



THE ROLE OF THE FAMILY

“Culture mandates that one make home the primary concern of the heart. The heart creates love, support, cooperation, nurturing, and peace. Home is our first school. Let us put our hearts, minds, bodies and souls back into the home as the first step toward eliminating the violence in the streets.” (Iyanla Vanzant in Acts of Faith: Daily Meditations for People of Color)

We must *heal* the community to end violence. **We MUST reclaim the African proverb that it takes a village to raise a child.** More importantly, we must realize that it takes the *entire* village to help the family raise its children. This includes the schools, communities of faith, social institutions, and community allies. All aspects of the village must take responsibility for raising the children and supporting *all* families in our community.

Therefore, as the village we recognize the following:

- There are all kinds of families in the African American community – two-parent families, single mothers raising children, single fathers raising children, grandparents and other relatives raising children, and foster care families. The village must support families, no matter the composition or the orientation. Families need the support of the entire community. Institutions of faith, schools, businesses, and social and educational institutions *must* help them raise children, and provide relevant programs to address the diverse needs of the family, as well as those of the community.
- We have lost an understanding of how the history, cultural values, beliefs, practices, and traditions have sustained and protected the African American family. We have forgotten the significance of the role played by our elders as keepers of wisdom, as teachers of cultural values, and as role models for parenting. Today’s youth feel abandoned and disrespected by the rest of the community. We must heal the distrust and the disconnection that seemingly comes from a breakdown of the strong sense of unity once shared by everyone in the village. We must return to and accept the practice of holding youth accountable whenever we encounter unacceptable or inappropriate behavior. Therefore, to have a healthy community, we must repair the relationship between the generations to help break the cycle of violence permeating our neighborhoods. Furthermore, we must make a commitment to reclaim and institute these values, practices and traditions to save today’s families.
- Parents must see themselves as the children’s first teachers and main role models. Children often learn more from what they see their parents do than from what their parents say. We learn about values and behaviors from our parents. Parents must understand that they have responsibilities as well as rights to raise their own children. They have the *right* to raise children in a safe, healthy, productive and positive environment. Yet, they must take the *responsibility* to empower their children to become responsible and productive adults. However, they cannot do this alone. The schools, communities of faith, social service agencies, and the community *must assist* families in achieving these goals.

If we truly want to have a healthy community with healthy families, we must recognize the family as the *foundation* of the village. Protected and insulated by the entire village, *parents and families* must make a commitment to:

Empower children with a strong sense of self, community, culture, and spirituality to help them feel self-confident enough to avoid negative peer pressure and make the right choices. Remind our youth that the village will also take part in their individual rearing, and they should respect and listen to elders when approached regarding their appropriate *and* inappropriate behaviors.

Instill children with a sense of responsibility to the family, to the neighborhood in which they live as well as to the wider community. Trust and respect helps to build a healthy family, *and* a healthy community.

Support youth by allowing them to follow their dreams and not be deterred by influences of youth who engage in negative and even criminal lifestyles. Adults must encourage a *positive* mindset and perspective for all youth and must constantly be supportive of the need for young people to "do the right thing."

Encourage youth to only take part in *legal* money-making opportunities. Parents must not allow their children to participate in illegal activities, even when those activities have the possibility of bringing additional income into the household. Parents and guardians must realize that such behaviors can lead to the imprisonment and/or death of their children.

Teach children self-discipline by strongly urging them to resist engaging in unhealthy or illegal behaviors or life-styles. Help them to deal with negative peer pressure, especially regarding drugs and alcohol.

Provide positive role models. Children must see strong, positive men and women living, working and engaging the community. Fathers must take an active role in raising their children, whether they are in or out of the home. Men in the village must step in to "father" children when biological fathers are incarcerated, or dead, or otherwise absent. In doing so these men can provide the

nurturing such children need to be emotionally and physically healthy. Moreover, the *entire* community must serve as extended family to provide support for *all* families in the village.

Demonstrate at all times positive parenting skills and habits to provide a loving and caring environment for the youth under one's care. Parents and guardians should always keep open communications with their children and provide opportunities for young people to feel free to share their deepest fears, concerns, upsets and frustrations. Such an atmosphere of trust might prevent the child from resorting to negative and possibly criminal behaviors.

