



Choose Peace

Gun Violence Must Cease

Gun Violence Prevention Summit

Sunday, Aug. 6 - Monday Aug. 7, 2023
Hilton University of Florida Conference Center



City of
Gainesville



About Gun Violence Prevention in Gainesville

The City of Gainesville and its surrounding areas are seeing a rising tide of gun violence. In 2020, 79% of all homicides and 53% of all suicides in the United States involved firearms. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) calls this a serious public health problem.

Today we take a step forward—as partners and collaborators—to reverse this trend.

This Gun Violence Prevention Summit is a convening of partners to explore and address gun violence in our community. *Choose Peace: Gun Violence Must Cease* speaks to both the problem and the solution. We will examine why these crimes occur. We will talk about services and programs that offer support. And we will work to develop a framework to hold each of us accountable moving forward.

This is where we join together in ways that make a difference. You may be an educator whose connection with students inspires success; or a first responder who sees the cost of violence daily; or a young person with input to share.

We are grateful to work side by side with all to reduce gun violence in Gainesville and Alachua County.

This program is supplemented by a resource packet with additional material on the subject of gun violence. It includes information along with a list of resources and organizations that provide assistance. Please reference these materials as you attend this two-day summit. Digital copies of these resources are available at GainesvilleFL.gov/2023Summit.



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Letter from Mayor Harvey L. Ward Jr.

When I was sworn in as mayor on Jan. 5, 2023, I was granted a total of 1,463 days in office to make this community better. On that morning, I announced my most important policy goals.

Reducing gun-related crime is at the top of that list. Our community feels a sense of urgency. Every day counts in the effort to move forward.

James Baldwin wrote, “Neither love nor terror makes one blind. Indifference makes one blind.” I promise you that while I am mayor, we will not be indifferent to gun violence.

This is one of the primary issues that we need to shine a light on as a community. I say “shine a light on” because the idea that we are going to solve it alone is not realistic. Gun violence is a national crisis. But we have to do the things we can, that we can do together, to minimize the impact in our community.

I am thankful to all who engage in this conversation. I appreciate everyone who has a hand in helping reverse the rising tide of gun violence in our city, in our state, and across the nation. It is certainly an issue that needs more direct action, and I am glad we are at a point where we can dive more deeply into that work.

The work of safety depends on many partners. We are committed to working not only with our own community members, local leaders and police, but with law enforcement and officials from around our region to begin searching for answers to this profoundly complex issue.

Letter from District I Commissioner (Mayor Pro-Tem) Desmon Duncan-Walker

I think we can have a very candid, organic conversation about ways that we can move forward, addressing gun violence, centering community. Because what we understand is the police department has their strategy, and they will continue. But we understand clearly, and the statistics have shown, that fighting gun violence takes more than police.

There is probably not a person in this space who does not understand the fact that our approach to gun violence is going to require all hands on deck. I'm very excited to hear from our partners and neighbors about how best to engage our community in a way that will make a difference.

The solution must involve everyone. What I realize is that for every idea I have, there are hundreds of ideas the community has. Those are a valuable and essential part of our road map. As I declared in my Feb. 2, 2023 motion, approved unanimously by the City Commission, gun violence is a crisis in the City of Gainesville. It is a public health crisis. The steps we take in addressing the many root causes of that crisis is what this conversation is about.



Gun Violence Prevention Summit - Day One

Sunday, August 6 – Community Day*

The sessions today focus on the community perspective. Taking a partnered approach to learning and sharing, these conversations and activities draw on the knowledge of mental health professionals, thought leaders, justice system experts, neighbors and advocates. The goal is to understand the steps community members can take right now to help reduce gun violence in our neighborhoods.

Schedule:

2 – 2:30 p.m.

- **Invocation**
- **Welcome and Reason for Convening (District I Commissioner (Mayor Pro-Tem) Desmon Duncan-Walker)**
- **Opening Remarks and Recognition of Elected Officials (Commissioner Book)**

2:30 – 4:15 p.m.

Dinner / Panel Discussion: The Role of Community in Addressing Gun Violence

Greg Bradley, Founder and President of Mirror Image Leadership Academy, moderates this panel discussion as experts from a variety of disciplines share effective methods for making community part of the solution.

