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COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

3

JOINT COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

4

AND PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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Bartram Main High School
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Wednesday, October 25, 2006
7:30 p.m.

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PRESENT:

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COUNCILWOMAN MARIAN B. TASCO

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COUNCILWOMAN DONNA REED MILLER

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COUNCILMAN FRANK RIZZO

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RESOLUTION 051155 - Resolution authorizing the
Council Committees on Public Safety and Public
Health and Human Services to hold hearings
regarding the findings and recommendations of
the "Blueprint for a Safer Philadelphia," and
further authorizing the Committees to seek
advice and recommendations on how Philadelphia
can reduce and eliminate crime affecting the
City's youth.

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COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Good

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evening. My name is Marian Tasco. I'm

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the Councilwoman from the Ninth

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Councilmanic District. I'm here as Chair

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of the Committee of Public Health and

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Human Services, and chairing the Public

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Safety Committee is Councilwoman Donna

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Reed Miller, who will have opening

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remarks also.

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I'd like to call the Committee

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on Public Health and Human Services and

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the Public Safety Committee, Council

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Committee on Public Safety, to order and

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state that a quorum for this hearing was

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established at our first meeting some

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months ago in City Council. This meeting

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is one of a series that we are having

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across the City in an effort to discuss

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the Blueprint for a Safer Philadelphia.

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I'd like to have the Clerk read

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the resolution.

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MR. GREEN: Resolution 051155,

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a resolution authorizing the Council

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Committees on Public Safety and Public

1 10/25/06 - PUBLIC SAFETY - RES. 051155
2 Health and Human Services to hold
3 hearings regarding the findings and
4 recommendations of the "Blueprint for a
5 Safer Philadelphia," and further
6 authorizing the Committees to seek advice
7 and recommendations on how Philadelphia
8 can reduce and eliminate crime affecting
9 the City's youth.

10 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you
11 very much.

12 Faheem Thomas-Childs, murdered
13 at school, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
14 Marion Fisher, murdered at school,
15 Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Although some
16 try to ignore it, these two senseless
17 killings highlight the undeniable fact
18 that gun violence is not just a
19 Philadelphia problem, gun violence is not
20 just a Lancaster issue, but gun violence
21 is a statewide crisis that affects the
22 children and citizens of our entire
23 state.

24 How do we address this crisis?
25 We must begin to change the culture of

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2 violence in our block, neighborhood, city
3 and state. How do we change the culture?
4 By working together, participating in
5 meetings like tonight's public hearing
6 and using tools like the Blueprint for a
7 Safer Philadelphia to take a short and
8 long-term approach to dealing with this
9 public health crisis of violence in our
10 society.

11 It will take our unified
12 efforts to light the spark of activity
13 that brings people together in our block,
14 our neighborhood, city and state to
15 collectively fight this crisis. In this
16 regard, I thank you for coming out
17 tonight and joining us in this movement
18 for a safer Philadelphia.

19 We will have a panel. I will
20 introduce the panel after Councilwoman
21 Donna Reed Miller, who represents the
22 Eighth Councilmanic District and is Chair
23 of the Council Committee on Public
24 Safety, gives her opening remarks.

25 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Good

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2 evening, everyone. As Councilwoman Tasco
3 said, I am Councilwoman Donna Reed Miller
4 for the Eighth Councilmanic District and
5 Chair of City Council's Public Safety
6 Committee.

7 I'd like to begin by thanking
8 those who have taken an interest in
9 Philadelphia and its problem with
10 violence. The fact that you are here
11 shows that you are more than interested
12 in the affairs of the City, you are
13 willing to actually get out and do
14 something. Thank you.

15 We're here today to discuss the
16 Blueprint for a Safer Philadelphia and
17 its ten-year plan, and right now we're in
18 its ninth year -- there's nine years
19 left. We've just completed our first
20 year.

21 There's been much talk of
22 violence in our City, from the many
23 murders and other violent forms of crime,
24 that we felt it necessary to convene
25 these public hearings in the communities

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2 to get input from our constituency.

3 Do you know that we have
4 reached 329 murders as of today? We have
5 completed 298 days this year. This means
6 that more than one person is getting
7 killed every day. So since we only have
8 67 days left this year, how many more
9 will be killed? At least 74 more,
10 according to our track record. We're
11 losing people here in Philadelphia just
12 like in Iraq, and they are at war. What
13 is the problem?

14 We have definitely passed last
15 year's murder rate, and it is only
16 increasing. We need to do something now
17 to stop the violence. I am aware that
18 there is only so much that we can do, but
19 together, the community side by side with
20 elected officials, we can make a
21 difference, and I know you care, that's
22 why you're here today.

23 I've been working with
24 Councilman Clarke, and together we have
25 introduced seven pieces of legislation

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2 aimed at addressing the problems with
3 violence, specifically with guns.
4 Unfortunately, the State has the power to
5 make these laws and they will not let us
6 control or legislate our own gun laws.

7 Dwight Evans has been working
8 hard trying to get out the word in the
9 State legislature, but we need your help.
10 Last month, people know that there were
11 more than 3,000 Philadelphians that
12 rallied on the Capital steps. As you all
13 know, we cannot legislate attitude
14 change, but it is a start.

15 Gun violence is only a part of
16 what we are here for today. We are here
17 to show our young people that they are
18 not destined to a violent end. We want
19 to offer them other alternatives to
20 taking lives as a way of resolving
21 disputes. We want to give them other
22 options for their futures. We want to
23 let them know that there is a bright
24 future ahead for them and not one of doom
25 and gloom.

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2 Our goal in holding this
3 hearing is to make Philadelphia a safer
4 place, a safer place to live in, a safer
5 place to visit, a place where you can
6 drive to work safely, and ultimately a
7 place where children can play safely
8 outside in front of their homes or go to
9 school without fear of being senselessly
10 gunned down.

11 Again, I just want to thank
12 everybody for coming, and with that,
13 those are my opening remarks.

14 Thank you.

15 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Thank you
16 very much.

17 Tonight we're here because
18 we've been traveling around the City to
19 discuss the Blueprint for a Safer
20 Philadelphia. After Faheem Childs was
21 killed, there was a call to action, and
22 the call was answered on April 21, 2004
23 when Representative Dwight Evans convened
24 an historic meeting of State legislative
25 leaders, top law enforcement officers

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2 from federal, state and local
3 governments, and community leaders to
4 discuss strategies to stop the violence
5 that had taken the lives of too many
6 young people.

7 Tonight we have a panel who
8 will give you an overview of what the
9 Blueprint is all about. We will
10 introduce State Representative Dwight
11 Evans to give remarks about how he came
12 to become involved with the development
13 and evolution of the Blueprint for a
14 Safer Philadelphia.

15 We have Alicia Jackson from MEE
16 Productions, who is working with the
17 Blueprint to get the word out and to
18 develop programs that address the issues
19 that we are concerned about.

20 We have Jaime Beck of CHOICE,
21 who is here to talk about how they're
22 involved in providing the hotline for the
23 Blueprint for a Safer Philadelphia.

24 They will give a brief
25 overview. You're being passed out some

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2 information. And then we'll ask you to
3 give your comments on what you think we
4 might be able to do in order to
5 strengthen the Blueprint, how you might
6 want to become involved with the
7 Blueprint for a Safer Philadelphia to
8 address the issue of violence in the
9 City.

10 I want to personally thank
11 State Representative Dwight Evans for his
12 leadership in this issue. In 1999 when
13 he ran for Mayor, he was the only
14 candidate talking about the main issue
15 was guns and violence, but nobody was
16 listening at that time. There were other
17 agendas on the table, but he has that
18 story to tell, as well as all the other
19 stories he can talk about in terms of his
20 involvement in the Philadelphia
21 community.

22 But he was right on target in
23 1999 talking about guns and violence, and
24 here we are today, seven and a half years
25 later, still talking about guns and

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2 violence, which has become the front page
3 issue in Philadelphia.

4 So State Representative Evans
5 represents the 203rd Legislative
6 District, which is in the West Oak Lane,
7 Olney, a little bit of Lawncrest, which
8 goes up to the Boulevard. He's been in
9 office since 1981 and has served that
10 district very well. He is Minority Chair
11 of the Appropriations Committee in
12 Harrisburg. He has brought back many
13 dollars to the City for many initiatives,
14 particularly the supermarket initiative,
15 which he introduced in Harrisburg and was
16 able to get the Governor to appropriate
17 about \$16 million to help grocery stores
18 open up into neighborhoods where there
19 are no grocery stores.

20 So State Representative Evans,
21 would you please make your comments.

22 REPRESENTATIVE EVANS: Thank
23 you very much.

24 I'd like to first thank all of
25 you who have come out today for the

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2 purpose of this discussion. I'm going to
3 be really brief, but I want to really
4 sincerely thank Councilwoman Marian Tasco
5 and Councilwoman Donna Reed Miller. This
6 is our tenth hearing. We started out in
7 City Hall and we have been to Germantown,
8 Olney, South Philly, Gratz, West Philly,
9 Overbrook, Strawberry Mansion and we're
10 ending up here at Bartram, and then I
11 think we end up in City Hall. And I
12 think this is extremely significant for
13 what is taking place here by going
14 directly to the neighborhood to talk
15 about this problem.

