



**Michael J. Murphy**  
*City of Milwaukee Common Council*

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May 4, 2015

**Council President Murphy**  
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## **Curbing violence and promoting peace: In their own words**

*MKE Peace Project asks Milwaukee's youth for input on why violence occurs, potential solutions; City Hall news conference set for Tuesday, May 5*

Describing Milwaukee's systemic problem of violence is one thing, but offering possible solutions to help reduce it is a much more difficult endeavor.

**The MKE Peace Project (MPP)** is looking to challenge youth in the central city to initiate, at the group level, an assessment of the factors that contribute to violence in their neighborhoods and, subsequently, to provide a solution to the problem. Youth are being asked to submit written entries to be considered for the project, and prizes are also being offered for the top entries.

Developed by **Common Council President Michael J. Murphy** in collaboration with members of the Common Council, the goal of the MPP is simple: to promote youth dialogues around violence prevention. "We believe that in order to imagine and promote peace in Milwaukee, our youth must be actively involved. But, talking about the problems is not enough," President Murphy said.

"By simultaneously challenging youth to provide solutions to the problems they identified, we are asking them to envision the opposite of violence around them—we are challenging them to imagine peace," President Murphy said.

**The MKE Peace Project will be launched during a news conference at 2 p.m. TOMORROW (Tuesday, May 5) in the first floor rotunda at City Hall, 200 E. Wells St.**

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**President Murphy and Council members are expected to be joined by representatives of several community partners, including the Milwaukee Brewers, the Milwaukee Bucks, Milwaukee Christian Center, Bader Philanthropies, the United Community Center, Clear Channel, Journey House, the Center for Youth Engagement, Running Rebels, MPS Superintendent Dr. Darienne Driver, Coming Together Partnership, and Discovery World.**

**Prizes** to be awarded for MPP entries will be announced by the Brewers, Bucks and Summerfest at tomorrow's news conference. Also, thanks to the generous support of the Bader Philanthropies, the Milwaukee Public Schools Foundation, Discovery World, and the Zoological Society of Milwaukee, additional prizes will be awarded. Prizes will be provided to winning teams, finalists, as well as random drawings from all who submitted responses.

**Common Council members, including Alderman Ashanti Hamilton, Alderman Willie C. Wade, Alderman Terry L. Witkowski, Alderman Russell W. Stamper, II, Alderman Nik Kovac, Alderman Robert J. Bauman, Alderman José G. Pérez and Alderman Joe Dudzik, are also expected to attend.**

**Project Objectives:** The MPP has ambitious but accomplishable goals, Alderman Hamilton said. "It occurred to several of us that no one in a position to offer policy or other key changes in Milwaukee has asked Milwaukee's youth for their input on our problems with deadly violence," he said. "In this project, we are doing just that – asking our youth to identify their own neighborhood challenges and to offer their own ideas about opportunities for community safety and advancement."

Alderman Wade said he looks forward to the enhanced level of engagement with youth on the issue of violence. "Civility is an important issue often times overlooked in society," Alderman Wade said. "We have to do more to move it to the forefront -- all of us -- but especially leaders, both young and old."

The MPP is also looking to provide Milwaukee youth with an opportunity to represent and advocate on behalf of their own generation and neighborhoods to influence public policy related to civic issues (especially as it relates to violence prevention), and to provide city youth the space to voice concerns in local affairs.

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**Alderwoman Milele A. Coggs** said the search for violence prevention solutions should rightfully extend to every block and every demographic in Milwaukee, including young people. “Sometimes the best suggestions and solutions come from the future, from the children and youth,” Alderwoman Coggs said.

“I am hopeful that our youth will express themselves through the MKE Peace Project in such a way that we are enlightened by their ideas and their vision,” she said.

**MPS Superintendent Dr. Darienne Driver** said the project is “an important initial collaborative effort between youth and adults to address the issues impacting our community.” “It is vital that we create safe spaces for our young people to be heard and for their ideas to be listened to and acted upon,” she said. “As adults, it is our responsibility to support their efforts to bring peace to the city and to create safe places for them to learn and grow.”

President Murphy said the Common Council is planning to implement some of the finalists’ suggestions during the course of the summer.

The MPP is targeting Milwaukee’s at-risk youth, particularly those still in school and connected to positive programs and systems. The areas and schools being targeted for youth input include those neighborhoods where Milwaukee Police Department statistics show there’s a high rate of violent crime perpetrated by youth on victims who are also youth.

To participate, students can organize themselves in teams of up to three members. They will be challenged to identify:

- a. **Problem.** In fewer than two sentences identify a leading cause contributing to violence in your neighborhood or school. (What is causing violence in your neighborhood or school?)
- b. **Solution.** In fewer than 200 words (1/2 page) provide a solution to the problem your team has identified. (What is your idea for improving your neighborhood or school?)
- c. **Impact.** What impact will this solution make in your neighborhood? (For example, why is this needed in your neighborhood and how do you know it will make a difference?)

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All submissions must include first and last name of participants, school name and grade level, and a contact phone number. Submissions can be made in three ways and **must be submitted by Thursday, May 21, 2014:**

1. The team can submit their response to their school Principal's office.
2. The team can submit their response through an online form that will be announced tomorrow.
3. The team can submit their response through one of the following participating community based organization

**South Side:**

Journey House  
2110 W. Scott St.  
Milwaukee, WI 53204

United Community Center  
1028 S 9<sup>th</sup> St  
Milwaukee WI 53204

**North Side:**

Children's Outing Association (COA) – both locations:

909 E. North Ave.  
Milwaukee, WI 53212

2320 W. Burleigh St.  
Milwaukee, WI 53206

Running Rebels

1300A W. Fond du Lac Ave.  
Milwaukee, WI 53205

Citywide:

**The manager's office of any Boys and Girls Club location.**

4. The team can email their response to their local alderperson's office.

Main Contact Person			
First Name	Last Name	Phone Number	Email (if applicable)

Team Member Names (your team must have at least 2 individuals and no more than 3 individuals)					
First Name	Last Name	Phone Number	Grade Level	School Name	Address
1					
2					
3					

**The Challenge:**

<b>Problem.</b>	In fewer than two sentences identify a leading cause contributing to violence in your neighborhood or school. (What is causing violence in your neighborhood or school?)
<b>Solution.</b>	In fewer than 200 words (1/2 page) provide a solution to the problem your team has identified. (What is your idea for improving your neighborhood or school?)
<b>Impact</b>	What impact will this solution make in your neighborhood? (For example, why is this needed in your neighborhood and how do you know it will make a difference?)

Is your team interested in participating in youth-led dialogues?

Yes  No