- **Lauryn Simmons**, Junior Class Vice President, Gainesville High School
- **Zouzouko Doualehi**, Compliance Manager, City of Gainesville Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- **Heather Jones**, Chief Assistant State Attorney, Office of the State Attorney, Eight Judicial Circuit
- **Alexandra Martinez**, Director of the Alachua County Crisis Center
- **Adrian Price**, Social Acceptance Advocate

4:15 – 4:20 p.m.

Session Transition and Overview

4:20 – 4:30 p.m.

Break

4:30 – 6 p.m.

Resource Fair

The Resource Fair, led by **Cherie Kelly**, City of Gainesville Youth Services Manager, is an opportunity to highlight and learn about programs that strengthen and safeguard our community by providing support that addresses the root causes of gun violence. Organizations include Children's Trust of Alachua County, City of Gainesville, Moms Demand Action, Peaceful Paths and more.

Educational Breakout Sessions

This series of breakout sessions is designed to assist in evaluating and understanding the rising tide of gun violence on the national and local levels while supplying tools to discourage dangerous behavior and mitigate risk. View detailed information on each session on page 14.

6 – 7:30 p.m.

Youth Town Hall

Amid the rising tide of gun violence across the United States and in our community, it is crucial to bring young people into the conversation. The Youth Town Hall will center youth voices, assisted by a panel of moderators. To provide an opportunity for context and analysis, DJ E-lo will play snippets of drill music as part of this event. Gainesville District I Commissioner (Mayor Pro-Tem) Desmon Duncan-Walker will serve as moderator for this important discussion.

Sponsored by:



CHILDREN'S TRUST
OF ALACHUA COUNTY

Academic Experts:

- **Dr. Derek Hicks**, Associate Professor of Religion and Culture in the School of Divinity at Wake Forest University
- **Dr. Micah Johnson**, Assistant Professor of Sociology in the Department of Mental Health Law & Policy at the University of South Florida

Youth Panelists

- **Marland Perry**, Youth Steering Committee Member, City of Gainesville One Nation One Project (ONOP)
- **Youth Representative**, member of Manhood Foundation Youth Program (invited)

7:30 – 9 p.m.

Kickback / Reception

**The material in these sessions will include violent content and some profane language. Portions of the discussion may be emotionally and intellectually challenging, particularly for young people. Mental health resources will be available on-site for those who would like additional support. The intent of this event is to create a space where we can engage thoughtfully together.*

Gun Violence Prevention Summit

Day One Speaker Biographies

John Alexander, Program Director, Gainesville Police Department

John Alexander has served as commander with Gainesville Police Department's Youth and Community Services Division. This division houses important programs including school resource officers and the Brave Overt Leaders of Distinction (B.O.L.D.) Re-entry Program. Mr. Alexander spent many years at Reichert House Youth Academy and in 2018 was honored by The Gainesville Sun in its 40 Under Forty list for writing a national charter to create a Police Athletic League and implementing an accredited high school diploma program for dropouts at the Reichert House. He also has been acknowledged as a Paul Harris Fellow by Rotary for commitment in youth development and community engagement.

Edwin Book, District II Commissioner, City of Gainesville

District II Commissioner Edwin Book was elected to the Gainesville City Commission in November 2022. A graduate of the University of Florida with a master's degree in educational leadership, Commissioner Book served as an officer with the Gainesville Police Department for 27 years. He is currently Chief of Police and emergency manager for Santa Fe College, where he is also an adjunct instructor teaching primarily to public safety recruits. Commissioner Book has been involved in many service and non-profit efforts in our community, including Keep Alachua County Beautiful, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, the Rotary Club and the United Way.

Greg Bradley, Founder and President of Mirror Image Leadership Academy

Greg Bradley started Mirror Image Leadership Academy on the premise that youth are already leaders, and with the goal of helping young men discover the leader inside themselves. Mirror Image now has 51 scholars participating in a three-year program. Earlier this summer, the school's second-year students visited Atlanta and its third-year students traveled to Ghana. The academy focuses on five pillars of development: self-image, purpose, faith, character and work ethic. With growing support from the community, Mirror Image has raised nearly \$400,000 in funding over the past three years. Mr. Bradley is also the owner of the G. Bradley Allstate Insurance Agency and is an alumnus of Leadership Gainesville and Leadership Atlanta.



