New Yorkers Against Gun Violence

Working to Reduce Gun Violence Since 1993

PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Jackie Kuhls cell (917) 587-4108
office (212) 679-2345

On Eve of Mother's Day
Advocates and Elected Officials
Walk with Mothers of Children Killed by Stray Bullets
Call for Prosecution of Gun Traffickers and the Rogue Dealers Who Supply Them

(Bronx, NY) This morning, advocates and elected officials joined with families of loved ones slain by illegal guns at the playground in the Bronx where ten year old Naiesha Pearson was killed by a stray bullet while at a family picnic last Labor Day. They marched to a local church where they called for an end to the flood of illegal guns that arrive daily on the streets of New York. The recent shootings of children highlight the tragedy.

Jackie Kuhls, Executive Director of New York Against Gun Violence (NYAGV), one of the event's co-sponsors said, "Guns are responsible for the deaths of more children in the United States than the sum total of the top five natural causes. It is time to stop the madness. We know that most illegal guns come from just a few rogue gun dealers. Gun traffickers and the gun dealers who supply them must be prosecuted."

Gloria Cruz, Aunt of Naiesha Pearson and co-sponsor of the event noted, "I conceived of this rally after grieving for my niece. I have comforted many mothers over the years who have lost children to gun violence, and I have attended too many funerals for young people. We must do all we can to prevent these tragedies."

The rally included remarks from Bronx Borough President Adolfo Carrion Jr, and State Senator Ruben Diaz, Tyaiesha Pearson, (mother of Naiesha Pearson), told of her heartache; as did Joanne Sanabria, mother of two year old David Pacheco Jr. killed by a stray bullet in his family's van on Easter Sunday.

Edie Smith, NYAGV Board Member and Million Mom March Chapter Leader said, "Guns turn day to day altercations into deadly tragedy. Too many guns are available on the illegal market and these guns do not fall from the sky. We know where they originate and yet the response from Congress has been to pass laws that protect rogue gun dealers and gun traffickers. It is up to state and local government to act since Congress has abdicated its responsibility to the American people."

Kuhls closed, "This week, States United to Prevent Gun Violence, a national coalition of state-based gun violence prevention organizations, including NYAGV, is kicking off a campaign to educate the public about illegal guns and to pose solutions. We are proud to stand her today as part of this effort to save lives. Mayor Bloomberg has led the way for local government action through initiating a Coalition of Mayors to address illegal guns and the public health crisis they cause. The Mayor has also condemned reckless legislation currently pending in Congress that would assist gun traffickers and make the jobs of law enforcement officers more difficult. We call on Governor Pataki to take such a position as well. We also call on the New York State Senate to take action on bills passed in the State Assembly that will help keep illegal guns off of our streets by requiring responsible business practices from gun dealers and by assuring that the State's ballistic and crime gun databases are used so that gun traffickers can be prosecuted. We can and must end the flood of illegal guns, we owe it to our children, our future."

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