

Faith & Community Based Partnerships a Key Part of Detroit's Plan to Prevent Youth Violence

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Chief of Police Ralph Godbee and members of the Federal Government meet with students from Osborn High School as well as faith-based and community organization focusing on Detroit's Safe Routes initiative at Osborn High School.

Last week I had the honor of travelling to Detroit along with my colleagues from the White House, DOJ, DOL, EDU, HHS and HUD. As part of the National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention, we participated in a wonderful two day site visit focusing on the implementation of Detroit' City Wide Youth Violence Prevention Plan.

Over the past year Detroit has made considerable progress under the leadership of Mayor Dave Bing, Police Chief Ralph Godbee, US Attorney Barbara McQuade and their talented staff who helped to lead the Youth Violence Prevention efforts in the city. We toured the three target areas in Detroit's Youth Violence Prevention plan (Cody, Denby and Osborn). A key part of the plan is the successful implementation of their Safe Routes initiative. One of the primary goals of Safe Routes is to increase the safety of students on their way to and from school. Detroit has successfully enlisted faith based and community based volunteers who build relationships with students, and also patrol the surrounding communities acting as additional eyes and ears on the street. We met with representatives from "Men on Patrol", "the Man Network" and "M.A.D.E. Men" all volunteers who everyday of the week are up patrolling as early as 6:30am (rain, sleet or

snow) to make sure that young people in their communities feel safe and are safe on their way to and from school.



Mayor Dave Bing speaks with Deputy Assistant to the President, Michael Strautmanis, DOJ Office of Intergovernmental Affairs Director, Portia Roberson and Office of Justice Programs Chief of Staff Thomas Abt.



Congressman John Conyers, US Attorney Barbara McQuade, DOJ FBNP Director Eugene Schneeberg, Strong Cities, Strong Communities lead Portia Roberson, Mayor Dave Bing, Chief Ralph Godbee at Press Conference aimed at elevating the importance of preventing Youth Violence in Detroit.

Some of the highlights of the visit were:

- We had the pleasure of announcing a \$5.7 million DOJ COPS grant to the Detroit Police Department, which will pay for 25 new officers assigned directly to this initiative. The Detroiters were grateful and excited about this concrete demonstration of support for their work.
- In various meetings throughout the two days tour Mayor Dave Bing, Chief of Police Ralph Godbee, US Attorney Barbara McQuade and Congressman John Conyers and Hansen Clarke all demonstrated their commitment to keeping young people safe in the city.
- Participated in a packed room of committed steering committee members including youth representatives from YOUTH VOICES.
- We met with Officer Monica Evans from DPD who heads up the cities Operation Safe Passages: a community and law enforcement partnerships to create in-school alternatives to suspension and expulsion.
- Another central theme of the site visit was a series of meetings discussing the planning and implementation of a Cease Fire intervention model in Detroit.
- The federal team was very fortunate to be able to participate in a Student Roundtable at Osborn High School. This discussion was facilitated by Chief Godbee and included student representatives from the NSO Youth Leadership initiative. The Chief and students discussed how they felt safer since the launch of Safe Routes and can see the increased police presence and volunteer presence, and discussed ways in which youth and police can partner moving forward to make the Osborn area safer.

[Learn more about the work that can be done in your community to help prevent youth violence.](#)