Corey Collins, Youth and Community Specialist of the River Phoenix Center for Peacebuilding

Corey Collins is a certified Florida Supreme Court County Mediator and a passionate youth and community specialist. He has extensive experience engaging with youth by introducing learning opportunities to increase their skills and abilities, modifying behavior, decreasing re-offenses, and promoting their future. In his role as youth and community specialist with the River Phoenix Center for Peacebuilding, Mr. Collins works to facilitate nonviolent solutions and is fluent in the tools and skills of peacebuilding and restorative justice. Mr. Collins also has worked with the the SNAP in Schools Program (Stop Now and Plan), and is a member of the Florida Academy of Professional Mediators.

Zouzouko Doualehi, City of Gainesville Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Zouzouko Doualehi, known as Zou by family and friends, is a graduate of Eastside High School and the University of Florida's Levin College of Law. As a child, Mr. Doualehi was one of the at-risk students who received mentoring and guidance at the Reichert House Youth Academy. He went on to serve on the prosecuting team in the Eighth Judicial Circuit of the State Attorney's Office before joining the City of Gainesville's Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Mr. Doualehi's work with the city includes: increasing education and awareness of diversity, equity and inclusion; enhancing policy development using an equity lens; expanding outreach to include more small, minority and women business owners; and providing timely, fair and objective responses to complaints and concerns.

Desmon Duncan-Walker, District I Commissioner and Mayor Pro-Tem, City of Gainesville

District I Commissioner (Mayor Pro-Tem) Desmon Duncan-Walker was elected to the Gainesville City Commission in March 2021. A graduate of Buchholz High School and Bethune-Cookman University, Commissioner Duncan-Walker worked as an administrator of government programs and cultural institutions in Miami-Dade County before returning to Gainesville to assist her family business and support the community. She is the founder of the Gainesville Alliance for Equitable Development, and has worked with the A. Quinn Jones Museum & Cultural Center, the Gainesville Community Reinvestment Area's Fifth Avenue / Pleasant Street Advisory Board, the Alachua County NAACP and "The Voice Radio Show."

Day One Speaker Biographies (cont'd)

Derek Hicks, Associate Professor of Religion and Culture, Wake Forest University

Dr. Derek Hicks is an associate professor of religion and culture at the Wake Forest University (WFU) School of Divinity, where he is the founding director of the Center for Research, Engagement and Collaboration in African American Life. Dr. Hicks also co-chairs the steering committee of WFU's Slavery, Race, and Memory Project, and teaches and researches broadly in the areas of African American religion, religion in North America, and cultural studies. He is the author of the book "Reclaiming Spirit in the Black Faith Tradition," and is a recipient of the Martin Luther King Jr. Building the Dream Award for his justice work at Wake Forest University and in the Winston Salem community.

Micah E. Johnson, Professor, Activist and Artist, University of South Florida

Dr. Micah E. Johnson is a professor, author and award-winning performance artist. His research and creative works focus on childhood trauma, behavioral health, youth violence and social justice. Dr. Johnson has published more than 20 scientific articles and has received four million dollars in research grants from the National Institutes of Health. He is the recipient of USF's 2023 Outstanding Research Achievement Award and his work has been cited by The New York Times, ESPN, Senator Bernie Sanders, Charlamagne Tha God, and others. Dr. Johnson is also a lifelong hip-hop enthusiast, and was a recording artist for over a decade, working at the legendary southern gangster rap record label Slip-N-Slide Records. As a victim of gun violence himself, Dr. Johnson works extensively in jails, prisons and on death row to understand the relationships between stress, culture and violence.

Heather Jones, Chief Assistant State Attorney, Office of the State Attorney, Eight Judicial Circuit

As Chief Assistant State Attorney for the Eighth Judicial Circuit, Heather Jones prosecutes criminal cases for the State of Florida. The office is responsible for the screening and prosecution of cases ranging from criminal traffic charges up to first-degree murder. Ms. Jones mainly focuses on major crimes or those that are high profile in the community. She works to enforce the law and represent the people of the Eighth Judicial Circuit in criminal and certain civil legal matters. This circuit includes which includes Alachua, Baker, Bradford, Gilchrist, Levy and Union counties.



Cherie Kelly, Youth Services Manager, City of Gainesville

Cherie Kelly is the youth services manager for the City of Gainesville Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs Department. She also serves as co-lead for One Nation, One Project (ONOP) GNV alongside Community Health Director Brandy Stone. ONOP is an initiative to prevent youth gun violence in the community by increasing the opportunities for arts and cultural programming for young people. Ms. Kelly previously worked with Partnership for Strong Families, helping families be safe, happy and together, and also for Project YouthBuild, an educational, occupational and leadership program for young people with low incomes who have dropped out of school and wish to pursue coursework or professional training while giving back to their community.

