



Indianapolis
Gregory A. Ballard, Mayor

NEWS RELEASE

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MEDIA CONTACT:

Emily Garrett
Communications Coordinator
Office of Mayor Greg Ballard – City of Indianapolis
Emily.Garrett@indy.gov O: (317) 327-5541 C: (317) 464-7112
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Mayor Ballard Joins Community Leaders to Announce “Your Life Matters” Initiative

INDIANAPOLIS – Mayor Greg Ballard today joined community leaders to issue a call to end the violence and a plan to help young people make better choices in the city.

Mayor Ballard said in his State of the City Address, “This current pattern of violence is robbing us of an entire generation of young men of color, and it must stop. Every life in our city matters.”

Today Mayor Ballard outlined steps the city has taken and is taking to create a safer and healthier environment in our city.

2-1-1 Parenting Assistance

The City is pledging \$75,000 to 2-1-1 to expand its capacity to help. 2-1-1 can now provide information to parents who need help and guidance with their children.

“I cannot stress enough the need for parents to join us in this effort to stop the violence,” said Mayor Ballard. “If you need help, call 2-1-1. That call could determine whether you will attend your child’s graduation, sentencing hearing or funeral.”

Mentoring Help/Public Service Announcements

The Mayor also shared a list of nearly 60 organizations that can provide mentoring and role models for troubled youth. He also highlighted new PSA spots currently airing on Radio One stations that share the message that every life matters and tell young people to stop the violence.

“Radio One Indianapolis is committed to engaging the community with active messaging that encourages individuals to seek assistance and direction to avoid criminal activity,” said Chuck Williams, General Manager of Radio One Indianapolis.

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Re-Entry Assistance for Ex-Offenders

Every year approximately 5,000 ex-offenders are released from the Department of Corrections into Indianapolis. The Mayor's Office of Re-Entry works to give these ex-offenders a genuine shot at turning their life around by providing a directory of groups that will assist them with everything from jobs to housing, assign them a specially trained mentor to help prior to and up to 18 months after their release, moving probation officers to IMPD district offices to be closer to the ex-offenders living in their area, and showing them a video on their first day in prison to help them prepare for their first day out.

Prescription for Hope

This program, sponsored by City Crime Prevention Grants and private donations, enrolls at-risk people, mostly young black men between ages 14 and 20 and those who enter Eskenazi Hospital with gunshot, stab and other wounds resulting from violence, into programs to help them turn their life around. In the past three years, nearly 150 people have been enrolled in Prescription for Hope. Less than five percent of those people have returned to the hospital with a violence-related injury, and only 10 percent have been arrested.

Mayor's Your Life Matters Task Force

Breaking this cycle of violence will take the entire community. So Mayor Ballard is creating the Mayor's Your Life Matters Task Force. This group of community and faith-based leaders will make sure the city is connecting silos, collaborating and using nationally recognize best practices to break the cycle of violence. The creation of a community task force is one of the recommendations of Cities United, a group praised by President Obama two weeks ago as a prime example of bi-partisan cooperation between cities seeking to reduce violence.

In addition to these initiatives, IMPD officers have implemented extra operational tactics to help reduce violent criminal activity. "Reducing violent crime in our city will take a complete approach by all of us," Public Safety Director Troy Riggs said. "There isn't one solution to the challenges we are facing. It will require the continued good work of our police department and will also call for our entire community to confront the social issues that lead some citizens to feel that they are out of positive options in life."

IMPD is increasing its research efforts to identify those who have historically engaged in violent criminal behavior. The Marion County Prosecutor's Office has also allocated additional resources to IMPD to help target the city's worst offenders. Increased citizen-officer interactions at the neighborhood level have also generated more tips and leads.

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