Teach children to be assertive, not aggressive, in expressing themselves. Help them to understand that they can resolve conflicts without resorting to inappropriate or violent behavior when they are at home, at school, *and* out in the community. Insist that children show respect for each other and *everyone* they encounter in the community. Monitor your children's friends or acquaintances and encourage them to develop healthy ways of communication with their peers.

Encourage youth to use mediation techniques when faced with conflict and emotionally devastating situations. Parents and guardians should continually discourage the use of knives, guns and other weapons by young people who might find themselves involved in human conflicts. Parents and adults should consistently demonstrate positive interpersonal behaviors and practices to the youth of our community.

Value the pursuit of education and raise the standard of excellence as an essential requirement for success. The academic achievement gap between African American children and the so-called "dominant" culture is widening and many of our children are failing. We cannot afford to let our children continue to buy into the mistaken notion

tbeing smart, is “acting white.” We must instill in our children that being an educated person has nothing to do with color. They should understand that education is a right we did not always have as a people, and that we must not forget the blood shed to give us this right. Education provides a path to being productive and successful citizens.

Urge your children to aspire to succeed in school. Insist that our youth graduate from high school, and, if they desire, seek higher education such as college, technical or trade schools. Insist that the schools give *all* children the skills to compete fully in today’s society. Advocate for the resources necessary to provide a safe environment conducive to learning, and elicit the help of the village to make certain this happens.

Take a strong interest in every aspect of a child’s education. Develop open relationships with teachers, principals and other school officials. Be proactive instead of reactive. Healthy and positive collaboration between the parents and the schools must occur in order for children to receive the best education possible.

Develop and encourage a strong work ethic in children from an early age to prepare them to become productive adults. For example, children can be responsible for chores around the home. Parents can encourage teens to obtain after-school or summer employment. Requiring children to volunteer in their schools, their community and in faith-based institutions provides excellent opportunities to learn leadership and social skills, which facilitate the development of a strong work ethic.

Monitor what teens and children see in the media (TV, movies, videos, games), as well as the music they listen to. We are exposing children as young as two years of age to a myriad of potentially damaging messages about gender roles, self-gratification, and the acceptability of violence.

Talk openly about subjects such as healthy relationships and healthy sexuality with children from an early age, and *before* they become adolescents. As a child’s primary

and most important teachers, parents are encouraged to address issues such as sexual and social responsibility before their children become adolescents.

Urge both boys and girls to value their virginity. Young men must understand that their manhood and masculinity are not solely defined by their ability to make children. Just as important, teen girls should not solely be defined by their sexuality.

Encourage youth to seek positive and healthy friendships before they decide to engage in sexual activity. While marriage is the ideal, parents must strongly encourage youth to wait until they have completed their education or have become financially and emotionally stable to have families of their own. Parents can help their children safely navigate today’s society by having positive, committed, and safe relationships.

Gather information about the importance of good mental, physical and emotional health, and consider adopting a healthy lifestyle, which includes proper nutrition and physical exercise for the entire family. Encourage the village to provide the necessary resources that contribute to a healthy community for all families.

Recognize the *necessity* of securing all firearms, *if they are in the home*, to reduce the risk of accidents, theft, or unauthorized use. Just as so much of the violence in the streets is the result of using firearms, deaths or injuries in the home are also committed with guns. Therefore, parents who choose to keep firearms in the home must insure that children and visitors do not have access to them. Moreover, they must provide age-appropriate safety instruction for all members of the family.

Advocate for safer communities. We must hold every school, municipality, and state and federally elected official accountable. Urge them to enact legislation that will protect the community and provide *all* of the resources necessary to make our communities safe for *everyone, including families*.

It indeed takes an *entire* village to raise a child. If *our* village does not, many more children and youth may seek another kind of *family* – a family that is fostered in violence – one that is called, “The Streets.” Therefore, the village *must* provide the guidance, and the leadership, as well as have the *will*, to raise all of our children in a productive, viable *and* safe environment.



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A Community Prescription for Ending Violence
From: Mary Young, Personnel Committee Chair, B-PEP

Incorporate the “Values for Life” (created by Dr. Jerome Taylor for the Center for Family Excellence in Pittsburgh, PA) in all school curricula beginning with Head Start and through the 12th grade. This will help children internalize values such as: self-esteem, self-persistence, self-reliance, self-confidence interpersonal skills, love and respect, and love of learning, along with other positive attributes for success. Parents, community groups working with families and children, communities of faith, and schools.