Alexandra Martinez, Director of the Alachua County Crisis Center

Dr. Alexandra Martinez received her master's and specialist's degree in Marriage and Family Therapy from the University of Florida in 2001, and is currently the Director of the Alachua County Crisis Center. The Crisis Center is a National Suicide Prevention Lifeline Center and offers 24/7 crisis and suicide intervention services via phone, mobile response, telehealth and face to face. Over the past 20 years, Dr. Martinez has provided more than 2,500 hours of training and consultations on crisis intervention, family counseling, diversity and suicide prevention. She is the Florida Suicide Prevention Coalition Region 3 Director and her speaking engagements have included presentations for the American Association of Suicidology, National Association of School Resource Officers, Florida Association of Hostage Negotiators, Florida Suicide Prevention Coalition, Florida Parks and Recreation Association and the Florida Network of Youth and Family Services.

Marland Perry Jr., One Nation One Project GNV Youth Steering Committee Member

Marland Perry Jr. first became aware of gun violence as an elementary school student. By the time he entered high school, he had noticed that some students who exhibited violent behavior were influenced by their peers. Today, as an adult, he looks back in sadness. Some of those peers, Mr. Perry notes, are now dead or in jail. Unlike his upbringing—with a supportive mother and father—these children may have missed the positive influence of a strong mentor who could set a good example. Mr. Perry says this is why he has continued to move forward in his education and career, and it is the primary reason he feels called to help others.

Day One Speaker Biographies (cont'd)

Adrian Price, Social Acceptance Advocate

Adrian Price is a social acceptance advocate who served time on a charge of robbery with a deadly weapon. While in prison, Mr. Price noticed that many of the people he met were exhibiting traits and behaviors that seemed to trace back to a similar set of causes. He believes many young people who become justice-involved have grown up without a mentor, have received very little educational support, and feel no sense of real opportunity. This experience motivated Mr. Price to work on behalf of youth who have faced these challenges and guide the community toward more effective interventions.

Lauryn Simmons, Junior Class Vice President, Gainesville High School

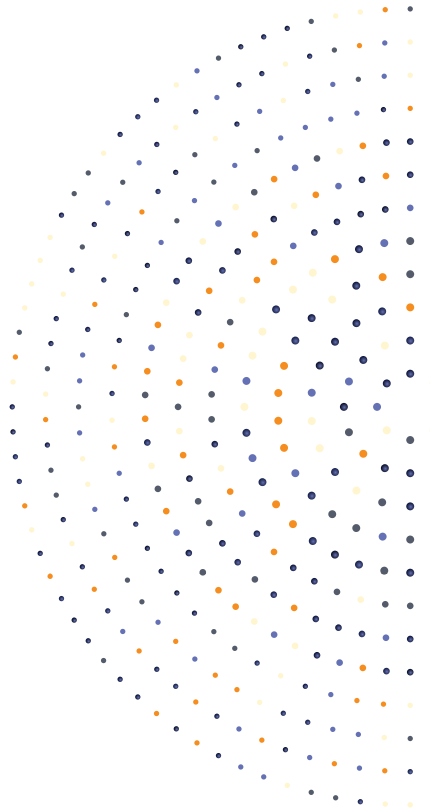
Lauryn Simmons currently serves as the Junior Class Vice President at Gainesville High School. She is also a member of the high school's weightlifting and softball teams. In her spare time, Miss Simmons volunteers with various organizations throughout Alachua County.

Joni Williams Splett, PhD, Associate Professor and Director, Prevention and Intervention Network, College of Education, University of Florida

Dr. Joni Williams Splett is an assistant professor in the University of Florida's School of Psychology and Early Childhood Studies Program and a licensed psychologist. Her work aims to understand and improve youth mental health promotion, prevention, and intervention strategies implemented in organizations that serve youth and families, such as schools, mental health agencies, and community organizations. Most recently, Dr. Splett has examined how these strategies may prevent school-based violence and aggression. She teaches social-emotional intervention and assessment courses, including violence prevention, crisis intervention and suicidality.

