
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



FOR INFORMATION CALL

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Ald. Mike McGee, Jr.
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Mayor's "Safe Summer Initiative" Will Duplicate Respect Kampain Efforts, Is "Feel Good Clone," Ald. McGee Says

Mayor's new Community Resource Team is a weak "knock-off" of Rapid Response Team, Doesn't Have Credibility in Inner City, Alderman Says

Using a tactic employed by many rap artists who "loop" the music and phrases of other artists and make them part of their own songs, Mayor Tom Barrett has "looped" some of Ald. Mike McGee, Jr.'s work to make Milwaukee's streets safer.

"Instead of collaborating with citizens and honestly working in the community to reduce violence and criminal activities, the Mayor has propped up his Rapid Response Team clone (Community Resource Team) and is pushing forward an initiative that pretty much duplicates what the Respect Kampain has already been doing on the streets and in the neighborhoods for some time," said Ald. McGee.

Ald. McGee will host an official community kickoff event for the Respect Kampain's Code of Conduct from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Thursday, May 19, 2005, on the playground at Malcolm X Academy, 2760 N. 1st St. He said he finds it "very interesting" that the Mayor plans on launching his "Safe Summer Initiative" the following day.

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Mayor's Clone Program/ADD ONE

In an effort to curb the deadly gun violence that has claimed many lives so far this year, Ald. McGee has hosted community vigils and has been spreading a message of non-violent conflict resolution and mutual respect and cooperation in city neighborhoods. “We are especially advocating a strict ‘no shooting’ code for neighborhoods, so people can live in relative peace and so children can play outside without worrying about gunshots,” he said.

He and members of the Rapid Response Team have been handing out Respect Kampain Street Code flyers regularly, with a goal of distributing 100,000 of the flyers in targeted city neighborhoods throughout the spring and summer. Also, the team is in the process of developing councils of stakeholders in each targeted neighborhood, with the goal of having each council implement conflict resolution strategies while also promoting entrepreneurial and educational opportunities, and distributing information on community resources.

The Respect Kampain flyer includes several rules or directives to follow, including: “Adopt an elder” (someone who is at least 60 years old); “Respect each other like you respect your mother;” “Get a spiritual sense of purpose;” “Turn your music down when you see older people,” and “No hating, no snitching, no stealing, no lying.”

Statistics show Milwaukee has a higher per capita rate of homicide than New York City, and the city’s homicide rate for African American males is an astounding 75 per 100,000 people, Ald. McGee has said. “We have to change our mindset and try something new, or else I fear we will continue to lose our friends, our loved ones and more of our innocent children to senseless violence,” he said.

The Rapid Response Team – which includes Ald. McGee and Ald. Ashanti Hamilton, as well as neighborhood and community leaders – has responded to serious disputes between neighbors, has looked into complaints about police brutality and police response issues, has helped mediate disputes between residents and business owners, and has responded to crime scenes to observe and gather information.

Ald. McGee said it is ironic that the Rapid Response Team – maligned when it was first announced last year as being a “vigilante” group – is now being duplicated by the Mayor. “It’s been said that all great movements are first demeaned, then discussed, and then ultimately duplicated,” he said.