Incorporate and implement Non-Violent Principles, such as those espoused by Dr. Martin Luther King and others, in schools, community groups working with families and children, communities of faith, and in families in their homes. This is an effective way to indoctrinate children into learning, internalizing and aspiring to live in a violent-free community and become “Standard Bearers against violence.

Provide true and complete Black History in all schools. This will eradicate self-hate and hate of other Blacks by instilling pride in our children and youth. Moreover, this will be an impetus for the black race to be seen as a race of “great quality and intellect, themselves coming from kings and queens.” (A child being taught that he or she comes from slaves with no further elevation in their lives can psychologically inhibit their abilities for higher aspirations in life).



STRATEGIES FOR CHANGE: Building More Peaceful Communities
The Greater Pittsburgh COALITION AGAINST VIOLENCE (CAV)
Creating Long Term Solutions to Deep Rooted Problems

Executive Summary

It is *everyone's* responsibility to change the culture of violence. *Strategies for Change: Building More Peaceful Communities* is filled with action points and ideas that could be used by any agency, organization, or individual seeking solutions to the violence that plagues many of the communities in the region. Each section of the booklet is designed to stand alone, and page numbers have been included in this Executive Summary for easy access to any section of interest. We ask that you *act* on those strategies for which you can make a commitment.

ANTI-BULLYING STRATEGIES: Bullying has become a serious problem in our schools, as evidenced in the statistics below. This behavior takes different forms, direct and indirect, which can result in different types of bullying, i.e., physical, psychological/emotional, verbal and cyber bullying. This type of aggression can be carried out by groups or individuals. The three important contributing factors in bullying incidents are that the behavior: 1.) occurs over time; 2.) is usually repeated, and 3.) involves an imbalance of power and control. While more youth violence may occur on school grounds, strategies are needed to assure student safety no matter where it happens. Everyone can play a role in stopping bullying. (pg.22)

THE ARTS COMMUNITY: The power of art to move and transform human beings has been demonstrated throughout human history. Art is extremely powerful in that it works on the creator and the beholder alike. Psychologists have long recognized the sublimating effect of art whereby aggressively unacceptable impulses are changed into socially acceptable forms. So much human energy is employed in creating art – be it painting or sculpture or music or drama – that destructive behavior can be re-routed through a powerful communicative tool. Many local organizations are already developing artistic outreach programs to youth. Many of the suggestions supplement existing programs. (pg. 27)

ATHLETES: *Professional Athletes* are in a unique position to gain access to people in power at a level not available to the average citizen. They have an extremely powerful opportunity to impact the violence in the communities where they play. Because youth look up to athletes at all levels – high school, college and professional – athletes have the responsibility of being positive role models. Student athletes must embrace the fact that they are role models for their fellow students and the youth of the community that they represent. Because the community supports their team on the playing field, student athletes must return the gracious gift of support to the community and their school. (pg. 28)

BLACK BUSINESS COMMUNITY: All sectors of the community are urged to support African American business and business development throughout the region. The goal should include the development, implementation and maintenance of community-based businesses and employment initiatives that will create and establish viable businesses, as well as living wage career and employment opportunities in and around designated African American communities. (pg. 30)

THE BUSINESS AND CORPORATE COMMUNITY: The Business and Corporate community has a strong interest in improving the quality of life for everyone in the region. Business leaders have a responsibility to reduce the impact of community violence by providing leadership and creating economic opportunities that will improve the conditions for those who are historically disadvantaged. (pg. 33)

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT: THE ROLE OF THE CITIZEN: Civic participation is the foundation of democracy. The culture of civic participation must be brought back to a vibrant and relevant lifestyle if we are to be successful in our efforts to stop the increasing violence in our homes, schools, workplaces, neighborhoods, cities and the region. Civic education helps prepare people, especially the young, to carry out their roles as citizens and to help them understand that one's vote *does* matter. Therefore, all citizens must be given the tools to fully participate in the democratic process. (pg. 35)