Caleb Young, High Risk Intervention/Gang Investigator, Gainesville Police Department

A native of Gainesville, Caleb Young saw the disparities that increase risk for young boys and girls and decided to create change. Working with the Gainesville Police Department, Mr. Young brought together professionals from law enforcement, intervention and prevention, employment outreach, education, mental health and social services. The goal was to identify and mediate potentially lethal conflicts in the community and then follow up with effective case management. To this end, Mr. Young has served as assistant director at the Reichert House Youth Academy, worked with the Brave Overt Leaders of Distinction (B.O.L.D.), and has certifications with the National Alliance of Mental Illness Crisis Intervention Team and the Florida Gang Investigators Association.





Educational Breakout Sessions:

Below The Water Level:

During this session, participants will be provided with tools and strategies to resolve conflict. This approach will be taught by **Corey Collins**, Youth and Community Specialist of River Phoenix Center for Peacebuilding.

Youth and Hip Hop Culture:

Understanding the genre known as drill music, and how its messages impact our youth, can help us develop better solutions. As **Dr. Derek Hicks** of Wake Forest University notes in his lecture, *Youth, Hood and Hip Hop*—this phenomenon is the latest development in a long history of young people taking societal cues from the energy and power of music.

Violence Intervention and Prevention Strategies:

Violence intervention and prevention is an umbrella term for a collection of interrelated approaches that promote public safety. These include everything from family support services to street outreach workers who mediate disputes before gunfire erupts. These techniques are taught by intervention specialists **John Alexander** and **Caleb Young**. Redirecting for a more positive outcome is the goal.

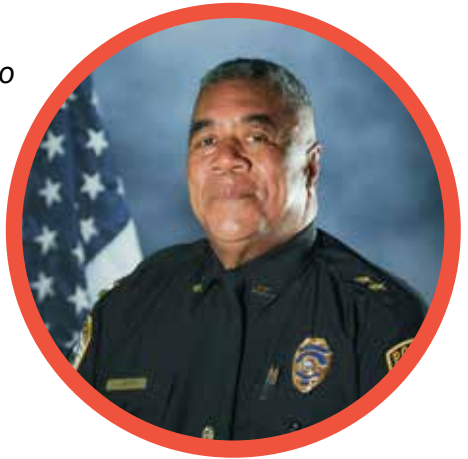
Social and Emotional Well-Being and the Risk for Violence:

One way to protect children is by monitoring their social and emotional well-being and the warning signs associated with the risk of violence to themselves and others. Children and youth's social and emotional well-being is influenced by factors from home, school, peers, and online environment. Everyone can help monitor children's social and emotional well-being and the risk for violence in these contexts to prevent harm and promote healthy development. **Dr. Joni Williams Splett** of University of Florida's School of Psychology and Early Childhood Studies Program will present information to help parents understand healthy social and emotional development and look for warning signs associated with mental health needs and risk of violence.



“The Gainesville Police Department and I would like to encourage every member of the Gainesville community to personally take an active role in protecting our most precious resource, our children and young adults. Every life is priceless and should be treated that way. We, the family of Gainesville, Florida, must guard against the acceptance of gun violence as a natural phenomenon. Know where your children are, know what they are doing and know who they are socializing with. Protect our future and teach our youth the value of human life, conflict resolution and compassion for others. End violence and live!”

—Gainesville Police Chief Lonnie Scott





Gun Violence Awareness

In recognition of Gun Violence Awareness Day on June 2, 2023, the City of Gainesville joined a number of community groups in a demonstration of solidarity. Along with Moms Demand Action, M.A.M.A.'s Club and Save Our Children, city leaders and staff held an awareness gathering at the Martin Luther King Jr. Multipurpose Center.

District I Commissioner (Mayor Pro-Tem) Desmon Duncan-Walker read a proclamation declaring Gun Violence Awareness Day in the City of Gainesville. Commissioner Duncan-Walker, who introduced the Feb. 2, 2023 resolution declaring gun violence as a public health crisis in our community, has been a strong and persistent voice in this effort.

Immediately following the ceremony, the center opened for Teen Midnight Basketball, an event series hosted by the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs Department that provides a safe place for young people to engage in a fun, nighttime activity.

"I have only become more determined to focus on how we can use opportunity, education and the arts to reverse this trend in our community. As a product of Gainesville, the growing occurrence of gun violence, especially the rise in incidents involving youth, is particularly disturbing to me. Addressing gun violence is a community-wide responsibility. I am confident this convening will be the beginning of a movement within our great city."