16 Historically, when we attempted
17 to deal with this problem, we always
18 attempted to deal with it from top down
19 rather than bottom up. And don't, in my
20 view, lose sight based on the number of
21 people. The purpose of this is to hear
22 information, which the Councilpeople
23 gather information to take it down, and
24 then to take that information and begin
25 to see how can we make changes in

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2 policies that could ultimately help by
3 reducing violence. So that's the first
4 thing.

5 The second aspect of it, the
6 Blueprint came about, as the
7 Councilperson said, after Faheem
8 Thomas-Childs, who was ten years old, who
9 was in the right place, not the wrong
10 place, he was going to school, 90 rounds
11 was shot during that particular morning.
12 And Jewell Williams, Representative
13 Jewell Williams, and Jerry Mondesire of
14 NAACP, along with others, led a march of
15 about 12,000 people.

16 A group of elected officials
17 and non-elected officials, we got
18 together and put this initiative together
19 called the Blueprint. So far, we've
20 invested close to \$30 million in the
21 Blueprint. For example, things such as
22 Gun Court, AYP. Alicia will describe it
23 to you. And we felt like this needed to
24 be a long-term effort, because the
25 general feeling is, we have to change the

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2 behavior.

3 Historically, when we
4 approached this problem, we always tried
5 to approach it from strictly a criminal
6 justice approach, but we don't believe
7 it's just a criminal justice approach by
8 itself. It has to be a criminal justice
9 approach and a public health approach,
10 and they have to work together.

11 The Councilpeople really need
12 credit, in my view, and I got to really
13 say this, because you got to understand
14 something, neither one of them represent
15 this particular Councilmanic District.
16 They're from another part of the City,
17 but they're here and they're really
18 trying to organize the community to
19 understand to have, quote/unquote, an
20 official policy called the Blueprint for
21 a Safer Philadelphia. We've been working
22 together trying to put certain policies
23 in place that ultimately will have a lot
24 with reducing violence.

25 It is something, as

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2 Councilwoman Marian Tasco said, that will
3 be a long-term struggle. I don't know
4 which Councilperson said it, but they
5 talked about the aspect that may it be in
6 Lancaster or may it be in North
7 Philadelphia, unfortunately violence is
8 occurring every single place.

9 Councilwoman Donna Reed Miller
10 mentioned that we just had a huge debate
11 in Harrisburg about gun policy. I don't
12 think that issue is over. Unfortunately,
13 we were not able to address the kinds of
14 policy issues that Councilwoman Donna
15 Reed Miller and Darrell Clarke,
16 Councilman Clarke, wanted to happen, but
17 I think the first step is the awareness,
18 and I think that people are now seeing,
19 no matter what community you're in, no
20 matter what their income level, they're
21 now seeing that the violence can affect
22 all of us.

23 So these hearings, if for no
24 other reason, raises the consciousness of
25 people in terms of trying to come up with

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2 solutions. So I want to again thank both
3 Councilpeople. I know it's been long,
4 but I want to sincerely personally thank
5 them.

6 So what I'd like to do next is
7 turn it over to Alicia, who will talk
8 about the specifics of the Blueprint.

9 Alicia.

10 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Before
11 Alicia begins, Representative Evans, we
12 are going to add two more. We're going
13 to have one at William Penn, at the
14 request of State Representative Curtis
15 Thomas, and the Councilwoman and I
16 decided to do one ended up at Martin
17 Luther King High School. We just have to
18 get the dates.

19 REPRESENTATIVE EVANS: I didn't
20 realize it. Well, you know, I'm happy.
21 We can do these the rest of the year.
22 That's a good idea. I like that.

23 MS. JACKSON: Thank you so
24 much, and, again, my name is Alicia
25 Jackson. I'm here to talk broadly about

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2 the Blueprint for a Safer Philadelphia
3 and then more specifically about the
4 social marketing component of the
5 Blueprint for a Safer Philadelphia.

6 Before I start, I'd also like
7 to thank the Councilpersons for their
8 initiative, again, to come into the
9 community, because this is really where
10 it's going to start. I'd also -- and I
11 continue to thank Representative Evans
12 for his vision, as well as his backbone
13 to say, I'm going to step out here to say
14 I'm going to make a difference in my
15 community, that community being
16 Philadelphia.

17 So with that said, he really
18 has a commitment to not only looking at
19 this violence issue from a criminal
20 justice standpoint, but also from a
21 prevention standpoint.

22 The Blueprint for a Safer
23 Philadelphia really encompasses a number
24 of activities. It's a broad-based
25 multi-component effort. We're trying to

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2 tackle, if you will, violence from a lot
3 of different perspectives. You have, as
4 the Representative mentioned, Gun Courts,
5 gun policy, what we call AVRP, which is
6 Adolescents Violence Reduction Program,
7 YVRP, which is Youth Violence Reduction
8 Program. So you have a lot of
9 initiatives that are focusing on those
10 high-risk young folk living in the City
11 of Philadelphia to target them to say, We
12 want to really direct some services so we
13 can now redirect your energy.

14 But what's most important is
15 that we're now going to be very inclusive
16 with trying to look at this from a public
17 health standpoint, trying to say to the
18 community, not let's just deal with the
19 criminal justice aspect, let's start to
20 focus all of our energy, if you will, on
21 preventing violence, looking at those
22 younger kids, looking at what is
23 important in their lives now to say, You
24 have some other options, let us now try
25 to talk to you about those options, so by

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2 the time you reach a significant age, we
3 won't be looking at putting you in the
4 criminal justice system.

5 With that said, as we look to
6 develop this public health model over the
7 next ten years and look at violence
8 prevention, we're looking at trying to
9 come into the community from a social
10 marketing standpoint initially, which is
11 what MEE Production is spearheading, the
12 social marketing campaign, which is to
13 come into the community, raise awareness
14 and provide a level of education around
15 prevention. And what we're trying to do
16 is actually come into the community and
17 change our mindset, change people's norms
18 around this particular issue.

19 We're coming into the community
20 from a mass communication standpoint with
21 radio ads, print materials that we're
22 sharing with you this evening. We'll be
23 launching television ads the end of this
24 month, November, so we can bring the
25 entire community up to speed as it

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2 pertains to prevention. We all know
3 about the criminal justice stuff, so
4 we're really going to focus on
5 prevention.

6 In addition to the mass
7 communication strategies, we're also
8 doing some non-traditional communication
9 strategies, where we are taking the
10 audience directly -- I'm sorry; not
11 audience, but the messages directly to
12 the audience, coming into the community,
13 working with community-based
14 organizations. We're working with young
15 people via a peer outreach strategy.

16 We have opportunities for young
17 folk. If you know of young folk who need
18 to have something to do with their time,
19 direct them to the toll-free number that
20 you will hear about and, again, let them
21 know that we are coming into the
22 community to talk about violence
23 prevention, do outreach to educate folk
24 and to raise the level of awareness,
25 again, around prevention.

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2 In addition to that, we're
3 going to be organizing the faith-based
4 community around this effort. We're also
5 specifically letting folk know that there
6 are resources available around violence
7 prevention.

8 Initially when we started this
9 effort, we did some research in the
10 community to find out what violence
11 looked like in the City of Philadelphia.
12 We talked to parents, we talked to
13 community-based organizations and we
14 talked to young folk, and they
15 articulated some things that were
16 critical and important as we move this
17 message through the community.

18 One of those messages was, and
19 why we're here tonight, is that education
20 is critical. We're having these public
21 hearings in formal educational
22 institutions like our major high schools
23 in the community. Again, education is
24 critical for young folk. They understand
25 they're not getting a good education, but

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2 they want one. So it is imperative that
3 we as adults step to the forefront to say
4 education is critical. We're going to do
5 that with these messages.

6 In addition, parenting is
7 important. We don't want to blame
8 parents. We want to let them know that
9 we understand the stresses that you
10 endure on a daily basis. With that in
11 mind, we have resources available to
12 assist you with raising your young folk.
13 There are resources out there.

14 With that said, young folk
15 really articulated that they wanted
16 adults involved in their lives. So we as
17 adults have to step to the plate and say
18 we're going to take hold of this
19 prevention piece, make sure that we are
20 accountable to our young folk and let
21 them know that they have other options in
22 life, that violence is not their only
23 option.

24 So we'll be looking to do all
25 of that in the community. We're coming

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2 up with a number of activities. One that
3 is very critical to this process and that
4 is a part of the social marketing
5 campaign is called the Great Vine, where
6 we now want to push the message of the
7 young folk who are doing some positive
8 things in our community. We really need
9 to understand that it's a small segment
10 of the young folk that are involved in a
11 lot of this violence. There are a lot of
12 young people doing some great things, and
13 we need to acknowledge that.

