

## Allegheny County Violence Prevention Initiative



**Vision:** To reduce crime and violence by reaching out  
and providing opportunities for a better way of life

9/20/04

### Program Updates

- **Staffing:** Two Area Managers and 21 Community Coordinators were hired to represent the North Side, the Hill District, Beltzhoover, and St. Clair Village.
- **Community Convening:** The Center that CARES (a program of the Wesley Center AME Zion church) serves as both fiscal agent and community partner for the Hill District. The Pittsburgh Project serves as community partner for the North Side. A similar partnership is in the works with a Southside Community Based Organization.
- **Community Programs:** Over the summer, hundreds of people attended a 2-day Peace in the Hood event in Manchester (on the North Side) and a similar event in Beltzhoover. The Kennard and Schenley Men's basketball leagues were successfully organized and managed by One Vision One Life (OVOL), drawing thousands of people for 12 weeks of basketball and safe community gathering. A four-week basketball academy was run on the North Side. Approximately 35 kids engaged in conditioning, drills, and game play four days a week. The Academy was well received by kids and the community alike.
- **A Presence:** OVOL Community Coordinators presence was requested and felt at several youth basketball leagues, downtown after-school, at the prom line-ups, at an under-21 nightclub, and at several Community events.
- **Schools:** OVOL Community Coordinators ran groups, worked lunches, and mentored kids over the summer. As the school year begins, Community Coordinators are posted everyday both downtown and in the four communities in which we are focusing efforts. Starting in October, an additional presence, including group meetings, will be felt in selected Pittsburgh schools
- **Police:** OVOL has developed an extremely open relationship with the City Police, as well as with the Housing, School, and Port Authority police. In addition to monthly meetings and data sharing, Deputy Chief Harper calls frequently to request our presence/assistance; likewise we call frequently and request police presence.
- **Housing Authority:** OVOL has a partnership with the City of Pittsburgh Housing Authority. Starting in October, OVOL will assist in recruiting and staffing Night Sports which will be held every other Saturday through December in five public housing communities.
- **Department of Corrections:** OVOL developed a targeted state reentry program. Secretary of Corrections Beard granted OVOL staff access to all state institutions and the information we need to begin the program.
- **Trauma Centers:** OVOL is in the process of working with the Health Department to gain access to the trauma centers to intervene with nonfatal gunshot victims. We hope to have this program up-and-running by the end of October.
- **District Attorney/Public Defender/Juvenile Probation:** OVOL is discussing the possibility of working with these partners and the courts to ensure that officials have enough information to most appropriately adjudicate and juveniles.
- **Jobs:** OVOL is working with several construction companies and the several trade unions to obtain living-wage jobs for individuals who want to work, and change their lives.
- **Interventions:** OVOL has intervened in every targeted violent incident that has occurred in the four implementation neighborhoods. For example, after several stabbings in St. Clair Village, OVOL staff mediated a solution, and helped move one of the feuding families out of the community. After

several shootings involving Wilson Avenue on the North Side, OVOL staff got to the bottom of the dispute, visited both shooters and victims and identified potential representatives of Wilson Avenue to join OVOL. Another intervention with an individual who had been shot several times led to his relocation out of the state – an intervention necessary to save his life.

## **Results**

One Vision One Life focuses on the type of violence that drives local homicides rates. When homicide rates are high, like in 1993 or 2003, there are an unusual number of violent incidents that involve young black men living in high crime communities.

Overall year-to-date (through August) homicides are down 33% over 2003. Targeted homicides have also been reduced both in number and in percentage of overall homicides. Between January and August 2003, 30 or 61% of homicides committed in the City of Pittsburgh, and 9 or 30% of homicides committed in the County were incidents which required One Vision One Life attention/intervention (assuming we were operating County-wide). In 2004, just 15 or 48% of homicides committed in the City of Pittsburgh, and 7 or 30% of homicides committed in the County were incidents which required One Vision One Life attention/intervention (assuming we were operating County-wide).

One Vision One Life's efforts are currently focused in the neighborhoods of the North Side, the Hill District, St. Clair Village and Beltzhoover. Year-to-date North Side homicides were reduced by 6 or 50% from 2003 to 2004. Targeted North Side homicides were reduced by 4 or 36% from 2003 to 2004. Likewise, Hill District homicides were reduced by 4 or 50% from 2003 to 2004; and targeted Hill District homicides were reduced by 5 or 71% over the same time period. Targeted homicides were low and flat in both Beltzhoover and St. Clair Village.