COMMUNITIES OF FAITH: The recognition and valuing of the sacred breath within each human being is essential to the building of relationships that can ultimately reduce violence, while increasing respect and tolerance for oneself and others. Indeed, practicing spiritual disciplines can help people understand the meaning of the suffering and frustrations of others, while constructively channeling their anger, thus reducing violence. Faith communities have an extremely important role to play in the transformation of communities. (pg. 36)

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: Domestic Violence is a pattern of abuse in a relationship that is characterized by physical, emotional, verbal, sexual or financial control. Domestic violence is a widespread issue, affecting one in four women during their life time. When abuse occurs in a relationship, there is an impact on the community as a whole. Working together, we can help to lead victims to safety and decrease the prevalence of domestic violence in all communities. (pg. 40)

EDUCATION: PRIMARY AND SECONDARY: Education is the foundation for financial success and responsible citizenship. Historically, the lack of education all too frequently leads to the absence of hope, wasted lives, violence, incarceration, and even death. The entire educational system, from pre-school to university, must be held accountable to the community. It must empower students to live creative, effective contributing lives. (pg. 42)

EDUCATION: COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES: Colleges and universities need to take advantage of the opportunities related to the multicultural diversity of their students by including courses that reflect that diversity. Colleges and universities should be at the forefront of this movement because of their unique position to educate young people from *all* backgrounds. Responsibility for the implementation of this initiative must come from the top. (pg. 46)

FINANCIAL AND ECONOMIC VIOLENCE: Not all violence is committed with a gun. Violence was used and is still being used to prevent Blacks from fully participating in the economic system of the United States. Government and institutional policies often kill just as effectively as a nine-millimeter semiautomatic. Policies and practices that kill dreams are violent. Policies that kill hopes and aspirations are violent. Policies that allow neighborhoods to die are violent. Therefore, we believe that economic and financial violence is unethical, immoral, and, as such, it must be stopped and eradicated from our communities. (pg. 48)

FINANCIAL LITERACY AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT: Careful financial management brings peace and stability to families and communities. The majority of divorces can be traced to quarrels and accusations over money. Some professional counselors indicate that four out of five families are burdened with serious money problems. Proper money management and living within one's means are both essential to live abundantly and happily in today's world. Teaching children by example and by precept to work and to manage their income gives them confidence in their abilities, occupies their time in productive ways, builds habits that will lead to a productive life, protects them from the lure of expensive and unneeded purchases, and helps them to put money in proper perspective. (pg. 49)

FOUNDATIONS/CHARITABLE TRUSTS: Foundations have an important role to play in reducing violence, because of their ability to foster initiatives that are holistic, comprehensive, systematic, evidence-based and empowering. Furthermore, foundations can play an important role by providing innovative and non-traditional grants that may have a profound impact within the African American community. (pg. 51)

GANGS/VIOLENT STREET GROUPS: Gang-involved youth are impacted by poverty, unemployment, limited educational achievement, and a lack of positive activities and positive influences and role models. These same factors often keep young African American and minority males trapped in the gang lifestyle into their early twenties. Many communities are disproportionately impacted by poverty and social disorganization that places young people at greater risk for gang involvement, which in turn results in ongoing criminal activity. Although some resources and programs are available in many of the affected neighborhoods to address the issue of gangs and their impact, there is often a lack of coordinated resources that target and enroll violent, gang involved individuals. Even though overt gang violence of the '90's had diminished substantially, since that time there has been a rise in drug trafficking offenses, and its subsequent violence turned away from actual gang activity to criminal enterprise pursuits and apparent 'turf' or territorial disputes. The greatest impact on reducing, or eliminating gang-related activity is the collaboration among community and faith-based leaders, dedicated street organizations parents and families, students, school systems, law enforcement, and political leaders. (pg. 53)

GOVERNMENT POLICY AND THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT: The purpose of government is to engage in activities to promote the "common good," and to regulate and control social, political and economic spheres. Government policy affects the food we eat, the water we drink, where we can park our cars, and what medications we can take. Government policy determines which activities are legal or illegal and what the punishment is for said illegal activity. Government policies, at all levels of government (federal, state and local) should be written in a way that protects the rights of all citizens and to maintain an orderly society. Government entities must collaborate with local communities, businesses, and the philanthropic communities to reduce violence. (pgs. 57 and 58)