14 With that said, we have an
15 opportunity for people to tell their
16 story via the website, which is
17 www.philly, P-H-I-L-L-Y, blueprint, all
18 one word, phillyblueprint.com. If you
19 know of a young person doing some
20 positive things, put their story on the
21 website. We will highlight them. We
22 will get them some media attention. And
23 then call the toll-free number. The
24 toll-free number is a catchall, and I'll
25 let the young lady from CHOICE here tell

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2 you about it. It's 1-888-570-BLUE, and
3 you'll see that on the materials.

4 But, again, what we want to
5 leave today understanding and knowing and
6 being prepared to talk about is that we
7 have to look at this issue of violence
8 very differently. We have to now think
9 about this issue of violence very
10 differently. We have to start to think
11 about preventing violence and not just
12 responding to violence.

13 So thank you very much, and I
14 will pass it on to CHOICE.

15 MS. BECK: First, I just want
16 to say thank for having CHOICE here
17 tonight.

18 To tell you a little bit about
19 CHOICE -- my name is Jaime Beck. I'm the
20 Hotline Coordinator at CHOICE.

21 CHOICE began in '71 as really a
22 reproductive sexual health hotline. We
23 expanded to become more of a public
24 health hotline. We reach over 60,000
25 people throughout the Philadelphia area,

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2 Pennsylvania, and we hope to expand that
3 with the Blueprint.

4 We run four hotlines, and the
5 Blueprint hotline is our new hotline and
6 we're pleased to have it. Basically what
7 the hotline does, it serves as a
8 clearinghouse to link parents, teens to
9 educational and family support services,
10 connect individuals who want to volunteer
11 or mentor and engage different community
12 organizations to work together to combat
13 youth violence throughout the City.

14 We've gotten tons of people
15 calling that want to volunteer and
16 mentor, which is great. I actually was
17 just saying we had a 13-year-old call the
18 other day who wanted to volunteer, a
19 13-year-old girl, and she was really
20 concerned about gun violence.

21 Currently on the hotline we
22 have 120 referrals throughout
23 Philadelphia, and we are actually adding
24 more daily. We added a library to our
25 hotline, and we're also -- our staff is

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2 attending trainings and they're actually
3 trainings from other Blueprint
4 organizations. So we're really going out
5 in the community for ideas on how we can
6 expand the hotline.

7 Right now most of our referrals
8 are for after-school programs. We have
9 referrals for literacy programs, GED
10 programs and a lot of opportunities for
11 people that want to get involved, to
12 volunteer, mentor. They range from
13 sports and rec to people that want to
14 just go out and do street outreach. So
15 we have different volunteer programs for
16 people.

17 When someone calls the hotline,
18 how we make referrals, they're really
19 based on the caller's needs. So whether
20 that being if they can't travel, we have
21 places -- we can pull up places by zip
22 code, by age, by hours that they want to
23 get involved, after-school hours, weekend
24 hours. So all our services are based on
25 consumer needs.

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2 We also believe in a holistic
3 way to direct calls or referrals. So we
4 really try to probe about maybe other
5 underlying concerns, since we have about
6 400 referrals throughout the Philadelphia
7 area. So if someone is calling just for
8 literacy programs, we can talk to them
9 about other public health issues and
10 other places that they can go.

11 Our information is assessed
12 daily and can be broken down for
13 different mapping, so that we can really
14 track where the need is throughout the
15 City. We can break our information down
16 by age, race, insurance status and how
17 actually an individual heard about our
18 hotline. So we can really track
19 different media campaigns.

20 That's basically it about the
21 hotline.

22 REPRESENTATIVE EVANS: What I'd
23 like to do, you now kind of see how this
24 process is working. You heard CHOICE in
25 terms of the hotline number, Alicia go

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2 back over the website number, you heard
3 the website and what was described, and
4 you heard how radio and TV are being
5 used. So think of it in the concept that
6 using the media to drive people and make
7 a connection, and then CHOICE makes a
8 link between the organizations that fit
9 the needs of the constituency.

10 There is another part of this
11 initiative that is connected through
12 hospitals, and Elisha, if he wants to
13 speak, he's another connection.

14 Elisha.

15 MR. MORRIS: My name is Elisha
16 Morris. I work for Philadelphia
17 Anti-Drug/Anti-Violence Network. I'm the
18 Coordinator of the PIRIS, Pennsylvania
19 Injury Reporting Intervention System, and
20 what we do at PIRIS, if a gunshot victim
21 is shot and taken to one of three
22 hospitals -- and all of this is part of
23 the Blueprint -- either Temple
24 University, Einstein or the University of
25 Pennsylvania Hospital, we get in touch

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2 with that person, meet with that person,
3 along with PHMC, and then we provide
4 outreach to that family, not just to the
5 individual but to the entire family.
6 Because what we found is sometimes
7 there's a mom who is like, I'm
8 overwhelmed, I'm just barely making it
9 with two jobs and I've got a couple kids,
10 and the drug dealers have more time with
11 them than I do and I need some help. So
12 we would be contacting the hotline to try
13 and link them up with services or with
14 services that PAAN already has to help
15 those young people.

16 Then another big part of what
17 we do -- and something I just got
18 finished doing tonight, by the way -- we
19 go to where that individual was shot and
20 we have a meeting, kind of like we're
21 having tonight, only we bring like all
22 the City agencies, all the private
23 agencies that we can get a hold of to
24 come out and talk about the services that
25 they have, the idea being if we come and

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2 make a community aware of a shooting, of
3 the violence -- and let's be real honest,
4 most people don't know what goes on
5 around the corner, because we get out of
6 our cars and we go in the house and we
7 deal with our own stuff.

8 But what we do is actually come
9 out to that neighborhood. I'm on the
10 corner with a bullhorn. Tonight is one
11 of the last nights to do that because
12 it's cold. Tomorrow night we're in a
13 church at 15th and Dauphin right on the
14 corner. But we talk about this
15 individual being shot, the drug trade
16 going on in the community, the gang war
17 maybe over turf that young guys or girls
18 are having in the community, and we then
19 talk about the resources that are already
20 in the community.

21 And the Councilpeople can tell
22 you, a lot of them, when you call their
23 office, they can tell you stuff that's
24 right in your neighborhood that you're
25 not aware of because you just don't get

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2 out to find out what's there a lot of
3 times.

4 And so we make that information
5 available to the folk at the meeting.
6 And then, in turn, we take down their
7 concerns and we write that up, and the
8 State Rep and the Blueprint and the City
9 Council folk, they all get a write-up of
10 what happened at that meeting.

11 We have a subsequent follow-up
12 meeting about 45, maybe 60 days after
13 that to look at the concerns that were
14 addressed and what we could do, what any
15 of the City agencies or the private
16 agencies could do to help that community.
17 And what we find out is, a lot of people
18 don't want to be out there doing what
19 they're doing, a lot of the young people,
20 but they didn't have an alternative.
21 They just didn't see anything else. And
22 I think Councilwoman Tasco said it.
23 After school homework help programs are
24 so in need, because we find that a lot of
25 the young people can't read on the level

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2 that they should be able to read and so
3 the inferiority complex kicks in, and if
4 you're standing on the corner hanging
5 with the gang or whomever, that makes you
6 feel like you are somebody.

7 So our job is to really go out
8 and engage that community. We think
9 we're being successful because we've had
10 a lot of young people and the family -- I
11 don't want to leave out the family part
12 of it, the parents, particularly the
13 moms, who are asking for assistance -- we
14 take them to the E3 centers. There's one
15 on Parkside Avenue that PHMC runs, and in
16 that center, there are computers and you
17 can make CDs and you can make records,
18 and the kids find out that they can go
19 and they can hang out in this place and
20 do some real positive things, and it
21 changes the outlook.

22 So it's those kind of things
23 that the Blueprint is doing right now
24 through our program, PIRIS, that affects
25 not only that young person who has been a

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2 gunshot victim between the age of 15 to
3 24, but also the entire family.

4 REPRESENTATIVE EVANS: One of
5 the things I wanted to point out, to my
6 knowledge -- and Councilman Rizzo just
7 came in -- what we are attempting to do,
8 in my view, has probably never been done
9 in the history of the City. What we
10 fundamentally are trying to do is to
11 organize all of the various resources
12 that are available and target them at
13 different levels in terms of
14 intervention. I mean, they require
15 different levels of intervention. We
16 call it primary, secondary, tertiary, and
17 that's how we do it.

18 So our first year, we have been
19 working our way through a lot of the
20 different things. You heard about the
21 hotline, you heard about the website, you
22 heard about communication, you heard
23 about what Elisha has talked about.
24 There's the Gun Court. There's a lot
25 that we all are collectively coming

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2 together.

3 The other thing I want to share
4 with you, we also are very conscious of
5 the economic climate. We are conscious
6 that there needs to be a creation of
7 employment. You heard Councilwoman
8 Marian Tasco mention the job initiative
9 or the supermarket initiative. So far I
10 know working with Donna Reed Miller,
11 specifically Chelten and Pulaski Avenue,
12 a brand new supermarket there. LaSalle
13 University there's going to be one. We
14 did one in Southwest Philly. We're going
15 to do one at Progress Plaza. It's a
16 total of over 1,400 jobs right now just
17 in those centers that we have done.

