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MAYOR EMANUEL ANNOUNCES FIFTH ANNUAL FAITH AND ACTION

Residents, community groups, faith leaders encourage the city to #PutTheGunsDown

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today joined residents, community groups and faith leaders to kick-off the fifth annual Faith and Action, a citywide initiative designed to promote positive community engagement and alternative programming for youth throughout the summer months. For the kick-off Faith and Action night, from 5 PM – 9 PM today, more than 22 events are occurring simultaneously, in neighborhoods across the city.

"All over the city, men and women are coming together to take back their streets and turn their faith – whether religious or not – into action," said Mayor Emanuel. "Public safety means we are all in. Police can't do it alone. Mentors can't do it alone. Schools can't do it alone. Faith-based institutions can't do it alone. But together, in unity, where our bonds cannot be broken, there can be no space for violence and we can truly demonstrate what it means to love thy neighbor."

This year, Mayor Emanuel was joined by CPD Superintendent Eddie Johnson at the Rain or Shine Baptist Church in the Grand Boulevard neighborhood. CPD partnered with Rain or Shine to provide food, raffle prizes, job opportunity booth, clothing donations, a Bouncy house for kids and music for community children and their families.

"When Chicagoans from every neighborhood and every background from the North Side to the South Side unite as one against gun violence, there is no firearm that can break our faith and resolve," said CPD Superintendent Eddie Johnson. "The Faith and Action events that are being held throughout the city, which serve as a rallying cry to put down the guns, should represent our every day approach towards making the sounds of gunshots a distant memory. "

The Faith and Action initiative is a call to action to create positive programming that supports youth to stay active and safe, while deterring negative behaviors during the summer. Residents and community leaders are encouraged to gather and celebrate together on their blocks and in their communities, collectively creating a safe environment throughout our city. In addition, the Police

Department CAPS office will be supporting these events and engaging with their communities to foster transparency and trust.

“Evidence shows busy are safer parks,” said General Superintendent & CEO Michael Kelly. “We encourage everyone to get involved in one of the many sports, health and social activities offered tonight as well as the 1200 community-based, cultural events presented through the Night Out in the Parks series this summer.

Last year’s Faith and Action brought together nearly 1,000 residents across the City to kick off Faith and Action. This year, participants have planned barbecues, street corner prayer sessions, door to door canvassing, block club recruitment drives, carnivals, rallies, block parties, CAPS activities, raffles, wellness checks for seniors, neighborhood clean ups, community walks, and other events for youth. All events have the common goal to help provide positive alternatives for young people this Friday and throughout the summer.

“In many ways our communities have felt churches have been missing and mute when it comes to Chicago violence,” said Pastor Chris Harris of Bright Star Community Outreach, Inc. “This amazing weekend of activities holds us accountable to get involved in demonstrative ways, adding works to our faith. The truth is, clergy and churches should say nothing until we do something about Chicago violence and trauma.”

“We are fully committed to ensuring that our youth have positive, engaging summer activities,” said Leslie Honore, Executive Director of the KLEO Community Family Life Center. “Whether its summer jobs, poetry slams or community service projects, the KLEO Center is proud to partner with the City to keep our streets safe.”

“Violence is the abductor of our community, that will never be contained by a simple amber alert,” Pastor John Zayas of Grace and Peace Church said.

“Faith and Action shows the power of how many organizations, who care deeply about the people of Chicago, can grow and work together towards holistic transformation,” said Nate Tubbs, Communications Director of Chicagoland United in Prayer. “We want to celebrate the many initiatives that are seeking peace and building community this year, and further the ongoing movement of prayer and partnership among churches and residents.”

Details about the events are available at: www.CityOfChicago.org/PutTheGunsDown

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