**—District I Commissioner (Mayor Pro-Tem)
Desmon Duncan-Walker**



Gun Buy-Back Events Take Weapons Off the Streets

The Gainesville Police Department held three gun buy-back events in Fiscal Year 2022 to take weapons off the streets. GPD offered gift cards up to \$300 in exchange for assault rifles, pistols, long guns and revolvers. Police record the manufacturer, model, caliber and serial number of each surrendered firearm, and the collected weapons are sawed, crushed and destroyed. State Attorney Brian Kramer has also traditionally authorized amnesty from prosecution for any person participating in the event. Chief Investigator Darry Lloyd of the state attorney's office has said the events promote conversations with the community to make Gainesville safer.

“This is a national problem with very real local consequences, and Gainesville leaders are committed to tackling this challenge locally with responsibility, compassion and transparency. Crimes connected to gun violence, including burglaries and possession of illegal firearms, are a present and growing problem in every district.”

—Mayor Harvey L. Ward Jr.

Gun Violence Prevention Summit - Day Two

Monday, August 7 – Policy Day

The sessions today focus on the overlapping spheres of social disparity, mental health and public safety. This day is about strategizing around operational approaches that ultimately improve the Gainesville-Alachua County experience in anti-gun violence efforts. From brainstorming prevention models based on the range of factors that put people at risk for violence, to enhancing preparedness with an original tabletop exercise, these activities are designed to spur a discussion around changing policies and procedures for better outcomes.

Schedule:

9 – 9:30 a.m.

- **Invocation**
- **Welcome and Reason for Convening (Mayor Ward)**
- **Opening Remarks and Recognition of Elected Officials (Commissioners Chestnut, Anna Prizzia)**

9:30 – 10:30 a.m.

Overview and Introduction to the Social-Ecological Model

On July 20, 2023, the Gainesville City Commission declared gun violence a public health crisis. Gainesville Community Health Director **Brandy Stone, MPH, CPH**, and University of Florida Senior Lecturer **Julia Varnes, PhD**, give an overview of a public health approach to violence prevention as outlined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The Social-Ecological Model (SEM) will be described as a tool to develop actionable policies and practices.

10:45 – 12:15 p.m.

Sector Breakouts: A Public Health Perspective for Gun Violence Prevention

This series of breakout sessions is divided by sector. Each group will brainstorm factors relative to the sphere of influence using the Social-Ecological Model. The discussions will include prevention strategies and protective factors such as safe homes, social support networks, convenient healthcare, and opportunities for engaging programs and activities.

- Public Health, Healthcare and Social Services
- Elected Officials / Local Government
- Public Safety / Judicial System Stakeholders
- Educators and School Administrators
- Business and Civic Community Members

12:15 – 1:30 p.m.

Lunch / Keynote Speaker: Ariel Cathcart, Everytown for Gun Safety

1:30 – 2:45 p.m.

Panel Review: Learning from Sectors

This is an opportunity to learn from the sectors. As moderator of this panel review, **Mayor Harvey L. Ward Jr.** will employ the following prompts to generate discussion based on the previous activity.

- How can your sector intervene with positive action items to work across each level of the social-ecological model to prevent gun violence?
- What can your sector do to increase protective factors and decrease risk factors for gun violence in our community?

2:45 – 4:30 p.m.

Tabletop Exercise

All stakeholders have a role to play in preventing gun violence. This tabletop exercise encourages participants to share knowledge and perspectives as they work through a real world, multi-phase gun violence scenario together. Using the Social-Ecological Model to address a series of increasingly complex health and social challenges, this activity focuses on interoperability between sectors.

4:30 – 5 p.m.

Next Steps / Where do we go from here?

Our final session is led by **Bishop Christopher Stokes** of the Willie Mae Stokes Community Center and **Jeffrey Weisberg** of the River Phoenix Center for Peacebuilding. The discussion looks at next steps in the development of enhanced communication, improved leveraging of resources, and centralized data collection to heighten future collaborative strategies. Participants also have an opportunity to reflect on what they have learned.

5 p.m.