18 In addition to that, we are
19 working with Councilwoman Marian Tasco --
20 she and I were just talking about this --
21 we're also trying to work around the
22 construction industry, working with
23 organizations called the -- Bruce Crawley
24 has an organization called TAP Emerging
25 Contractors, right?

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2 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: I think
3 it's TAC, T-A-C.

4 REPRESENTATIVE EVANS: T-A-C,
5 TAC.

6 What we observed in the City is
7 that we just have a lot of things that
8 are not connected, that are disjointed.
9 So the people who are responsible for
10 trying to coordinate all of this for us,
11 there's a gentleman named Dr. Fink, who
12 is working with us, and then nationally
13 there's a woman by the name of Dr. Stith,
14 who nationally is working with us. She
15 basically tells us what's going on
16 nationally, then she tries to educate us,
17 and Dr. Fink is working with us locally.

18 So you can imagine if you
19 envision Philadelphia trying to organize
20 all of these different entities, so when
21 you call the hotline number, they can
22 tell you specifically in this zip code,
23 in this police district, these are the
24 programs available.

25 You heard what Elisha said.

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2 So that's how we're trying to
3 organize, but we're trying to organize
4 quality programs. We want to make sure
5 that the program is quality that when you
6 go to the program, you know for a
7 fact that something is right.

8 One last thing, and I want to
9 close, over the summer a number of
10 legislators, we did listening tours, and
11 I was out here at the 12th Police
12 District, I think it was, in August with,
13 I think it was, Jewell Williams and Jim
14 Roebuck and Ron Waters, because Ron
15 basically represents this area. We were
16 at the 12th Police District.

17 And so what we have been trying
18 to do is link the police district with
19 the rec centers. Like there's an
20 after-school program I think at 58th and
21 Chester. There's an after-school
22 program.

23 So we feel we have a lot of
24 programs, but we feel that the usage of
25 the programs is not there. The whole

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2 idea is to match up the mentoring with
3 the program.

4 So this effort led by Donna
5 Reed Miller and Marian Tasco and why
6 we've been going place by place is, we're
7 really just trying to make this a
8 seamless system, right? We have a lot of
9 efforts. We're just trying to make this
10 a seamless system. And this has never
11 been done before. So when people
12 magically say, Well, why have you turned
13 this around? You know, we've been
14 putting a lot of time in to just try to
15 get this organized, I mean, when you
16 think about it.

17 And since both Councilpeople
18 said they got William Penn, which I
19 agree, and Martin Luther King, which I
20 agree, there's more. I mean, there's a
21 lot more. So as we travel, more people
22 say to us they want us to come.

23 So the best thing I would say
24 in closing is, I hope you don't lose
25 faith and don't lose a sense of hope. I

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2 mean, I hope you don't lose that. I
3 understand Donna gave you the statistics,
4 and it is tough, but I hope you don't
5 lose that sense of hope that we are
6 trying to bring together.

7 I'll turn it back over to the
8 Chairpersons.

9 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you.

10 Let me just recognize
11 Councilman Rizzo, who is part of the
12 Public Health Committee.

13 Councilman Rizzo, would you
14 like to say a few words?

15 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Thank you,
16 Council Lady Tasco.

17 It's really been an honor for
18 me to participate in every one of these
19 events, because Marian Tasco, Donna Reed
20 Miller and everyone sitting here,
21 especially Dwight Evans, this is really a
22 commitment that all of us have made and
23 we've been to every one of these
24 community meetings. And I hope that the
25 next round, like Dwight just said, it's

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2 got to grow, it will get more people
3 involved, and if we keep working at it,
4 we're going to fix this. We're going to
5 make this issue something that we look
6 back at in our lives and say, We had this
7 problem and because we all worked
8 together, republicans, democrats, that
9 the problem is not a significant issue
10 anymore.

11 But, Dwight, I appreciate your
12 focus on this issue, and Marian and Donna
13 Miller, you've been so good to include me
14 in all of these meetings, and I certainly
15 appreciate it.

16 Thank you.

17 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Thank you
18 very much.

19 The guests who are here, if you
20 have some comments or questions, come to
21 the mike and address them to the
22 Committee. We might have told you
23 everything, but if you have something to
24 ask.

25 The Blueprint is really trying

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2 to collectively bring all the resources
3 together in a fashion where people can
4 access those resources, and one of the
5 things we really want to do is begin with
6 the young children, because if we get
7 children early, their personalities and
8 their values are formed at a very early
9 age. So a lot of programs are focused in
10 on early childhood education and
11 intervention and parenting. Because the
12 bottom line of the Blueprint is to change
13 the behavior, change the behavior of
14 individuals.

15 I had a friend tell me the
16 other day, We got to have discipline in
17 schools.

18 Come on up, ma'am.

19 So he said, We need to go back
20 to corporal punishment.

21 I said, I don't think we can do
22 that.

23 Thank you.

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It's
25 hard for me to use the mike because I

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2 want to include the folks in the
3 audience, but I appreciate you all coming
4 and spending your time here. I
5 appreciate the holistic approach. It's
6 got to be a difficult task to bring all
7 the resources together.

8 I think Elisha started with my
9 primary question. What components of the
10 Blueprint will specifically address the
11 broken spirits? I think the crowd is
12 evidence of the broken spirit,
13 particularly in Southwest Philadelphia.
14 I came this evening all the way from West
15 Philadelphia. Southwest is my second
16 home, and I have led many parent
17 orientations, after-school orientations
18 in this very gym where there were people
19 to the back of this room trying to get
20 their kids enrolled in after-school
21 programs. I worked previously at
22 Presbyterian Children's Village, an AVR
23 provider.

24 What can you do, other than
25 changing some of the behaviors and you

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2 talked about your social marketing plan,
3 to heal the broken spirits of not only
4 the parents in this community but the
5 children? There are tons of children who
6 have gone to more funerals in their short
7 ten years than I have ever gone to in my
8 entire life, and those spirits broken now
9 grow up into adult broken spirits.

10 REPRESENTATIVE EVANS: I think
11 everybody may have an answer. You raise
12 to me what I think is the heart of this
13 challenge. I would say to you I had a
14 broken spirit prior to Faheem
15 Thomas-Childs being killed, personally.
16 When Councilwoman Tasco said to me
17 that -- when I ran for Mayor, I raised
18 this issue constantly, and what was
19 frustrating was to raise the issue and
20 then not make the connection and then
21 begin to wonder why, why couldn't people
22 see what the problem is.

23 So personally I had like a
24 little broken spirit. And I think the
25 thing that made me get reconnected was

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2 Faheem Thomas-Childs. I think that got
3 me reconnected, because I just could not
4 understand or accept that that could
5 occur.

6 You know, some of us remember
7 Marcus Yates, 1985. You can go through a
8 whole list. And that was in, what, West
9 Philly or Southwest Philly?

10 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: South.

11 REPRESENTATIVE EVANS: South
12 Philly, Marcus Yates. Or Nafique
13 Jefferson, who was in South Philly, in
14 1999. I remember it was right around the
15 Mayor's race.

16 So I admit to you that it was a
17 broken spirit for me. So it was Faheem
18 Thomas-Childs that was a reconnect for
19 me.

20 And we do have ministers
21 involved. We have been trying to get the
22 churches involved. We have been trying
23 to get them connected. And one of the
24 reasons I give Donna and Marian and Frank
25 Rizzo credit, because when they first

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2 started this, we did it just in City
3 Hall, but they said, Let's really take
4 this to the street.

5 Now, I'm an eternal optimist,
6 because I believe if you do this long
7 enough and often enough, you can make
8 that change. Now, I don't have any
9 evidential information based on the
10 numbers you see here, but our theory is,
11 if we do this long enough, which the
12 theory is ten years, that we can reverse
13 it.

14 I don't think you're going to
15 do it with a piece of legislation. I
16 don't think you're going to do it with
17 some medicine. I think you're going to
18 have to do good old-fashioned go to the
19 streets, build it up and have the sense
20 of toughness of sticking with it. I know
21 sometimes when I say that, people look
22 for like, Well, isn't there a quick
23 answer? I don't think there's a quick
24 answer to this. I mean, we've been doing
25 this almost, what, since February? I

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2 mean, we've kind of been out here a
3 couple of hours each week or whatever
4 weeks we do. We go out here and we just
5 go from neighborhood to neighborhood and
6 we try to tell you about those resources
7 that we have.

8 We have some dollars on the
9 table from the City and the State, and we
10 try to just go day to day and we try to
11 organize things.

12 So I think the spirit is a
13 process that at least I don't have a
14 particular answer, except what I said to
15 you about what we got to do.

16 If anybody else got any
17 thoughts on it.

18 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: I just
19 want to add, I agree with Representative
20 Evans, and I guess I'm just an optimist,
21 too. My spirit is broken every morning
22 when I pick up the newspaper and read
23 that someone else has been killed.

24 Where do we reach children?
25 The easiest place to reach children are

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2 in schools and day care centers. So how
3 do we then begin to maybe help them deal
4 with their broken spirit? And I think we
5 have to do it through outreach efforts
6 where children are, and the schools are
7 one of the most perfect places to do
8 that.

