

Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN)
Monthly Newsletter for the Durham Community
August 2009

How You Can Help Make Durham A Safer Place to Live

I am proud to live in a city with dedicated residents and even prouder, as the Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) Coordinator, to be able to connect those concerned citizens with local, state, and federal law enforcement partners. Durham is in the enviable position to boast about having five active Partners Against Crime groups, strong collaborations between the police department and community-based organizations, and solid alliances with law enforcement agencies across the region.

And still, I believe that something is missing. Where is the public outcry and desire to actively mobilize after this summer's incidents on Hoover Road, Hart Street, and Atka Court where children were wounded by gunfire?

Durham is as safe as any city its size and Project Safe Neighborhoods' mission is to make it safer. The widely varied efforts of our police department deserve attention and respect. Our officers support this community through initiatives that run the gamut from compassionate care to finely targeted suppression. However, community safety is a partnership and Durham will only be as safe as you, its residents, allow it to be.

You can support efforts to make our city a safer place by:

- becoming aware that citizens have power against violent crime. Residents, neighbors, and even family members can report individuals with weapons or firearms they discover. Criminals will lose control over our streets and sidewalks when residents stand together to insist they've had enough.
- knowing that saving lives is not "snitching". Criminals use the term "snitching" when individuals with consciences feel compelled to report illegal activities. Take down the tag numbers of cars you believe may be involved in drive-by shootings. Parents and care-givers can call PSN for help when they see signs of gang involvement in their children. Wouldn't you rather feel the rewards of keeping your neighborhood safe than living with the knowledge that someone's child was shot because you didn't report something you saw? I would imagine any child's mother would want someone to "snitch" and prevent a horrific act.
- reaching out to other Durham citizens. Please participate in Community Responses as time permits. They are announced in newspapers and via email to anyone who requests notification. Maybe if we sought to understand and support our neighbors we'll be less likely to perpetuate violence against one another. Scheduled Responses take less than an hour of your afternoon. I have fond memories of my own children growing up with the Museum of Life and Science's beloved dinosaur. However, I witnessed a far greater public outcry over its potential demise than I did when PSN held Community Responses for three Durham children who were shot less than a month later.
- understanding that community safety is a give-and-take (and win-win) relationship. As a Partner Against Crime do you simply expect updated reports in your neighborhood listserv or do you actively support DPD initiatives?

Law enforcement officers are working above-and-beyond their traditional roles to keep you safe. Project Safe Neighborhoods staff work to mobilize citizens against gun crime and violence. Are you willing to join us for the good of our community? - Jennifer Snyder

PSN Partners Spotlight: Durham At-Risk Youth Collaborative

The primary mission of The Durham At-Risk Youth Collaborative is to reduce the dropout rate in the Durham Public School System (DPS). Youth that finish high school are more likely to go to a community or four-year college. We all know that education is the key to finding meaningful employment and becoming a productive member of our community.

The Collaborative is an association of programs that share this common objective. Members believe that by working together they can have a greater impact on the dropout rate at DPS. The Collaborative works to provide a year-round series of programs to support youth at-risk of dropping out. There are currently four programs that make up the Durham At-Risk Youth Collaborative. They are:

- The Restoration Institute for Leaders (RIL)
 - RIL is a summer course recovery program
- P.R.O.U.D
 - PROUD is an afterschool program
- The African American Male Leadership Academy (AAMLA)
 - AAMLA is a tutoring and mentoring program with a summer camp
- YO-Durham
 - YO-Durham is a summer program that prepares youth for a 36-week jobs internship during the school year.

ONE SIMPLE THING YOU CAN DO to Prevent Gun Violence in Your Community: Active Parenting

According to Lt. Howard Alexander of the Durham Police Department, one successful way to keep your children from joining gangs is to simply be observant of your children's behavior.

"You want to watch out for your children's attitude; when they start talking back to you, when they start putting their hands on you," he said. "Start noticing clothing changes, sneaking out of the house. Don't be afraid to talk to your children. Always remember: You are the parent. It is not a democracy. These are your rules. These are your children."

Pointers for Parents: Five Things to Teach Children

1. Never go anywhere with (or open the door to) someone you or your parents don't know and trust. If someone touches you in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable, say no, get away, and tell a trusted adult.
2. Don't use alcohol or other drugs, and stay away from people and places associated with them.
3. Stick with friends who are against violence and drugs, and stay away from known trouble spots.
4. Get involved to make school safer and better – conduct a poster contest against violence, hold anti-drug rallies, counsel peers, settle disputes peacefully. If there is no program, help start one!
5. Help younger children learn to avoid being crime victims. Set a good example, and volunteer to help with community efforts to stop crime.

PSN In Your Neighborhood:

August 4: National Night Out

August 7: Toy Exchange at Urban Ministeries

August 11: Cleveland Holloway

August 17: Old Five Points

August 27: Bragtown Weed and Seed

Do you need help with an organization or community presentation regarding gun crime and violence? Call the Project Safe Neighborhoods Office at 560-4438 x29230.