

A photograph of a city street at dusk. In the foreground, three men are standing and talking. The man on the left is wearing a dark jacket and a cap. The man in the middle is wearing a dark jacket and a beanie, and is gesturing with his hand. The man on the right is wearing a patterned jacket and a beanie. In the background, there are cars parked along the street, streetlights, and buildings. The sky is a mix of blue and orange from the setting sun.

Stop Shooting. Keep talking. **START LIVING.**

# CEASEFIRE

A PROVEN METHOD TO REDUCE SHOOTINGS AND KILLINGS



I said, “**LISTEN, MAN, DON’T DO NOTHING CRAZY.**” I said, “**LET’S GET THOSE GUYS ON THE PHONE.**” I believe if I wasn’t there, that guy was blatin’. I kinda got this squashed. I been working on that all weekend.

— CEASEFIRE VIOLENCE INTERRUPTER



# THIS IS THE STORY OF CEASEFIRE

THE ONE PROGRAM THAT SUCCEEDS WHERE SO MANY OTHERS HAVE FAILED—THE ONE PROGRAM THAT STOPS THE SHOOTING, KEEPS PEOPLE TALKING AND BRINGS THE HOPE OF HEALTH AND WELL-BEING TO COMMUNITIES RAVAGED BY THE DISEASE OF VIOLENCE. THERE IS NOW A STRATEGY AND A PROVEN SOLUTION FOR WHAT MOST SEE AS AN UNSOLVABLE PROBLEM. THERE IS CEASEFIRE.

# VIOLENCE IS A DISEASE

Grievance. Shooting. Death. Retaliation. More shootings. More deaths. More urban neighborhoods turned into war zones with more unsafe schools. More emergency rooms with gunshot victims, grieving families and friends bent on revenge. More deaths in America's war against itself. Violence multiplies into an epidemic and yet few see it for the disease it is—grown through social conditions, spread through contact with one's peers, becoming


stronger as it moves from person to person, killing the carrier and destroying the health of the community.

This is what Gary Slutkin, M.D., saw when he returned to Chicago after developing a model to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS in Africa for the World Health Organization. As an infectious disease control specialist, he viewed Chicago's urban violence as an epidemic that could

only be arrested if it was interrupted in the same way as all health epidemics: changing the social norms that spread disease by building a strategic intervention and the structures to support it.

America sees violence as a moral problem. The truth is that violence is a public health problem—and it can be stopped in the same way as all epidemics are stopped.



A photograph taken from inside a room, looking out through a window with vertical bars. Two people are walking away from the camera in a snowy outdoor area. The person on the left is wearing a dark coat with a fur-lined hood and a dark beanie. The person on the right is wearing a brown hooded jacket and blue jeans. In the background, there is a chain-link fence, a brick building, and a clear blue sky. The ground is covered in snow, and there are some puddles reflecting the light.

In the United States, the average cost of a non-fatal assault resulting in hospitalization was \$57,000 in lost productivity and \$24,000 in medical costs.<sup>1</sup> On average it **COSTS ILLINOIS TAXPAYERS APPROXIMATELY \$486,000 TO INCARCERATE A PRISONER SENTENCED FOR MURDER.**<sup>2</sup>





**DYING EARLY IS EXPECTED** in the hood, but it don't make it right.  
Every time you step out of the house **THERE'S A CHANCE YOU'LL  
NEVER COME BACK.**

—CEASEFIRE PROGRAM PARTICIPANT

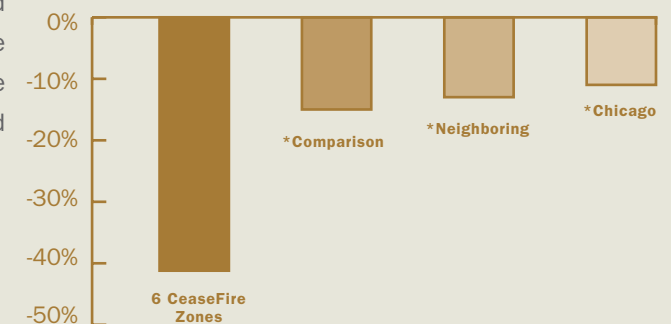
# CEASEFIRE IS THE INTERVENTION

Violence spreads through learning and modeling that is reinforced through unconscious social expectations. The way to stop it is to identify and interrupt high-risk events while simultaneously using social pressure to change negative behaviors and reshape community expectations. That vision created CeaseFire, a program of the Chicago Project for Violence Prevention at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Today, we know how to prevent epidemics. We can use that exact knowledge to prevent shootings and killings: Change the perceived social norms and negative behaviors by providing a structure that interrupts the spread of violence in much the same way that peer pressure and condoms stop the spread of HIV/AIDS. That simple concept is what CeaseFire does in a very structured and multifaceted way.