9 I used to go to every funeral
10 of a young person in my Councilmanic
11 District and I had to stop. All of the
12 sudden, right after Faheem's, I went to
13 the funeral at Gratz High School of the
14 young man that was selling flowers.
15 Remember that? And they robbed him and
16 just shot him for nothing, because they
17 gave him his money.

18 When I was sitting in that
19 church and looked at the program and
20 looked at this kid's face, something just
21 went through me and I knew after that
22 funeral that I couldn't go to any more.
23 I dreamt about that funeral. I dreamt
24 about Faheem's funeral for months. I
25 couldn't sleep. That breaks my spirit.

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2 But, again, I am an adult first
3 before I'm an elected official and a
4 mother and an aunt and a cousin of all
5 kinds of young people, and I guess for me
6 what helps my broken spirit is that I
7 know that we have to continue to fight,
8 continue to educate, continue to reach
9 out, and maybe one day we'll reach enough
10 people.

11 But to say how we can
12 specifically address the issue of broken
13 spirits for all the children -- and, yes,
14 they are going to too many funerals, my
15 God, but our spirits are broke, too, but
16 doing this kind of hearing out in the
17 public helps me deal with when I wake up
18 tomorrow morning reading about 329, and
19 hopefully tomorrow morning it's not 330,
20 and when you go to bed, you're hoping
21 that nothing happens overnight and you
22 wake up the next morning, you read it,
23 you're so disappointed, as elected
24 officials and just as a human being.
25 We're disappointed that this is

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2 happening.

3 MS. MORRIS: One thing that
4 we're doing at PAAN -- and I just in a
5 meeting today with our Executive
6 Director, Darryl Coates -- that I think
7 helps to address your question, when we
8 have these meetings, we have the meeting
9 because of the young person that was
10 shot, and thank God not killed, but shot.
11 But we then talk about, with young people
12 in the meeting, what can we do to keep
13 you from getting in this same situation,
14 from getting in our program.

15 When I took over the program
16 on -- started it on April 24th, there
17 were three clients. There's 70 now.
18 That's a 2,223 percent increase. I had
19 somebody else do the math, make sure I
20 was right. And that weighs on you, but
21 what I find is, there are so many of
22 these kids that were not involved in
23 anything wrong, they were in the right
24 place, they were -- and it was the right
25 time for most of them, but it was the

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2 gang that couldn't shoot straight.

3 But these young people have not
4 lost faith in us, in us, because I make
5 it very clear that it's the State House,
6 it's the City Council, it's PAAN that's
7 helping you, that wants to bring these
8 services to you. And so you got to break
9 through a layer or two --

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Or
11 three.

12 MR. MORRIS: -- or three that
13 they put up, but they eventually realize
14 we're here to help. So that gives them
15 hope, that there are folk like us around
16 who are still out there helping, no
17 matter how many other young people they
18 know who are getting messed up or getting
19 hurt.

20 So in a way, the PIRIS
21 program -- and it wasn't designed to do
22 this, but in a way, it helps to create
23 some hope, to let them know that we're
24 all out there fighting for them.

25 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: My spirits

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2 are better since we've done this, and I
3 want everyone here, this handful of
4 people, to let you know that Dwight,
5 Marian, Donna Reed Miller are as
6 committed to what they're doing. I mean,
7 you have to be impressed that with this
8 small group here, they're as involved
9 with you as if this whole auditorium was
10 full.

11 Some day it will be full, but,
12 again, Dwight, Marian, Donna, thanks,
13 because I believe that our spirits are
14 going to be lifted because things are
15 going to get better.

16 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: And I do
17 think that what Elisha said, he pretty
18 much took my comment, that hopefully that
19 the general public will understand that
20 there are people who care and who are
21 doing something to try and make a
22 difference in our society, and that will
23 give them hope.

24 But the other thing we want to
25 do is, in order to uplift their spirits,

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2 encourage them to become involved with
3 what we're doing, be a volunteer, start a
4 program in your neighborhood, work with
5 young people or just work with your
6 family members. If you don't work with
7 anybody else, if you have young people in
8 your family, work with them.

9 I have a granddaughter and a
10 grandson. I spend a lot of time with
11 her, because she is important to me and I
12 don't want her to be a victim. So I work
13 with her work, with my grandson, talk to
14 young people.

15 As Dwight said, we're not going
16 to solve this problem overnight, but
17 through the MEE Production, what they're
18 doing to get the message out, that there
19 are programs in this City, that we're
20 coordinating the programs and they're
21 providing a way for you to access those
22 programs through the hotline and that
23 there is money coming into the City for
24 these programs that they can engage in.

25 One of the things we didn't

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2 talk about in the recreation centers,
3 we're opening teen centers. They have a
4 great teen center at Simon's where kids
5 can go. We're going to do one at Olney
6 soon. I have one at Dorothy Emmanuel.
7 There's one out here.

8 So these teen centers are set
9 up so young people can go in and shoot
10 pool. We have pool tables. That's
11 important. Young people like to do that.
12 They can watch television and play the
13 PlayStation games on the TV. They have
14 dances at some of these teen centers on
15 Friday night for these young people.
16 Young people like to dance. We have to
17 give them what they like to do in a
18 supervised environment.

19 So there's a lot going on, and
20 the Blueprint is trying to coordinate all
21 these activities, let people know that
22 there are folks doing something, and we
23 want them to come and get involved in
24 what's going on. The spirit will come up
25 as people feel that there are those of us

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2 and other people, not just elected
3 officials here, a lot of people around
4 this City who are involved in this
5 effort. So if you have an idea, a
6 program that you want to get moving, then
7 talk to Alicia.

8 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: And I
9 think what's important is that the
10 elected officials and other City leaders
11 and community organizations can only do
12 so much. Again, in our statement we said
13 it takes the entire community.

14 What else helped me, I was
15 riding through my neighborhood the other
16 day and a young boy stopped me and said,
17 you know, Ms. Donna -- he was talking
18 about police abuse, police harassment,
19 and then he goes, I don't want to be a
20 drug dealer, I want a job.

21 Well, I was glad to hear that
22 from him, but I said to him, Did you
23 graduate from high school yet?

24 And he says, No. I'm in the
25 GED program.

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2 But now I have to help get him
3 in a different GED program, but I was
4 glad to hear him say he doesn't want to
5 sell drugs. First of all, he is one of
6 the neighborhood drug dealers, but I'm
7 glad to know that he wants to stop.

8 When we have forums like this,
9 it's my understanding that 7,000 flyers
10 were given out for this meeting, 7,000 in
11 this area, in the mail. Lots of people
12 were outreached to. And I don't know how
13 you guys got your information. I know
14 that it's on the radio, on like 99, some
15 of those stations that some of us don't
16 listen to, at least I don't anyway, but
17 people are trying to do things now that
18 attracts young people. The rec centers
19 are doing totally different, totally
20 different activities. Teen centers --
21 certainly when we were growing up, there
22 was no such thing as a teen center.

23 We're getting ready to do a
24 recording studio in one of the recreation
25 centers in my district, because we know,

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2 like you just said, Elisha, that this is
3 of interest to younger people.

4 So there are lots of programs
5 that are being developed specifically
6 targeting that particular age group to
7 keep them involved, to keep them out of
8 just standing on the corners with nothing
9 to do.

10 So Philadelphia is really
11 spending -- there's a lot of money being
12 put in Philadelphia to reach out and
13 touch teens and younger children and
14 parents. So we just want people to
15 utilize them. Thank you.

16 MS. JACKSON: And I just want
17 to augment what everybody else has said,
18 but two critical pieces here is, one,
19 Representative Evans has stepped out in
20 the forefront to say, We're going to do
21 this for ten years. That's some hard
22 labor, ten years. That's a real
23 commitment to this effort, as opposed to
24 saying, We'll be here, then we're going
25 to be gone. So we're looking at some

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2 hard work over the next ten years. So
3 it's not going to happen overnight, but
4 that gives us, again, hope, optimism that
5 we can conquer this.

6 And what helps me, because,
7 again, as you mentioned, yeah, spirits
8 are broken, but there is light at the end
9 of the tunnel because we are engaging
10 young people to carry this message to
11 their peers to say, Enough is enough. So
12 if we can't convey that message as
13 adults, surely peers are listening to
14 each other. And we have engaged right
15 now about 70-plus young people that come
16 into my office on a daily basis, wanting
17 to do outreach. I'm like, Okay, let's
18 get you out there to do some outreach. I
19 mean, it's amazing to see how these kids
20 want to make a difference in their lives,
21 in their community. And we're having
22 more orientations. If you know of young
23 people that want to get involved in this,
24 there is opportunity, and they can really
25 convey this message to their peers where

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2 it makes a difference, because they're
3 bringing their friends. I'm like, Okay,
4 how fast can I ramp up? And that is
5 involving, again, adults to go out there
6 with them, because this is a structured
7 process. We're getting male adults
8 involved that want to help young people.
9 We're getting people calling the hotline
10 to say, I want to do this work.

