

KINGDOM CHURCH INTERNATIONAL
DBA as Empowered People Church
Violence Prevention Council Coordinator
Chicago Heights Cluster (Chicago Heights, Park Forest, Sauk Village)
2-27-24 VPCC Meeting Recap

- I. Pre-Meeting Activity - “Early Bird Special” @ 10:50 am. Multiple choice from the “Violence Prevention Spin the Wheel Game” (Facilitator: Pastor John Coleman, Community Organizer). Questions were multiple choice and based on gun violence-related data and stats in the US and Illinois.
- II. Welcome by Pastor Kisia Coleman and Brief Introduction on Kingdom Church Intl.’s role as VPCC and the role that the Council members and their organizations play in fulfilling the objectives of the VPCC as outlined in the NOFO @ 11:00 am.

III. Last Month’s Meeting Recap - Read by Marie Johnson-Reynolds of *Establishing Hope Inc.*
Link to Sign-up for the Resource Guide: <https://forms.gle/sHeUHTZwxP79yfWW9>

IV. Community Response Activities (2 minutes each)

A. Youth

1. Brenda Boyd, the regional director for *Big Brothers Big Sisters Chicago Southland* provided an update about the recent opening of their office in the Southland area in Homewood, on 175th and Halsted. They are bringing their youth mentoring program to all 55 Cook County and 5 Will County Southland Communities. Kingdom Church Intl. and its Empowerment Center is a new community partner. They are framing a program that will hopefully be starting there in early Spring. It is a free program for the community. The challenge is enlisting and recruiting adult volunteer mentors. Mentoring has historically and statistically been proven to be a determinant of community violence. The fact that this is the first time in history for *Big Brothers Big Sisters* to have an office past 95th Street shows that there is a need in the community for mentoring services. Their goal is to create 500 partnerships and to be active in our VP Council.
2. Jamie Garibay is the Family and Communication Specialist with *Birth 2 Five Illinois*. They do not provide direct services but are more of an advocacy group located across the State. His region focuses on Cook County South. Last year their focus was on looking at the gaps in early childhood education. This year they are concentrating a little bit in the area of mental health services. They are gathering information from the community stakeholders and anybody who provides services to families. Ex: What are the barriers that families are having accessing services? They can guide families in applying for services to receive early childhood programs like CA (Child Care Assistance Program) and getting into a Head Start program, such as the Preschool for Health Prevention Initiative.

B. Government & Law Enforcement

1. Marva Campbell-Pruit, Village Clerk of Sauk Village gave the following report:

The *Restorative Justice Community Court* mentioned at our last meeting for Sauk Village on behalf of the Southland was approved at last week's board meeting. It requires community involvement. Currently, they have community courts in Avondale, Inglewood, and North Lawndale. All three of those are in Chicago with our Chief Justice Timothy Evans leading the initiative. The purpose of the court is to empower our communities to create solutions for young people who have committed crimes that are nonviolent, not felonies. This is a way to keep them from getting a record and instead go through the restorative courts' process, and then be exonerated of their crimes. They have to make atonement to whoever they have harmed whether it was another person or a community entity. Those between the ages of 18 and 26 who live in the neighborhood qualify. They cannot have a violent criminal history and must be willing to accept responsibility for the harm that they caused. They must participate in group peace circles where they talk about what they did, who they did it to, how the person to whom it was done to felt about it, and what needs to be done to make restitution.

2. Chief Malcolm White of the Sauk Village Police Department gave the following update and report:

The police department would like to have a link to the Council's resources should they have a victim of gun violence so they can offer those resources to families. At their last *Chat with the Chief* meeting (which is always the third Thursday of every month at 6 pm at their Village Hall) had speakers from the *Southland Juvenile Justice Council*. They are working to address issues where it's kind of a diversion intervention program for juveniles between the ages of 11 - 17. They are trying to attack this situation to improve the quality of life on every level not just the restorative justice programs. It's violence prevention and intervention for juvenile offenders which works basically off a referral program. When they have young people who commit less violent crimes, they refer them to get these services and can also be referred by the school districts and offer resources to parents who are having issues with their children.

C. Violence Prevention

Shelley Williams, the Founder and Executive Director of *In Tandem Workforce*, a violence prevention initiative that employs a comprehensive street campaign designed to address the root cause of street violence in communities that have historically been leveled by firearm violence reported the following:

Shelley has been a thought partner in the landscape of violence prevention for the last 20 years and started working with Ceasefire in Chicago. When he enrolled in the program, it was only in Englewood and West Garfield which were the two highest-hit communities in terms of firearm violence. Now he is in the Southland working with Villages like Chicago Heights, Sauk Village, and Park Forest alongside *Integrity and Fidelity, Inc.* who are the actual intervention specialists, and outreach workers that connect with people closely associated with violence. They engage them on a very intimate level by creating a case management support system of victim service advocacy. They work to redirect behaviors and their attitude toward violence. In warmer months when violence tends to have an uptick, they work to have more increased community activations.

