

- 3rd Annual Playing for Peace Basketball Tournament (Featuring 92Q’s Dre Johnson & Lil Black)
Friday, March 25, 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.
Bluford Academy (formerly Walbrook High School), 2000 Edgewood Street
- Where Yall At? A play by Michael Williams
Saturday, March 26, 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Lake Clifton High School, 2801 St. Lo Drive

Where Yall At? looks into Baltimore's notorious drug trade and how a young man from West Baltimore got involved at the tender age of 15 leading up to him being shot twice, numerous prison sentences, and ultimately the loss of his baby brother.

Tickets: \$10. Go to <http://www.missiontix.com> or call the Office of Youth Violence Prevention at 443.984.3566 for tickets.

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