



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Crown Heights Families, Victims of Gun Violence and Clergy Organize
S.O.S. Peace March and Balloon Release October 20th 6pm**

*The Week of Peace will send the message that shootings and killings are unacceptable;
the 77th Precinct has seen more than 40 shooting victims so far this year.*

BROOKLYN — From Sunday October 16th to Sunday October 23rd, Save Our Streets Crown Heights (S.O.S.), a neighborhood-based violence prevention program, is sponsoring a WEEK OF PEACE to amplify its message of nonviolence. The main event is a **Peace March on October 20th at 6:00pm** during which hundreds of community members will march through Crown Heights **rallying their neighbors to stand up for an end to the gun violence. The march culminates near Brower Park at Kingston Ave and Park Place with a program to support all the victims of violence and their families, and celebrate the positive changes the community has made to reduce gun violence.**

Allen James, S.O.S. Program Manager, states, “Violent response to conflict is a learned behavior that can be unlearned and replaced with peaceable resolutions. S.O.S. and the community are asking young men and women to lay their guns down. Crown Heights is unwilling to simply tolerate the continued killing and shooting in our neighborhood.”

The march will emphasize the importance of community involvement in changing the way people in the neighborhood think about using guns to settle disputes. **500 biodegradable balloons will be released into the sky at the end of the march, representing the tremendous loss that individuals and the community have suffered due to gun violence and incarceration.** People may write the names of specific loved ones they want to honor onto the balloons.

Since the S.O.S. program began to focus on the area of Kingston Avenue to Utica Ave and Atlantic Ave to Eastern Parkway in February of 2010, there has been a 55% decrease of shootings in the area. S.O.S. works closely with local organizations, neighborhood churches and pastors, community residents and the individuals most likely to commit a shooting. S.O.S. Crown Heights provides immediate intervention whenever a shooting occurs in the neighborhood, reaching out to the victim, friends, and family to ensure that a retaliatory shooting does not take place.

WEEK OF PEACE kicked off and will close with local houses of worship focusing on nonviolence in their service. The youth voice was present in WEEK OF PEACE on Monday, October 17th during a “flash mob for peace,” when 50 youth danced in unison to **Murder to**

Excellence by Jay-Z and Kanye West in order to highlight the destructiveness of gun violence to their peers. On Friday, October 21st, S.O.S. will have a free screening of the award winning documentary film “The Interrupters,” from the director of “Hoop Dreams.” The film follows three Violence Interrupters in Chicago who do the same work that the S.O.S. Street Team does every day.

About S.O.S. Crown Heights

- S.O.S. Crown Heights is a community-based effort to end gun violence in our neighborhood and a replication of the Chicago Ceasefire public health approach.
- S.O.S. Crown Heights provides immediate intervention whenever a shooting occurs and works closely with neighborhood leaders and businesses to articulate the message that shooting is an unacceptable behavior.
- S.O.S. Outreach Team members work with people who are the most likely to be involved in a shooting incident, mentoring them to change the way they think and behave.
- The S.O.S. program began in 2010. In the S.O.S. catchment area, a defined section of the 77th precinct on which S.O.S. focuses, shootings were from 20 incidents in 2010 to 9 in 2011. The 77th Precinct has had a 37.5% decrease in shooting incidents since last year.

Here is a partial list of groups participating in the Week of Peace:

Crow Hill Neighborhood Association, Metroplus HealthPlan, Black Diamonds Social Club, New York Juvenile Justice Corps, Bedford Stuyvesant Volunteer Ambulance Corps, Heal the World Ministries, Outer Order Queens S.C., Citizens Crime Commission NYC, Nazareth Christian Fellowship, Kings County District Attorney's Office, Bailey's Café, Avodah, Church of God in Christ on the Hill Cathedral, Christ Life Bible Church, Judah International Christian Center, Reflections of the Covenant Youth, Faith Deliverance Tabernacle Rhema, Berean Baptist Church, Holy Temple of Prayer, Inc., Glover Memorial Baptist Church, St Matthews Roman Catholic Church, Miracle Church of Christ, Peterson Temple, Rehoboth Cathedral, Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Midnight Mission Church, Bible Faith Tabernacle, Calvary Community Church, Brooklyn Community Church, The Frontliners: Emmanuel Baptist Church, Brooklyn Clergy Task Force, and YO S.O.S. (Youth Organizing to Save Our Streets).

Confirmed Speakers: City Council Member Letitia James, State Senator Eric Adams, Reverend Kevin Jones, The Choir of Pastor David Wright & Grace Tabernacle Church, the S.O.S. Street Outreach Team including the S.O.S. Violence Interrupters, Bishop Gerald Seabrooks spokesman for The Brooklyn Clergy/N.Y.P.D. Task Force & Pastor of Rehoboth Church.

For more information:

www.soscrownheights.org