

Faith Based & Neighborhood Partnerships Center Works with Mayor Nutter and Cities United to Reduce Homicide among Black Men and Boys

Posted by Eugene Schneeberg on June 27, 2012



Photo (left to right): Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter, Dr. Gary Slutkin, Cobe Williams

Recently, I had the opportunity to address a group of mayors and policymakers who are concerned about the high rate of homicides committed against black men and boys in our country. Their concern is well-founded. Homicide is the leading cause of death for African-Americans between the ages of 15 and 24.

The event was convened by the National League of Cities and Cities United. The conference was led by: Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter, the new President of the U.S. Conference of Mayors; Mayor Mitch Landrieu of New Orleans; and Leon Andrews, a Senior Fellow at the National League of Cities.

The two-day convening, deemed the Cities United Summit, was focused on data-driven strategies to reduce homicides among black men and boys. A wealth of research has indicated that the rate of violence among young black males is significantly more concentrated in comparison to other groups, and rather than take that as a given, the conference attendees participated in an emerging national discussion about how to address this pandemic—including the need for the presence of engaged fatherhoods and strong mentors.

Among others, the conference featured:

- Dr. Gary Slutkin, the founder of CeaseFire—a program in Chicago focused on gun violence prevention. For its success in reducing shootings in some of Chicago’s high-risk neighborhoods, CeaseFire has received much acclaim, including the focus of a documentary aired on PBS’s “Frontline”—*The Interrupters*;

- Cobe Williams, a revered outreach worker for CeaseFire and one of the stars of *The Interrupters*; and
- Representatives from the Student Peace Alliance, who shared the inspiration the conference gave them.

Here at DOJ, we are pleased to work with, and support the efforts of, Mayors Nutter and Landrieu, and we are looking for areas of synergy between their work and the work being done as part of the [National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention](#).

Thankfully, we are not alone in our efforts. Take a few minutes to learn more about [CeaseFire](#) and [Cities United](#).

Eugene Schneeberg is the Director of the Center for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships at the Department of Justice.