Closing Remarks

Day Two Speaker Biographies

Ariel Cathcart, Manager of Mayoral Outreach at Everytown for Gun Safety

Ariel Cathcart serves as the Manager of Mayoral Outreach at Everytown for Gun Safety, which is the largest gun violence prevention organization in the United States. With nearly six million supporters from across the country, Everytown for Gun Safety pushes for public safety policies that respect Second Amendment rights and reduce gun violence. Ms. Cathcart engages with leaders across the country to tackle gun violence in their cities. She has previously served as a liaison for external groups such as the African-American Mayors Association and AARP—both policy-driven organizations with coordinated efforts for specific constituencies.

Cynthia Chestnut, At-large Commissioner, City of Gainesville

A native of Tallahassee, at-large Commissioner Cynthia Chestnut was the first African American woman elected to the Gainesville City Commission as mayor-commissioner and the first woman and African American elected to serve in the Florida House of Representatives, House District 23. As a state representative, Commissioner Chestnut served as chair of the House Committee on Education and helped create the legislation that would eventually become Bright Futures, a scholarship program to reward Florida high school graduates for high achievement. She also worked to pass a 1994 bill focused on reparations for the survivors of the Rosewood Massacre. Commissioner Chestnut rejoined the City Commission in January 2022, serving in the seat where she began her political career as an at-large commissioner.

Anna Prizzia, District 3 Commissioner and Chair, Alachua County

Anna Prizzia is District 3 Commissioner and Alachua County Commission Chair. She founded and currently oversees the UF/IFAS Field & Fork Program, and works as the campus food systems coordinator for the University of Florida. Commissioner Prizzia has two decades of experience in sustainability efforts, including working as statewide coordinator for the Florida Farm to School Program, founding and managing sustainability efforts at UF, and working with several non-profits and community organizations to address education, food access and economic opportunity.



Bishop Christopher Stokes, Willie Mae Stokes Community Center

Bishop Christopher Stokes is pastor of New Beginning Christian Worship Center in Micanopy and the executive director of the Willie Mae Stokes Community Center, which he established to serve the youth of Alachua County and surrounding communities. The center is a safe haven that offers tutoring, afterschool care and access to technology, guidance and support for families in need. Bishop Stokes also coordinates fresh food donations for area families and is known as a mediator and peacemaker who steps forward to resolve conflict and discord within the community.

Brandy Stone, MPH, CPH

Brandy Stone serves as the Community Health Director with Gainesville Fire Rescue at the City of Gainesville. The first in this role, Ms. Stone works to coordinate public health efforts for the City of Gainesville, execute the city's Community Health Improvement Plan, and provide administrative oversight of the Community Resource Paramedicine Program. She also serves as the co-lead for One Nation One Project GNV, an initiative to promote youth wellbeing and reduce youth gun violence through arts and cultural activities. Ms. Stone has a Master of Public Health degree from the University of Florida and is certified in public health.

Julia Varnes, PhD, MPH, MCHES

Dr. Julia Varnes has worked and practiced in public health for nearly 20 years. Although her general area of expertise is in planning and evaluating health education and promotion programs, Dr. Varnes's specific area of focus is psychosocial health and includes interpersonal violence prevention and sociocultural influences on health and behavior. Dr. Varnes has a long history of involvement in and service to the profession. She is also a Master Certified Health Education Specialist (MCHES) and a member of Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers (MINT).



Day Two Speaker Biographies (cont'd)

Harvey L. Ward Jr., Mayor, City of Gainesville

Harvey L. Ward Jr. was elected to the Gainesville City Commission in 2017 and elected as mayor in November 2022. A graduate of Eastside High School, Santa Fe College and the University of Florida, Mayor Ward is passionate about reducing gun violence, improving safety across the city, and creating a more equitable community. Under his leadership, the City of Gainesville has approved partnerships that will build more than 200 affordable homes and will bring health, transit, recreation and economic development projects to east Gainesville. Mayor Ward has worked in the Gainesville non-profit community for decades, formerly serving as Executive Director of the Holy Trinity Episcopal Foundation and in several leadership capacities at WUFT-TV/FM.

Jeffrey Weisberg, Executive Director of the River Phoenix Center for Peacebuilding

Jeffrey Weisberg has designed, developed and implemented a wide range of programs and services in Gainesville, throughout the United States and throughout the world. His work with youth includes: police/youth dialogues, student/educator dialogues, peer mediation, juvenile diversion programs, social/emotional learning, restorative justice, youth empowerment and coming of age programs.





