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MAYOR EMANUEL JOINS ALDS. DOWELL AND KING TO LAUNCH "BUILDING COMMUNITY BLOCK BY BLOCK" SUMMER SAFETY INITIATIVE

Third and Fourth Wards launch comprehensive summer safety initiative, including Summer Safe Passage pilot for youth programming

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today joined Deputy Mayor and Chief Neighborhood Development Officer Andrea Zopp, 3rd Ward Alderman Pat Dowell and 4th Ward Alderman Sophia King in launching "Building Community Block by Block," a summer safety initiative designed to engage youth in the community through advocacy, entrepreneurship and summer jobs. The program, which runs through August 12, will include collaboration by Chicago Public Schools (CPS), the Chicago Police Department (CPD), Chicago Park District, University of Chicago Public Safety (U Chicago) and Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) to provide community workers who will serve as "eyes and ears" to identify hot spots to keep youth and communities safer this summer.

"I applaud Alderman Dowell and Alderman King for this innovative plan to keep their neighborhoods safe by involving their community members—because we all have a role to play in ensuring that our community is a safe one for our kids," said Mayor Emanuel. "By building on our successful Safe Passage program, we will help our kids to be kids, and our communities thrive this summer."

To create this new program, Alds. Dowell and King partnered with several city agencies, community groups and community members to leverage support and funds to expand the successful CPS Safe Passage program, which provides service to dozens of schools between the two wards during the school year. Bright Star Community Outreach and American Enterprises 3 are the two community organizations which will provide Summer Safe Passage workers to help ensure the safety of young people moving throughout the community. The workers will be identified by wearing lime green vests bearing the logo "Building Community Block by Block." In addition, the Love, Unity & Values (LUV) Institute and American Enterprises 3 will provide youth programming at Ellis, Kennicott, Mandrake, Taylor, Fuller and Anderson Chicago Park District parks while initiating youth engagement in the community. Sixty youth will work to make the community safer through advocacy, peace circles, block parties, vocational training, entrepreneurship and more.

In order to mitigate the anticipated summer violence, Alderman King is encouraging all stakeholders in the community to come together. "Gun violence is not an issue that happens in isolation; therefore, we need more than a police solution. We need a comprehensive approach that includes jobs, youth engagement and the entire community working together," said King.

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According to Alderman Dowell, "This important project expands on the initiatives currently in place for 3rd Ward residents to provide jobs, training and summer programming; and I'm happy to partner with the 4th Ward to ensure that all Bronzeville residents have the opportunity to have a productive and safe summer."

Over the past few months, Alderman Dowell and Alderman King have hosted planning meetings that have included representatives from CPS, Chicago Park District, University of Chicago Police Department, University of Chicago Urban Labs, CPD 2nd District, Metra, Chicago Housing Authority, Bright Star Community Outreach, the Community Builders (TCB), LUV Institute, American Enterprises 3 and community members to plan ways to make both wards safer for the entire community. In addition, City Treasurer Kurt Summers has lent support to ensure the success of the safe summer initiative.

The University of Chicago Urban Labs will measure the impact of the safe summer initiative. The ultimate goal of the safe summer initiative is to reduce violence in the 3rd and 4th Wards and to create a model that can be expanded into other aldermanic wards.

"The University of Chicago Police Department is pleased to work with the aldermen and local community members to support the Building Community Block by Block initiative," said UCPD Chief of Police Fountain L. Walker. "It is a comprehensive approach to ensuring the safety of youth participating in summer programs throughout the community, and it is one more way we are engaging with the public to promote public safety."

To ensure more public safety in both wards, the Aldermen are asking community members to (1) "Get Organized" to keep community safety a top priority, (2) "Plug-In" to your community network by building a relationship with your neighbors, (3) "Step Out & Speak Up" by reporting suspicious activity to the authorities, and (4) "Connect Publically" by participating in or hosting a block party. Parents are encouraged to check out the 3rd and 4th Ward Chicago Park District parks to find out about events and activities for the entire family. Community members are also invited to attend local Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS) meetings to stay connected to what is happening in the community.

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