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Project Haki Newsletter

**From Lisa LaGrone,
Project Coordinator, Project Haki**

I was born and raised in St. Louis. I have been doing violence prevention work since the mid-1990's when I worked in a federally-funded program called SafeFutures. We developed a successful and nationally-recognized anti-gang program. I realized that this work is my calling.

Project Haki is a program that arose from the unacceptable violence that we were experiencing in the 22nd ward in 2020. I know the streets of this city well. I want to see my city and my people do better.

The Project Haki team has been out working tirelessly trying to de-escalate violent situations. We can be more successful with the help of the community. We don't need to always call the police. As a community, we must hold ourselves accountable. We need each other.

Project Haki means 'Justice' in Swahili. We deserve justice. Join us in our goals to save lives, and to build a brighter, peaceful future for our community.



First Ma'at Summer Camp a Success

It appears that the last field trip of Ma'at Summer Camp was the most memorable. That field trip was to the St. Louis Griot Museum where we met civil rights icon Percy Green. Mr. Green ate pizza with the kids and answered lots of questions, especially about climbing the St. Louis Arch to bring attention to the public that there were no African Americans workers on the project.

Thirty-five kids ranging from ages 3 years old to 16 years old registered for the first ever Ma'at Summer Camp. The Youth Council for Positive Development has sponsored Ma'at Saturdays for over 30 years. We were able to expand that program with funding from Mayor Jones' office and logistical support from City Parks and Recreation. The camp was held at Barrett Brothers Park and was also a SLATE work site for three teens.

We weathered extreme heat, thunderstorms, floodings and shootings in the 22nd Ward to bring a program of fun activities and weekly field trips to children and youth. This included arts and crafts, (cont. page 3)

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Support for this newsletter comes from the City of St. Louis' Community Violence Initiative grant.

Project Haki is a project of the Organization for Black Struggle. To connect with us, please call 314.489.5877

Project Haki Helped to Re-unite a Family

"I have been searching for my son for a month and followed so many leads, even contacted the police who haven't been helpful."

These were the desperate words of a frightened mother whose five-year-old son had been missing for a month.

In late July, Project Haki team members responded to a domestic violence incident involving a missing child. The police were uncooperative during the incident and even refused to issue an Amber Alert for the child. Haki street outreach staff coordinated with other concerned community members in tracking the various sightings of the missing child. Their persistent efforts led to the child being successfully reunited with the mother.

These are the kinds of incidents that require trusted and trained personnel. This is why Project Haki has been welcomed with open arms by the neighbors in the 22nd Ward. We honor that trust and will continue to build on it.

Acknowledgements

Asante (thanks) for our summer success goes to Mayor Tishaura Jones & her staff, with special thanks to Wil Pinkney and Vernon Mitchell; to Evelyn Rice-Peebles (Recreation Commissioner) & her staff; to Ma'at Camp parents; and to OBS members and staff.

Forward Together!

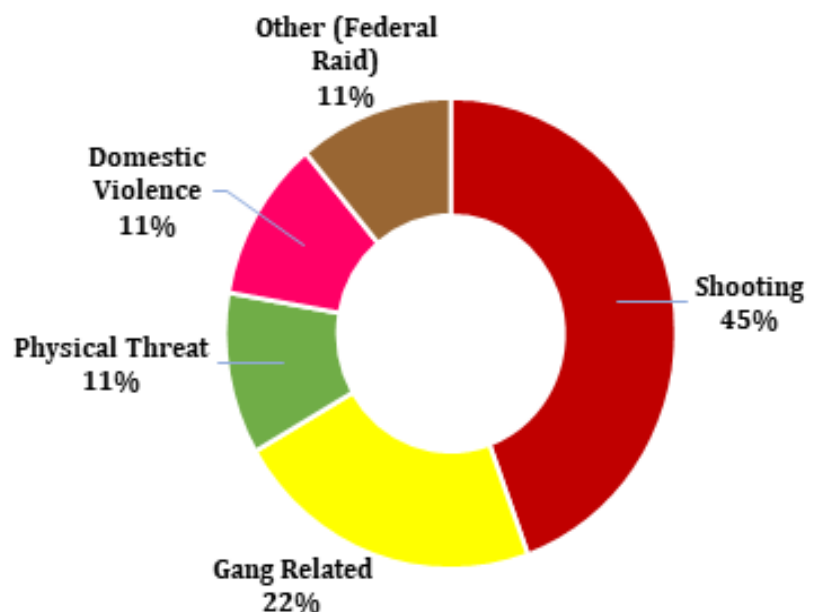


Night Out for Safety & Liberation

For the second August, Project Haki and its partners celebrated the National Night Out at Barrett Brothers Park in the 22nd Ward. The event was as a space to reimagine what collective accountability and safety might look like in a community that has strong relationships and a shared vision for peace and empowerment. There were speakers, activities and inner-attainment. We hope to have many other family-centered events in a park whose reputation could use a positive overhaul.

Project Haki Statistics: In the Name of Community Safety

The graphic to the right summarizes the types of violence incidents that the Project Haki team responded to for the month of July. There were four reported deaths from these incidents in the 22nd Ward. Team members used a variety of methods and techniques to respond to these conflicts, including street outreach, de-escalation, conflict resolution, and referral to external organizations providing other services of need. Project Haki's goal is to keep bringing these numbers down with help of 22nd Ward neighbors.



Scenes from Ma'at Summer Camp—Barrett Brothers Park

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math and science activities, civic lessons and field trips every Friday. We even created coloring sheets of the first African American female mayor, Tishaura Jones, and Freedom Fighter Percy Green. You can download both sheets at the Youth Council's website, www.positiveyouthdev.com. The Griot Museum plans to use Mr. Green's coloring sheet as part of the permanent exhibit featuring a wax figure of the famous St. Louisan.

The Ma'at Youth Program joins Project Haki in our commitment to making the 22nd Ward a safe haven for a community which is truly weary of excessive violence.



Field Trip to the Science Center We learned how...

- ...a crystal is made. - London J.
- ...important our bones are. - Journee L.
- ...fossils formed in North St. Louis. - Rihanna H.
- ...a tornado is formed. - Trinity L.





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c/o Organization for Black Struggle
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Building Power in the 22nd Ward!

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Fall Ma'at Saturday Youth Program starts on Saturday, September 17,
from 10 am-1 pm, Rowan Community Center-1401 Rowan Avenue.



The Organization for Black Struggle held a summer press conference to announce expansion of Project Haki, its violence prevention program in the 22nd Ward. On hand was Wil Pinkney from Mayor Tishaura Jones' office. He talked about her vision for community safety and her commitment to the ward. Together, we are reimagining public safety that is led by the people who are closest to the problems and to their solutions.