Gun Violence Prevention Initiative

The Gainesville Police Department's Neighborhood Policing Initiative, launched in 2020, trains officers and neighbors together in the areas of community problem-solving and policing. The department actively analyzes data on calls-for-service related to homicides and shots fired, looking for patterns and other key performance indicators. They also measure performance by speaking with neighbors who live in areas most impacted by violence.

Violence Prevention ARPA Funding

1. Forensic equipment purchased includes equipment to process scenes after violent crime occurs in a neighborhood. GPD has purchased lighting, screens, ladders and other items to ensure the proper processing of a scene. Currently on order is a BrassTrax machine that compares shell casings in multiple crime scenes. GPD also has an additional forensic truck on order to provide more response to violent crimes scenes.
2. Gun buy-backs focus on providing gift cards in exchange for firearms. In collaboration with the State Attorney's Office, GPD has been able to collect more than 100 firearms during these events.
3. Meridian Behavioral Healthcare sponsorship for the Stop the Violence Rally provides needed supplies for community events to prevent violence in our community.



This program is supplemented by a resource packet with additional material on the subject of gun violence. It includes information along with a list of resources and organizations that provide assistance.

One Nation One Project



One Nation One Project (ONOP) is a national initiative in Gainesville and eight other U.S. cities. Its goal is to use arts and culture to promote community healing and well-being. This project unites artists, local governments and community health providers.

In Jan. 2022, the City Commission recognized youth gun violence as a local issue, and it has worsened in the aftermath of the pandemic. For this reason, the City Commission decided to apply to take part in ONOP and put two percent of the city's American Rescue Plan Act funds (\$648,172) towards art and culture activities to address youth violence.

The city has created a youth steering committee to engage local affected youth, and has also engaged community members in the field of health, youth services and the arts.

Phase One:

- Call for projects launched March 2023 (66 applications received)
- 20 small-scale arts & wellness projects were selected and funded up to \$5,000
- Engage community members to share their ideas on how the next phase of the project will look

Phase Two:

- Projects will be larger in nature in partnership with other community institutions
- Projects are led by the information gathered in Phase One
- Applications for Phase Two open in fall 2023, with the awarded projects running until summer 2024

Phase Three:

- A large coordinated community event, hosted in summer 2024, will showcase the previous work done



Please reference these materials as you attend this two-day summit. Digital copies of these resources are available at GainesvilleFL.gov/2023Summit.



“As we move forward with this planning process, we invite participation from our friends and collaborators. This is an important step in working together to find solutions to the problem of gun violence. My office is honored to partner with all who will take a seat at the table.”

—Gainesville City Manager Cynthia W. Curry

City Commissioners

- *Mayor Harvey L. Ward Jr.*
- *District I Commissioner (Mayor Pro-Tem) Desmon Duncan-Walker*
- *Commissioner At-large Reina Saco*
- *Commissioner At-large Cynthia Chestnut*
- *District II Commissioner Ed Book*
- *District III Commissioner Casey Willits*
- *District IV Commissioner Bryan Eastman*

Charter Officers

- *City Auditor (interim) Brecka Anderson*
- *City Attorney Daniel Nee*
- *City Clerk (interim) Kristen Bryant*
- *City Manager Cynthia W. Curry*
- *General Manager of Utilities Tony Cunningham*
- *Office of Equity & Inclusion Director Zeria Folston*

Contributing Funding Partners

- *Children's Trust of Alachua County*
- *Alachua County Public Schools*

Committee Members

- Tametria Campbell, Department of Community Relations
- Yvette Carter, Director of Government Affairs and Community Relations
- LaShundra Coley'Hale, Department of Community Relations
- Cynthia W. Curry, Gainesville City Manager
- Pastor Gerard Duncan, Prayers by Faith Outreach Ministries
- Chief Tony Jones (former), Gainesville Police Department
- Cherie Kelly, PRCA Youth Services Manager
- Chief Inspector Jaime Kurnick, Gainesville Police Department
- Chief Investigator Darry Lloyd, Office of Eighth Circuit State Attorney
- Captain Paris Owens, Gainesville Police Department
- Amanda Powers, Department of Communications
- Chief Lonnie Scott, Gainesville Police Department
- Jennifer Smart, Director of Communications
- Brandy Stone, Community Health Director



Choose Peace

Gun Violence Must Cease

Gun Violence Prevention Summit

City of
Gainesville

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