GUN VIOLENCE REDUCTION: A civil society is based on the people and lawful authorities working cooperatively to reduce the violence in our neighborhoods. The irresponsible use of guns, especially handguns, is to blame for a great percentage of the violence and killing that occurs in our neighborhoods. In addition, guns are frequently involved in accidental injuries. (pg. 60)

THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM: The healthcare system has a unique and important role in reducing the physical, emotional, and social problems that contribute to violence in our communities. It includes responsibilities related to partnership with communities and health care clients to provide health-related education and employment opportunities. Members of the health care system are called on to take the specific actions aimed at healing the wounds caused by violence and reducing the incidence of violence in our communities. (pg. 63)

INTERNET AND SOCIAL MEDIA: The Internet has opened up a world of opportunities for everyone. Social communication technology/social networking (i.e. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.) is a part of our everyday lives since we utilize this technology to remain in touch with others. Most of society utilizes social media in the way it is intended. However, when an individual terrorizes another with words and images via the Internet, harms the entire community. Therefore, safeguards must be put into place to keep all members of the community safe and free from violence (i.e. cyber-bullying). Everyone has responsibility of preventing cyber-violence. (pg. 65)

THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM: Juvenile justice officials can play a significant role in the number youth impacted by violence in our communities through greater collaboration among parents, families, schools, human service organizations and other law enforcement institutions. (pg. 66)

LAW ENFORCEMENT: Strategies and initiatives advocating gun violence reduction must be immediately and will require unprecedented understanding and cooperation between all levels of the criminal justice system and the community. Teamwork is essential in law enforcement, as well as “community policing” environments in which citizens, community groups and the police work together as equal partners to attack and solve this problem. (pg. 69)

THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA: The media must understand the role they play in perpetuating negative images of African Americans and other people of color. The media have the ability *and* the responsibility to present a more balanced picture of our youth and our community, instead of solely concentrating on the violence in our community. (pg. 71)

THE MEDIA, Part 2 -- IMPACT OF RAP MUSIC: The entire entertainment industry, as well as a few rap stars, has reaped huge financial benefits at the expense of the “hearts and minds” of millions of youth. Everyone: the entertainment media, music artists, parents, and the community has to take responsibility for what our children and youth are seeing and hearing. (pg. 73)

MENTAL HEALTH PROVIDERS AND UNIVERSITY-BASED PROFESSIONALS: Healthcare providers and university-based professionals must attend to the full range of interventions that may prevent violence and its mental health consequences. This requires integrating research and treatment with a full understanding of the complex and important interactions between social, community, and family realities. It is critical to consider their impact on individual’s risk for: violence and self-injurious behavior. This behavior includes suicidal/homicidal behavior, depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorders and bereavement, difficulties in emotional, cognitive and moral development, as well as impediments to educational and vocational opportunities. (pg. 75)

IMPACT OF MENTORING ON YOUTH VIOLENCE: Mentors and mentoring organizations can have an impact in reducing youth violence by creating an environment where our youth are motivated to achieve by empowering them to become self-sufficient shareholders in the economic

and social fabric of the communities' in which they live. Mentors provide strong and positive role models in the lives of our youth. One-on-one or group mentoring exposes our youth to caring role models who reinforce the adage that says, "What they see is what they can be". Mentors, through their examples of leadership, dedication, and friendship, can nurture our youth and compel them to carry out the tradition of a continuous quest for educational excellence and to re-invest in our communities. Mentors act as guides for our youth in life experiences, fostering positive self-perception and self-respect, cultural enrichment, and the pursuit of positive life-long goals. (pg. 76)

REHABILITATIVE AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE: This is a community-strengthening alternative to the current prison-industrial complex that has particularly ruined the lives of too many Black youths and young adults. It is an attempt to reverse the damaging impact of a criminal justice system that traditionally relied on a policy of punitive justice resulting in lengthy incarceration and the lifelong stigma of a criminal record. Restorative justice views crime not only as breaking the law, but also as violating the relationships among in the community. The goal of restorative justice is to repair the relationships between the offender and the other members of the community. The role of the community is to create environments of understanding and work collaboratively with the Justice System support restorative justice efforts. (pg. 78)

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE --THE ROLE OF FORMER OFFENDERS: Having recognized The devastating effects their behavior has had on the life of the African American community, persons incarcerated and formerly incarcerated in the justice system can provide invaluable service for aiding the prevention of violence within our communities. (pg.81)