11 So I think that is really
12 what's encouraging for us, is to see
13 there are some other young people who
14 want to be about the business of making
15 their community better. So hopefully
16 that will start to heal these broken
17 spirits, because, you're right, there are
18 a lot of broken spirits that we have to
19 tend to as well. So thank you.

20 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Any other
21 questions?

22 You want to come to the mike or
23 do you want to just stand up and ask your
24 question? Identify yourself for the
25 record.

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2 MS. BRAXTON: Hi. My name is
3 Katrina Braxton and I'm here with my son,
4 representing my son, standing up for my
5 son.

6 One thing I just -- I'm
7 wondering, how can we get these programs
8 out to the children? Would it be easy
9 like to put it in the school system? I
10 mean, I don't know how we can get it out.
11 Or you said they have stuff over the
12 radio, but --

13 REPRESENTATIVE EVANS: It
14 varies. The hotline number, if you call,
15 they can tell you.

16 I know when I was out here,
17 there is a teen center at 58th and --
18 what is it, 58th and Kingsessing. I
19 can't think of the playground that's
20 there. I've seen it. They have a teen
21 center over there. So you could either
22 obviously find out directly through City
23 Hall and the Rec Department or the
24 Councilperson, you can find that out.

25 And usually there's a lot --

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2 the principal was here earlier. I don't
3 know if they have like kind of an
4 after-school program in Bartram.

5 Do they? The beacon here?

6 Okay. Then they do have it.

7 So the objective of the City
8 was to try to ensure that there was some
9 form of either beacon program or
10 after-school program in most of the
11 schools. One of the tasks that we are
12 working on, we're trying to work with the
13 School District to really open up these
14 buildings later, just like we're here,
15 talking about 9:00, 9:30, that type of
16 thing. We're discussing that with the
17 School District, with the idea of the
18 school -- because the school really is,
19 when you think about, there's schools in
20 every neighborhood. So the school is
21 really the anchor. It's the one place
22 where we can do something.

23 So we've been discussing the
24 idea about schools being open later and
25 being a location to take them. But the

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2 idea is, the schools, the rec centers,
3 churches. Churches, schools, rec centers
4 and PALs.

5 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: I think
6 what she's saying is, how do the young
7 people know what programs are available.
8 And the school is the key place to tell
9 them. Councilwoman Miller and I were
10 just talking that maybe during the course
11 of the year, we get into the schools an
12 assembly to talk about what's happening
13 and to give them the information. And
14 we're going to have a lot of resource
15 information that they will get to the
16 schools to give to the young people to
17 take home and make them available in the
18 neighborhoods and things of that nature.

19 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: And,
20 Alicia, you guys are putting together a
21 directory, correct?

22 MS. JACKSON: Yeah. We'll be
23 doing a youth directory, again, pushing
24 technology. Everything will be on a
25 little disc. Well, it's a disc that will

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2 connect to a website. We'll be able to
3 update this youth directory on a regular
4 basis so you won't have to worry about
5 printing it out. If you don't have a
6 computer at home, you can go to
7 libraries.

8 So, again, we will flood the
9 City with this disc that will connect
10 people to resources, as well as the
11 hotline connects you to resources. So
12 we're just pushing those vehicles and
13 these other vehicles, again, just to let
14 folk know that resources are out there
15 and they're in the community. They are
16 in the community. So we'll be getting
17 that information out there.

18 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: If you
19 have community organizations that you all
20 are bringing into your community out
21 here, let us know. Let us connect with
22 them. Let us maybe have a meeting with
23 them so that they'll know what the
24 Blueprint is about, how they can buy into
25 the Blueprint and connect to the

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2 Blueprint.

3 So this is an information
4 meeting to let people know what's going
5 on and also listen from you what your
6 needs are in your community.

7 MS. BECK: Just thinking off
8 the top of my head running the hotline,
9 there are two PAL centers right in
10 Southwest Philadelphia that are open
11 actually until 9 o'clock at night. They
12 have sports leagues. You could call the
13 hotline and we can connect you. We have
14 hours, we have contact information.

15 Also, going back to the
16 schools, there is actually a hotline that
17 I don't think many parents are aware of.
18 It's the Office of Climate and Safety and
19 it's run by the School Board, and they
20 actually can link parents to different
21 programs within their school, and the
22 hotline has that number. So, I mean,
23 that's always a number if you call the
24 hotline, we can link you to the Office of
25 Climate and Safety to your school and

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2 also different community organizations,
3 faith-based organizations in your zip
4 code.

5 MS. BRAXTON: Okay. Now, I
6 just this year put him in a charter
7 school. Now, would we have access?

8 MS. BECK: You have access.
9 It's all Philadelphia. It's not just
10 public schools. It's all Philadelphia
11 schools. So they service every
12 Philadelphia student. It's actually a
13 24-hour hotline, so it also can work as
14 like an emergency number, too. It's not
15 in place of a 9-1-1 number, but it's a
16 good way if a child is being bullied,
17 they can track. You can call and track
18 the progress and what steps the schools
19 are taking to help the individual
20 student. So it's a great number.

21 MS. BRAXTON: Because I --

22 REPRESENTATIVE EVANS:
23 1-888-570-BLUE.

24 MS. BRAXTON: Yes. I have
25 another thing, another issue. Problems

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2 that go on within the schools, I'm
3 finding problems not being solved the way
4 I feel would be appropriate for solving
5 certain problems. This is my first year
6 I've ever encountered -- no. I shouldn't
7 say my first year. I have encountered
8 this on several occasions. I said should
9 teachers be given a course on how to
10 resolve certain problems that I don't
11 think they have the ability to solve? I
12 mean, they don't know how to solve it.
13 That's what I'm finding out. They don't
14 know how to solve certain situations, and
15 it's really annoying. It's really
16 bothersome being a parent.

17 This is my youngest. I have a
18 26-year-old and 22-year-old twins. And I
19 found it over the years, and it seems
20 like it's getting worse as the years go
21 on.

22 The teachers are younger and my
23 girls, they have older teachers, and
24 these younger teachers just seem to -- I
25 don't know if they don't have children

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2 and don't know how to resolve certain
3 issues. And I said, Well, should there
4 maybe be some kind of a class for teacher
5 training?

6 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: That's
7 something we can bring to the School
8 District.

9 REPRESENTATIVE EVANS: Not to
10 speak for the School District itself,
11 there's no question that the whole aspect
12 of professional development is an issue,
13 but I thought you were going in another
14 direction, which we have Good Shepherd
15 Mediation. I know that's an initiative
16 we do fund under the Blueprint. The Good
17 Shepherd Mediation I feel does a very
18 good job, because it's something that was
19 recommended.

20 There's a list. I don't know
21 if they have it, but there's a list of
22 some programs that we do fund that kind
23 of have, quote/unquote, the stamp of the
24 Blueprint that we fund different
25 organizations that we try to use. Matter

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2 of fact, your State Rep just came in.
3 You want somebody who is a
4 problem-solver.

5 Ron, what rec center were we at
6 that had the teen center? Remember we
7 did the tour out here a couple --

8 REPRESENTATIVE WATERS: Myers,
9 58th and Kingsessing.

10 REPRESENTATIVE EVANS: You had
11 some other activities I know going on.

12 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: This is
13 our State Representative Ron Waters who
14 represents this area.

15 Thank you for coming. You've
16 been to others that weren't in your area.

17 REPRESENTATIVE WATERS: I'm
18 happy to be here. I'm happy to see you,
19 Councilwoman Miller and my colleague and
20 champion for the Blueprint for a Safer
21 Philadelphia, Representative Dwight
22 Evans.

23 I think our community should
24 feel honored that we have these
25 distinguished people who come here with

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2 something that they have taken all over
3 this City, North Philly, Northwest
4 Philly, Northeast Philly, South Philly,
5 West Philly, West Philly, West Philly. I
6 mean, he has been all over this City, and
7 I'm so happy because this Blueprint
8 touches the core of where the answer is
9 with empowering the people, government
10 for the people, by the people. It
11 empowers us and it gives us a chance to
12 be engaged.

13 So, Dwight -- well, excuse me.
14 I call him Dwight sometimes, but
15 Representative Evans, Councilmembers
16 Tasco and Miller and my friend here,
17 Elisha, and all of you who are here
18 answering the right questions, you got
19 the problem-solvers right here.

20 REPRESENTATIVE EVANS: Ron, why
21 don't you tell them a little bit about
22 what you're trying to do with the village
23 concept and the kids concept.

24 REPRESENTATIVE WATERS: Right.
25 We are setting up a model, and I shared

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2 this with my colleague, Representative
3 Evans. In addition to what the Blueprint
4 is designed to do Citywide, there are, at
5 least as far as I'm concerned, there's
6 going to be a need to have some satellite
7 Blueprint activities going on throughout
8 the City, so that we can set up a network
9 of models of what could be done in
10 neighborhoods that could be duplicated
11 again and again and again so that we can
12 create safe havens that address the
13 issues of public safety, address the
14 issues of this right-out education, from
15 politics to education on how to build
16 strong communities from education, to how
17 you could manage your money in a way
18 where you empower yourself so that you
19 can pretty much control what goes on in
20 and around your neighborhoods.

