

COUNTY OF KANE



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Project Safe Aurora Hosts Community Event to Address Gun Violence Prevention

(4/30/24) Project Safe Aurora Violence Prevention Coalition invites the community to join a pivotal event focused on gun violence prevention. "A Practical Approach to Gun Violence," is scheduled for **May 11th, 2024** from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM at the Prisco Center, located at 150 W Illinois Avenue in Aurora.

This community event aims to unite a diverse mix of organizations, nonprofits and government agencies, and the public - all dedicated to addressing and preventing gun violence. It offers a unique opportunity for community members to learn, engage, and contribute to making Aurora safer.

Attendees will have the chance to explore a resource fair where local organizations will showcase their services and initiatives to prevent gun violence, participate in a powerful panel discussion featuring individuals with lived experiences of gun violence, and engage directly with experts, advocates, and community members in meaningful conversations that inspire action and change.

"Youth in our community, or any community, should have every opportunity to succeed in life. Tackling issues, such as violence prevention, should remain a priority for all stakeholders," said Simon Rodriguez, Jr., Youth Services Manager for the City of Aurora. "As a coalition of youth-advocates, we will continue to work across all areas, with as many partners, to ensure all youth can safely attend school, activities, play outdoors, and attend events while ensuring they have the tools to be successful members of our community. It is our mission at the City of Aurora Youth Services to advocate for the youth of our community, while working to eliminate violence of any kind."

"This event is an essential step towards fostering a safer community for everyone," said Michael Isaacson, Kane County Health Department (KCHD) Executive Director. KCHD is the organization which convenes the Project Safe Aurora coalition. "By coming together, we can make significant strides in preventing gun violence and building a brighter future for Aurora and Kane County."

Erika Garcia, Community Liaison and Therapist at Suicide Prevention Services of Batavia, is one of the event panelists. "I am excited to be a part of Project Safe Aurora's upcoming panel and rewrite the narrative of gun violence as a public health issue," Garcia said. "When we investigate the root causes of gun violence, we must look at the trauma that affects our neighborhoods in Aurora. A well-resourced community that shares a collective sense of belonging practices healthy conflict resolution. Gun violence is a result of individuals feeling unsafe and ill-equipped to handle stress and/or conflict."

"Gun violence is a real issue. I am encouraged and excited that on May 11th, we can share real stories, have real conversations, and open the door to real solutions," said Babatunde Beeks, a panelist at the event and founder

and president of The Start Program, which addresses violence prevention, youth development, street outreach and mentoring in the Aurora area.

The event is open to all (families, students, professionals, and community leaders) who wish to contribute to the collective strength and commitment to address gun violence in Aurora.

About Project Safe Aurora Violence Prevention Coalition:

Project Safe Aurora is a coalition of organizations, nonprofits, and government agencies dedicated to addressing and preventing gun violence in the Aurora community. Through collaborative efforts, they strive to create a safer environment for all residents. Learn more at: <https://kanehealth.com/Pages/Violence-Prevention.aspx>