They host hiring events with resources and provide mental health support and services. This along with having a targeted approach has proven to be a best practice for eliminating firearm incidents.

Their workers wear neon-colored jackets and canvass the community working with police which is important because law enforcement can connect the dots on the data which provides where the concentration of firearm incidents are occurring. Then they effectively deploy their tactical approach to those hotspots. In the past, they've created heat maps to make sure they are present and working diligently in that space. They monitor those who are on parole or probation because they know that those leaving or coming home from the penitentiary may feel that they are owed a certain thing as far as on the community level. They connect with law enforcement with respect to the parole and probation population. It's really about them door-knocking and employing five components which include collaboration with criminal justice, clergy engagement, community activation, public health dissemination, and good old-fashioned street outreach.

After Shelley Williams' report, it was communicated that he and Chief White would schedule something to meet.

D. Community Relations

Dr. Mary Kemper, the CEO and founder of *Reestablishing Hope Inc.* gave the following introduction and update:

They are a licensed behavior clinic, providing the mental health component, trauma-informed care, and everything that falls under the behavioral spectrum. She sits on three committees with IDHS, is the co-chair of *Response Recovery Innovation*, and the executive committee of the big SSAC committee. One of her charges is to collect providers' responses on their experiences and challenges, organization as well as clients. They understand that there have been a number of identifiable challenges that providers have been experiencing even with receiving funds and stuff from the State. They have a charter to collect data, identify the challenge areas, provide feedback and recommendations to the State, and put focus groups in place to support providers. Their first area of focus is funding providers. They are collecting survey responses from providers related to the violence prevention spectrum of services. It is a quick 5 to 10-minute survey that collects data on the organization, their experiences, and some things that they may want to learn more about on different levels. Her contact information was provided for those who may have questions or want to learn more. Survey: https://northwestern.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_29uzDolehilQEHI

V. Open Floor Updates

- A. Pastor Kisia Coleman requested the group provide testimonies or stories that they have working with clients in the scope of violence prevention so that they can be sent to Reshma Desai, Bureau Chief for Violence Prevention. Any individuals who have been helped in our programs, municipal-level data, and any type of reduction that we've seen in shootings or homicides should be sent. This information is important because the State is having its FY25 budget hearings and they need to understand how successful our programming is as it relates to gun

violence, violence prevention, youth services, and all the different things we're offering. This information is needed by the close of business day.

B. Jacqueline Davis with the *Southland Juvenile Justice Council* informed us that:

Tomorrow they are having a teen dating violence workshop at South Suburban College which starts at 8:30 am. Breakfast and lunch will be served. They also have an upcoming behavioral health mental wellness conference with Thornton High School in Harvey on March 16th. Their flyer has a QR code where people can sign up. They are going to have raffles, art therapy, canine therapy, and a plethora of opportunities and information about behavioral health. They are building their behavioral health component and interviewing to recruit therapists.

VI. Professional Development Opportunities

Gigi Moore from *Prevention First* which is a TTA of the State gave a mini-presentation on the different trainings offered through the State free of charge for Council members. Some of them come with certificates and CEUs. Information about upcoming meetings and links to resources, training, and the Group Site were provided. Gigi also indicated that the group can reach out to her for questions or help with navigating any of the sites.

VII. Lead Council Positions

Pastor Kisia Coleman showed the group the diagram provided by the State where Council member positions should be indicated. She reminded everyone to fill out the attendance link and the incentives connected to getting it done. On the attendance link, everyone can confirm which one of the Council categories or positions they represent. <https://forms.gle/p74q2QyMxnDFDWev5>

VIII. Workshop Poll

Martialeena Reid, Outreach Worker for the VPCC conducted another poll in place of the one from the last meeting to see what date was best for our proposed 4-hour (10 am - 2 pm) Gun Violence/Mental Health Workshop for community residents. The dates were Saturday, March 23rd, and Saturday, April 13th. April 13th received the most votes.

IX. Survey Link

Council members were reminded to take the State survey regarding their thoughts on our meetings: https://uic.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3yjFpXxscQ9zDAa

X. Next Meeting - The next meeting is on March 26th. Meetings are every 4th Tuesday of the month @ 11 am online for everyone's convenience.

XI. Gift Card Distribution Process

Desiree Arnold won the early bird game. Jacqueline Davis, Kim Vaughn, William Anderson, and Leah Armour won for participation and interaction. They will all receive \$10 Amazon egift cards and were reminded to let leena@trykci.org know the best email address to send them to. The cards will be sent within 48 hours.

The meeting closed at 12:32 pm.