SENIOR CITIZEN CRIME PREVENTION: Senior citizens are a rapidly growing population the United States. They are most vulnerable to fraud, burglary, phone solicitation, and various other criminal activities, and must be vigilant when it comes preventing crime and violence from happening to them. As a resolution to this problem and to alleviate any fears, senior citizens should adopt life-saving practices. (pg.83)

SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS: Service organizations can have a significant effect on reducing violence by offering quality programs that engage youth and adults positively, as well as provide alternatives to violence. They can also provide activities which discourage other types of destructive behavior. (pg. 85)

STREET LEVEL OUTREACH: Anyone who works at the street level helps reduce violence by providing outreach, activities and services. (pg.87)

TEEN DATING VIOLENCE PREVENTION: Each year approximately one in teens report being the victim of verbal, physical, emotional, or sexual violence. Abusive relationships can impact adolescent development, and teens who experience dating violence may suffer long-term negative behavior and health consequences. Emotional abuse through digital technology, including frequent text messaging, and the circulation of embarrassing messages or photographs without consent can be devastating to young teens. It is imperative that we educate teens about dating violence through primary prevention information. Teachers, parents, and community leaders must be pro-active and understand the challenges today's adolescents face. Students must be empowered through leadership development so they can work with adults in their schools, community and government to eliminate dating violence in all its forms. (pg. 89)

VIOLENCE AGAINST THE LGBTQAI COMMUNITY: Violence against people who consider themselves to be Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Questioning or Queer, Asexual, Intersexual (LGBTQAI) is a complex and often quite controversial issue. Yet this is also a human rights and human dignity issue that must be addressed. This is also a social justice issue, a public health issue, a safety issue, an economic issue, a mental health issue as well an issue of societal mores, cultural values, and deeply ingrained prejudices. There are several forms of violence against people who consider themselves to be part of the LGBTQAI Community, including the following: Sexual and Intimate Partner Violence; Hate Crimes; Violence from law enforcement and the justice system; Violence against LGBTQAI Youth: Bullying and other forms. In order to prevent violence in the community, we must work to end inequality and homophobia, transphobia, biphobia, etc. By ending inequality, we create spaces where LGBTQAI people are seen as equal and reduce the amount of violence they experience, including sexual violence. (pg. 92)

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS: Women and girls all around the world have been marginalized, belittled, abused, deprived and underestimated all because of their gender. Today in the United States, this gender prejudice plays out in myriad forms, not the least of which is women earning on average 70% of what their male counterparts make for the same work. Other forms of gender discrimination take place in more violent ways such as physical and emotional abuse, rape, trafficking and female genital mutilation. Society will not flourish until women and girls thrive by means of equal treatment. (pg. 99)

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION: Violence in the workplace has received considerable attention in the popular press and among safety and health professionals. Negative behavior encompasses untrustworthy behavior, habitual lying, a chronic bad attitude, verbal threats, history of violence, sexual harassment, domestic disputes which spill into the workplace, and many more unsolicited actions. Moreover, there are different viewpoints to what constitutes a problem in the workplace, and the approach to it may vary when it comes to men and women. However, such differences in perception seem marginal when actual violence occurs. Every employee wants to feel safe, and should, within his or her daily work environment. (pg. 106)

YOUTH VIOLENCE PREVENTION: Youth are encouraged to be the change they want to see in the world. They must become leaders themselves in changing the culture of violence, particularly because they are far too often the *victims* of violence. However, it is the responsibility of the *entire* community to nurture, support, educate our youth, and become personally involved in every aspect of their lives. We must also be the change we want to see in our communities and in the world. (pg. 108)

ZERO TOLERANCE: The Coalition Against Violence (CAV) document has attempted to provide every part of society with a role to play in impacting violence. The implementation and mobilization of these strategies *will* make a difference in lessening the violence we all abhor. What we seek, however, is a *society-wide* commitment to *zero tolerance* for violence. Over the years the impact of violence throughout this nation has been far too wide and far too deep. In many of our communities of color the frequent reporting of death by violence has become almost expected and commonplace. That viewpoint is unacceptable. It is our stand that *everyone* must have a personal and ongoing commitment to zero tolerance. (pg. 114)