21 We don't need some of the
22 stores opening up two and three of the
23 duplicate stores on any one block, these
24 take-out restaurants and some of these
25 stop and go's.

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2 We have to figure out how we're
3 going to use our dollars to vote for us
4 so that we'll say we'll support this, but
5 we won't support that. And we'll start
6 closing down the nuisance and unwanted
7 public nuisance places and we'll start
8 saying, If you open up facilities like
9 this, we'll patronize you. But we're not
10 going to patronize anything that somebody
11 says that they want to provide in our
12 neighborhoods, and we say, Sure, whatever
13 you open up, we'll spend our dollars with
14 you.

15 So we have to have ways that we
16 create education where we control our
17 wealth, where we control our health,
18 where we have a better way of getting rid
19 of some of the things that cause us to
20 die early in life, diabetes, high blood
21 pressure. In our neighborhoods, it
22 probably happens more than it happens in
23 any other neighborhood. What's wrong
24 with that?

25 So how do we create models of

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2 communities that are healthy and wealthy?
3 We are not a poor people.

4 Representative Evans, you know
5 the statistics on this.

6 We are not a poor people. We
7 act like we're poor people, but we have
8 plenty of money to spend, and we have to
9 stop being consumers and be educated
10 buyers.

11 And we also have public safety,
12 of course, and beautification, how do we
13 beautify our neighborhoods so that they
14 look better, so that when kids go to
15 school, they don't walk past graffiti,
16 they don't walk past litter, they don't
17 walk past -- and when they get to school,
18 we expect them to get to school and feel
19 good about what they experienced on the
20 way to school. No wonder they get to
21 school and they don't feel so happy. How
22 do we create aesthetically pleasing
23 communities?

24 So this is some of the things
25 that we're doing with our village,

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2 because this is -- in wrapping up, I just
3 want to say this: The old African
4 proverb says it takes a village to raise
5 a child, right? But we keep saying it,
6 but we're not doing it. So I said let's
7 take that cliché and turn it into an
8 action word and let's do that. Let's
9 create a village, and that's what we're
10 doing. And with the help of
11 Representative Evans, who has already
12 come on board with it, it fits right into
13 his Blueprint. So this is what we're
14 doing.

15 Thank you.

16 MR. MUHAMMAD: In the name of
17 Elaba B. Nefferesent, the merciful, my
18 name is Brother Steven Muhammad. I
19 represent a group called Crossing
20 Crescent. We're a group of black men,
21 lead by black men, who are
22 unapologetically Christian,
23 unapologetically Muslim, who are
24 encouraging black men who are Christians
25 and Muslims to take more responsibility.

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2 We're going in the neighborhoods where a
3 lot of this at-risk behavior is and
4 troublesome young people are that look
5 like us, that are our sons and in our
6 family and encouraging them to join the
7 church, join a mosque, stop the killing.

8 The Millions More Movement that
9 we're allied with has a number of
10 committees. One of those committees is a
11 security committee. We just want to
12 extend ourselves to you and to this
13 community.

14 One of the things we like about
15 the Blueprint is that they're constantly
16 saying get involved with young people. I
17 like that. That hasn't been said,
18 Brother. We really commend you for
19 having the vision and the faith to put
20 this kind of thing and make it a public
21 policy type of issue.

22 We're concerned about promoting
23 to the general public in the
24 neighborhoods the responsibility of
25 making our own block, our own

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2 neighborhood safe, with the help of law
3 enforcement and with the help of other
4 community organizations, but I'm really
5 concerned that we do more to place the
6 onus on everyday people to take their
7 responsibility without demanding
8 additional police, even though that's
9 good in its place, but accepting what we
10 have to do that can make a decisive
11 difference.

12 So we just want to say that,
13 and thank ya'll. The question about how
14 can you heal spirits, that hasn't
15 typically been, from my observation, the
16 best field or workshop of elected
17 officials or the government or political
18 people, but I think that when it comes to
19 healing spirits not only of the people
20 who are affected and witnesses of that,
21 but to also change some minds and hearts
22 of the trigger brother and the trigger
23 sister who may be thinking about that, to
24 try to have an intervention of conscience
25 that may make them double-think that kind

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2 of activity.

3 So that's who we are.

4 REPRESENTATIVE EVANS: The
5 reason we were smiling, a number of us,
6 and Donna Reed Miller knows about this,
7 we were smiling because we mentioned the
8 word "responsibility" last week.

9 Donna, you remember that,
10 right?

11 So, Brother, I want to say to
12 you, we mentioned "responsibility" last
13 week. And Alicia has been working with
14 Kenny, so we formed an alliance with the
15 Million More Movement. So we don't feel
16 that there's any walls. I want to be
17 very clear. We feel very strongly
18 whatever political jurisdictions,
19 whatever boundaries, may it be from
20 Rizzo, who is a republican, or Ron, we
21 have traveled in districts. We have not
22 looked at these areas and said, Well,
23 this is somebody else's legislative
24 district or Council district. We have
25 just said, This is about people, and

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2 that's what the Blueprint has been about.
3 We have said that over and over again.
4 We don't get in no turf battles, no
5 discussions with anybody. We just kind
6 of come in.

7 And then just be clear,
8 everybody is invited, may they represent
9 the district, don't represent the
10 district, whatever. Everybody is
11 invited. We do not leave anyone out.
12 Anybody we exclude, they exclude
13 themselves. We don't exclude anyone.

14 And I'm glad you said what you
15 said, because I wish I had you at
16 Strawberry Mansion last week. I guess
17 something was wrong with what I was
18 saying.

19 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Come on
20 up, sir.

21 MR. BRINKLEY: Good evening.
22 How is everybody doing? My name is Greg
23 Brinkley and I'm from the East Falls
24 section of the City, up in the Abbotsford
25 area.

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2 First of all, I do believe that
3 we're winning this. You don't hear a lot
4 about it. I think that the devil is loud
5 and goodness is usually humble and
6 subtle. But all of the marches,
7 everything that's positive I believe
8 serves as part of a greater whole.

9 I think, sure, it's unfortunate
10 that we have 300-something murders, but
11 there's a lot of things going on and a
12 lot of people are doing a lot of stuff,
13 and I think we need to stay focused on
14 that.

15 That's not a criticism of you,
16 my sister. It isn't a criticism, but I
17 think for me that's how I stay positive.
18 And my spirit can be broken if I focus on
19 just the stuff that is the negatives
20 that's happening and not the positive.

21 This is my first time attending
22 this meeting, because I'm in the
23 correctional system. I'm a correction
24 officer. I won't get into where. So I
25 see a lot of the young people that come

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2 in. I get a chance to talk to them.
3 It's an adult facility. And when you
4 look at their background -- this isn't an
5 excuse, but it is a common thread that
6 there's a lot of things that we're
7 talking about doing that's missing.

8 When I was growing up on the
9 streets -- and I was with you,
10 Representative, with the call to the old
11 heads. That's another component,
12 bringing the old heads back up, but I
13 don't know -- those guys want to do that
14 uniquely, and I'm going to respect that,
15 but that's a whole -- that's coming into
16 play. It is working. All kinds of
17 groups are getting involved.

18 This is my first time. I
19 usually work 10:00 to 6:00. I'm off
20 tonight and I heard about this and I
21 wanted to come in, just add my little
22 piece.

23 I had a couple questions and I
24 got some suggestions that I think can
25 work. I'm in corrections now, but I'm an

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2 organizer by trade. For 20-something
3 years, I worked with the District 1199-C
4 as an organizer, and I want to throw out
5 some suggestions tonight on how we can
6 further that outreach. I see a lot of
7 stuff going on, but I just want to see if
8 we can maybe bring it home and throw
9 another suggestion out there.

10 I have a question about the
11 Think Tank that I saw in the budget. Who
12 is this Think Tank, if I can ask it?
13 What is the makeup of that?

14 MS. JACKSON: Absolutely. The
15 Think Tank is part of the Blueprint for a
16 Safer Philadelphia, specifically the
17 prevention component, because we needed
18 to engage, just based on the thought
19 process of the model that we're trying to
20 create here, again, this public health
21 model, something very new. We needed to
22 engage some folk who have done some
23 critical thinking around this issue
24 nationally as well as locally. So in
25 addition to Dr. Deborah Prothrow-Stith,

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2 who has an extensive background in this
3 issue of violence, and her theory around,
4 as Representative Evans mentioned,
5 primary, secondary and tertiary, there's
6 some other folk nationally who have been
7 engaged in violence over the last 25, 30
8 years.

9 With that said, we wanted to
10 see if we could get them committed to
11 what was going on in Philadelphia to say,
12 how can we take that knowledge, those
13 lessons learned and apply it to the model
14 that we're trying to craft here.

15 So we were able to call
16 together a Think Tank, and I'm talking
17 about some critical folk, some folk that
18 are high powered, some folk that, again,
19 have national presence around this issue
20 and local folk who have been deep into
21 this issue, I mean, just a number of
22 years to bring their heads together to
23 say, Take a look at what we're doing, let
24 us know if it's right, it's wrong, how we
25 can make it better, what changes need to

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2 occur and, again, just mold something
3 specific to Philadelphia.

