
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



FOR INFORMATION CALL

July 1, 2015

Ald. Ashanti Hamilton
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Alderman Hamilton and community leaders kick off Safe Zone initiative

Media event introducing neighborhood ambassadors scheduled for Thursday

In a year where Milwaukee homicides have continued at a pace doubling recent years', **Alderman Ashanti Hamilton** and other community leaders will introduce an initiative aimed at curbing the violence through community-driven intervention.

The **Safe Zone initiative** will establish "safe zones" in four of the city's most troubled neighborhoods, where community leaders will be available to intervene in potentially violent situations and counteract the root causes of violence, like poverty and educational disparity. Eleven community members have been hired and trained in crucial skills like conflict resolution, de-escalation, communication, community mapping and counter-human trafficking.

These "H.O.O.D. Ambassadors" (Helping Others Obtain Direction) **will be introduced during a news conference kicking off the initiative on Thursday, July 2, 11:00 a.m. at 2601 W. Port Sunlight Way.** Following the news conference, residents of the nearby Garden Homes Neighborhood will rally together for a neighborhood cleanup with the ambassadors.

"Sometimes, the most effective help has to come from within a troubled area," Alderman Hamilton said. "The ambassadors who will work in the safe zones are people who are from these neighborhoods. They have a stake in turning them around, they know the people and they know what it means to struggle with poverty."

Throughout the summer, "H.O.O.D. Ambassadors" will work in the safe zones Tuesdays through Saturdays from 1:00 to 11:00 p.m. Community members who are in need of their services can call (414) 551-7373 or (414) 554-4378.

-More-

Safe zones/ADD ONE

The city-backed effort is made possible by a partnership with community leaders Khalil Coleman and Shawn Moore, as well as Muhammad Mosque #3, New Hope Baptist Church, Northwest Side Community Development Corp., the Garden Homes Neighborhood Association, Peace for Change Alliance, True Strength Group Milwaukee, We Got This, I Will Not Die Young campaign, Crossing Jordan Ministries, Alpha and Omega Ministries, the Coalition of Hope and the Universal Companies.

Mr. Coleman, Mr. Moore, and their partners have designed an approach that is similar to the Interrupters model that has worked in other cities. Safe zones will be located in each of the four “Promise Zones” designated under Alderman Hamilton’s “Milwaukee Promise” legislation—Division/Harambee, Washington Park, Greater Old North Milwaukee and the Near South Side.

“With the support of our neighborhoods, our faith community and our dedicated corps of ambassadors, and working together with police and city officials, it is my hope that we can begin to steer would-be offenders away from the path to violence and despair,” Alderman Hamilton said. “Eradicating violence is a big job, and it will take no less than a total commitment from each member of our community. I challenge every one of our neighbors to get engaged with this critical effort.”

Additionally, neighbors in the area of Garden Homes Square plan to celebrate the initiative’s launch with a block party on Saturday, July 4th from noon to 5:00 p.m. The event will include food, fun for children, neighborhood resources and more.