

Dr. Mary Roberson opened the meeting sharing NIRCO's initiatives.

Barbara Young introduced Tierra Lemon, (Director) of Lake County's Gun Violence Prevention Initiative, who was later joined by Rachel Jacoby, (Gun Violence Prevention Specialist) and Sandra Bankson, (Chief of Victim Services).

The GVPI's mission is to implement trauma-informed programs and foster collaborative efforts throughout Lake County that will reduce and prevent all types of gun violence by addressing the root causes.

The GVPI was announced in 2021 with the support of the Mayors of Waukegan, Zion, and North Chicago as a new approach to addressing rising gun violence. The GVPI funds the data driven and proven approach of putting teams of violence interrupters in targeted areas, which began in 2022.

During the meeting they shared their vision interrupt cycles of violence through the use of evidenced-based practices that meet the needs of those who have been harmed, who are at risk of being harmed, and who have caused harm by:

- **Targeting violence interruption and street outreach** via the Lake County Peacemakers to areas with the highest risk of gun violence.
- **Utilizing restorative justice practices** that work to prevent unnecessary incarceration and criminal convictions for non-violent offenses.
- **Developing and supporting a county-wide network of partners**, including direct service providers, for-profit entities, and other stakeholders that support those who are the highest risk of being impacted by gun violence.
- **Educating and implementing programs** to raise awareness about gun violence prevention.

Their vision aligns with NIRCO's goal of increasing participation of our youth in promoting wellness and principles of recovery.

Tierra Lemon stated that lack of mentorship can increase an individual's risk of gun violence. They meet with youth by meeting them where they are, provide mentorship-services and facilitate narrative changing practices to cultivate the child's identity.

The team presented each service they offered as a "piece of a puzzle".

They include Youth Engagement, Resource Ecosystem, Intervention, Restorative Justice, Victim Services and Firearm Risk Reduction.

Provided training includes use of Narcan, Suicide Prevention and Stop the Bleed.

The recent Gun Violence Vigil provided a safe place for family members to speak about their loved ones lost due to gun violence.

Dr. Mary opened the floor for questions:

Q1. Debra Jordan- How is your initiative connected to police departments, that may have less skilled officers?

A1. The GPVI are currently working with the Waukegan Police force for heat spots, and blocks that have more exposure to help deploy the Lake County Peacemakers.

Ian Biggs from Youth Conservation Corp shared an upcoming meeting with the Chief of Police to discuss issues.

Q2. Yajaira Balderas asked about the language barriers and how they are being addressed.

A2. Rachel Jacoby responded the adding live translators at events. We shared that we are currently looking to hire a Bilingual employee.

Q3. Joy Gossman expressed her concern about juveniles who are charged, (most with gun offenses) becoming traumatized after being detained. How is the GPVI reintegrating them to help curb the behavior?

A3. Tierra shared they were addressing cycle repetition and were seeking grants to serve youth of incarcerated parents to find solutions and close gaps.

Dr. Mary added that untreated mental disorders and legalization of marijuana plays a part in gun violence.

Contact information for GPVI was shared at the closing of the meeting.