4 So we've had a commitment now
5 of about 25 folk who have been willing to
6 share their time and their expertise
7 around looking at this issue from a
8 public health prevention standpoint on a
9 monthly basis to say, here's what you're
10 doing right, here's what you're doing
11 wrong, this is how you need to tweak it,
12 this is what you need to add, this is
13 what you need to delete.

14 So we've been very fortunate to
15 get some, again, folk who have that
16 critical thinking and that expertise
17 around this issue, and we call that the
18 Think Tank.

19 MR. BRINKLEY: Thank you.

20 REPRESENTATIVE EVANS: Do you
21 have an interest in the Think Tank?

22 MR. BRINKLEY: Yeah, I really
23 would.

24 REPRESENTATIVE EVANS: Make
25 sure we get your name.

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2 MR. BRINKLEY: Okay. One of
3 the things that I'd like to suggest as
4 far as outreach is, a lot of things are
5 being done and you got the hotline, but
6 how do we bring that hotline, how do we
7 let people know where the hotline is?
8 Couple suggestions I'm just throwing out
9 there.

10 What we would do when we went
11 out to organize the people for new union
12 memberships, whether it be Philly or
13 Jersey, wherever I participated in, we
14 would do what is known as home visits.
15 Now, you can't do that every night, I
16 understand that, but something the
17 Representative here said, when you talk
18 about those regional centers, you can
19 pick, say, maybe -- it could be refined.
20 Just say maybe this Saturday. You pick a
21 group out here in West Philly and you got
22 five, six blocks. You actually go to
23 them and you knock on the doors. This is
24 what we got, blah, blah, blah, blah,
25 blah, besides just their community

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2 groups, but you actually do home visits
3 and you can -- and in addition to that,
4 you can do it -- you can't do it every
5 night, but you can pick certain amount of
6 times, you can pick where the center
7 blocks are so that you know that -- with
8 all due respect to you, Brother, we do
9 know what's going on in our community.
10 People do talk. They may not formally
11 come and say it, but we do know. And by
12 understanding that whole concept, it will
13 get out. Believe it or not, it will get
14 out to somebody.

15 Roxborough High School had a
16 problem at one point it was reported last
17 year with neighborhoods, groups from
18 Abbotsford, East Falls and some groups
19 from Germantown. Germantown and East
20 Falls was teaming up against the youths
21 from Abbotsford.

22 So they called people in -- I
23 went to Roxborough -- people like myself,
24 Malik Aziz, and what we did was -- they
25 took credit for it, but I don't care. I

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2 really don't. That's why I'm here. My
3 suggestions, however it works, I don't
4 need credit, because -- I don't want to
5 get too religious, but my reward is with
6 God, but that's a whole other story.

7 One of the things we went up
8 there and we did when I was called and I
9 was asked to come up there -- and I
10 worked with Mentos, you might know him,
11 Carlos Mentos. Anyway, we went up there,
12 and one of the things we did was -- this
13 was very interesting -- we had like 25
14 youths there, the core guys. So what I
15 do -- and I think we can do this. We
16 actually had them identify who their
17 leadership was. Because when we used to
18 gang war -- I think you've been out
19 there, Rep. You always had people
20 that --

21 REPRESENTATIVE WATERS:

22 (Unintelligible.)

23 MR. BRINKLEY: You had people
24 who were guys who were the leaders.
25 People knew that and they had respect.

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2 So you identified them. And when they
3 said something, believe me, you listened.
4 Ain't nobody going to give them too much
5 mouth.

6 So what we did was, I used that
7 concept and I identified -- because
8 everybody thought that it was interesting
9 what happened. By doing that, I told
10 them, Ya'll guys pick who you think were
11 your spokesperson, and everybody thought
12 that they was it until this started
13 happening. And some interesting things
14 came out. It broke up that whole thing.
15 It actually served to -- but the leaders,
16 wasn't nobody going to question them,
17 because they know that these guys could
18 actually handle themselves.

19 But what happened from that is,
20 those leaders, because they had the
21 respect, we identified who they were and
22 we went to them and we made -- we had to
23 utilize what they've built up and make
24 them feel like they were what they were,
25 but they only felt that way because

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2 that's what their people out of their own
3 peers said. Then once we got them to
4 start working with them, it all stopped.

5 And I think you can do that in
6 the community, identify -- because there
7 are people on the streets that people
8 identify with. Let me use the term, if I
9 can, with all due respect. They got the
10 (unintelligible) check.

11 REPRESENTATIVE WATERS:
12 Credibility.

13 MR. BRINKLEY: Credibility,
14 exactly. And I think within that, we can
15 identify those, take the programs to
16 them, make them feel -- because they
17 obviously have some influence. You just
18 want to redirect that influence and show
19 them how they utilize their influence in
20 a positive way. And one of the things
21 that I see -- and I'll get off the
22 mike -- that I see that I think is real
23 critical is -- I was an at-risk youth,
24 and I'm glad people didn't give up on me.
25 I'm here to say -- because a lot of times

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2 I see people who look for the youths that
3 are doing good, and that's fine. They
4 should be rewarded. But we're only as
5 strong as our weakest link.

6 So we got to find -- we got to
7 go to those at-risk youths. We got to
8 make them believe that they are somebody.
9 Because to me, I'm not God, I can't say
10 who can be saved and who can't. Now,
11 don't get me wrong. If I put my efforts
12 out there and you don't want to do it,
13 then that's good because it allows me to
14 isolate you and put you over there, but
15 what I found out in using this concept, I
16 have ran into some people who thought
17 that nobody cared about them, because
18 they were perceived to be the badder of
19 the bad. But I can't give up on them,
20 because people didn't give up on me, and
21 I think I'm doing a pretty good job,
22 doing my best.

23 I'm in the correctional system
24 and I deliberately went into the system
25 for -- because I was in healthcare, a

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2 whole different career, and I went in
3 there to begin to start trying to find
4 ways to help, because out of 43,000
5 prisoners in the state, 37,000 of them
6 are black, and that's a fact. Most of
7 them. We fund --

8 Thank you, Councilwoman.

9 Philly funds these communities
10 around the state.

11 So I just want to say that I'm
12 willing to get involved and, like I said,
13 take it to their homes. I don't want --
14 everything that's happening is positive
15 and is needed, you know, because
16 everything works together for the good of
17 the Lord, or however that saying goes. I
18 really believe that. But thank you for
19 having these forums.

20 REPRESENTATIVE WATERS: Well
21 said. Thank you.

22 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Will you
23 give her your name and phone number.

24 Okay. Well, I think that our
25 time is up. We have to be out of here at

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2 9 o'clock. I want to thank everyone for
3 coming. There are a lot of great ideas.

4 (Applause.)

5 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Some good
6 ideas and good comments. Your issue
7 about the schools and the effort to train
8 the teachers to deal with issues is a
9 very important one and something we will
10 address on the Council level when we have
11 the School Board with us. Okay?

12 But the other ideas, sir, talk
13 to Alicia.

14 And anyone else who has an idea
15 or a comment, there's the hotline, and
16 certainly leave your name and number and
17 someone will get back to you.

18 I want to thank the panelists,
19 young lady from CHOICE for coming out and
20 traveling with us. She's been on the
21 road, too, right?

22 MS. BECK: Yes. I'm here.

23 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: And thank
24 our State Representative Waters for
25 coming out.

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2 And the State Representatives,
3 when we go into the various communities,
4 have been supportive and have come out to
5 be supportive. We were in South
6 Philadelphia. The Representatives came
7 out there. It depends on their schedule.
8 Some of them get tied up in Harrisburg,
9 but they're here.

10 We want to thank Dwight Evans
11 for his leadership.

12 (Applause.)

13 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: And thank
14 him for working, putting all of this
15 together. It's not easy. It takes a lot
16 of time. It takes a lot of money, but
17 luckily he's got the money.

18 And so I think if there are no
19 comments -- Dwight, do you have any
20 comments?

21 REPRESENTATIVE EVANS: No.

22 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: We will
23 recess this meeting to December the 6th,
24 7:00 p.m., William Penn High School at
25 Broad and Master Street. So even though

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2 you live out here in Southwest Philly, we
3 live up in Mount Airy, come to North
4 Philadelphia, because it's a good way to
5 get to know the neighborhoods. I thought
6 I knew Philadelphia. I didn't know too
7 much about this place, but this is good.

8 So thank you all for coming.
9 If you have any questions, please feel
10 free to call any of us. You can access
11 us on the computer by calling philly.gov,
12 first name, last name. That's all you
13 need and you can get our offices. Call
14 City Hall, ask for the Councilperson and
15 they'll give you the number.

16 Thank you all.

17 And we look forward to having
18 that information, Alicia.

19 Thank you. Good night. Let me
20 just thank Bartram for letting us come
21 in. We appreciate it.

22 (Joint Committee on Public
23 Safety and Public Health and Human
24 Services adjourned at 8:55 p.m.)

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