## FIRST SIX CEASEFIRE PARTNERSHIP COMMUNITIES

Reductions in shootings first year (2000–2004)



\* These results are statistically significant with  $p < 0.01$ . W. Garfield, W. Humboldt, Logan Square, SW Chicago, Auburn Gresham, Rogers Park

# CHANGING BEHAVIORS THROUGH MULTIPLE MESSENGERS

CeaseFire is a structured, deliberate and disciplined violence intervention model that communities adopt as their own. It uses multiple messengers—community organizations, faith leaders, law enforcement, former gang members and everyday citizens—working in concert to repeatedly deliver a consistent message through peer relationships. Shooting is not an acceptable behavior—now or ever. It always makes things worse.

CeaseFire works because it's specifically focused on reducing the spread of shootings and killings in communities where violence is epidemic. Urban violence is caused by a myriad of problems: poverty, culture, crime, lack of opportunity, ineffective education, etc. However, CeaseFire doesn't attempt to solve all those problems. Instead, it creates the opportunity to solve them by arresting the spread of shootings and killings, creating the capacity for peace that allows for improving education, employment and economic vitality.

In short, CeaseFire creates peace and prosperity by interrupting the disease of violence, paving the way for all other social institutions and programs to be more effective in elevating the overall health of the community.

There are other programs that use community-based messengers and some of CeaseFire's core techniques. What makes CeaseFire uniquely effective is its structured and systematic approach to coordinate the energy and human capital of a community necessary to permanently convert negative behaviors into positive social norms. CeaseFire brings something more than a proven behavior change model and technical expertise; it also brings a set of techniques to the table that prove invaluable to the communities in which it works.

**CeaseFire is a specific intervention that reduces shootings as well as a community enrichment program.** It brings resources to the community in the form of training Outreach Workers, community organizers and Violence Interrupters who create greater capacity for peaceful conflict resolution. It also focuses the attention and structures the efforts of community groups and law enforcement to support violence prevention through highly specific and prescribed roles and actions.

**CeaseFire is street credible because it acknowledges street realities and works through the street to create on-the-ground impact.** That's why the program


speaks through the voices and efforts of the most credible people in the community, including ex-gang members and others who most understand life in the community and have the influence to change it for the better.

**CeaseFire is not a program that comes down on the community from above.** CeaseFire is adopted by the community, run by the community and worked through the community.

**CeaseFire is neutral.** It has an open and honest relationship with all the parties necessary to prevent violence—gang members, ex-gang members, faith leaders and the police—but its sole purpose is to stop shootings and killings, not to reduce crime overall, control guns, advance criminal justice or moral agendas.

**CeaseFire is independent from typical law enforcement institutions, programs and initiatives.** This gives CeaseFire extraordinary street credibility that allows for improving communication and collaboration between the community and law enforcement.





So, if you grow up and **THINK IT'S NORMAL TO SHOOT A GUN**, you do it. If it's not normal and acceptable, then you don't. **PEOPLE WHO GROW UP WITH VIOLENCE** don't question it any more than you may question how you dress or eat. It's just normal.

—GARY SLUTKIN, M.D., CEASEFIRE



# CEASEFIRE: ELEMENTS FOR SUCCESS

CeaseFire is a scientific, structured and specific violence prevention program. There are seven critical elements to every CeaseFire program and they all must work in concert. Knowing these elements and how to combine them to dramatically reduce shootings and killings has come with years of research, careful evaluation and refinement. Today, CeaseFire is a model that works because it has figured out the human structures and actions necessary to defuse explosive neighborhoods.

## THE RIGHT COMMUNITIES

CeaseFire is only appropriate for neighborhoods or community areas experiencing levels of shootings and killings disproportionate to both the national and citywide levels of violence. Vulnerable areas are distinguished by retributive and/or gang-related violence. These areas should be selected through an analysis of at least three years of law enforcement data at the smallest geographic area possible to concentrate efforts in “hot spots.” The program also requires active involvement of community members, faith leaders, law enforcement, service providers, elected officials and others who are committed to ending violence.

## THE RIGHT MESSAGES AND MESSENGERS

CeaseFire’s public health approach calls for clear and consistent messaging from multiple credible messengers in order to change community norms and the behavior of those who “receive” those messages as they conform to expectations. Thus, CeaseFire looks to affect the thinking and behavior of those who are most likely to engage in violence, members of their community who have condoned or tolerated violence, and the community at large. For instance, CeaseFire has found that flyers that identify the consequences of a gun charge, paired with a list of local resources that can be accessed as alternatives to violence, are powerful messages for Outreach Workers to share with people.

## THE RIGHT PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

CeaseFire targets multiple messengers and messages with a specific goal: stopping those most likely to be involved in a shooting or killing before it occurs. Therefore, the focus of outreach efforts are those individuals who, according to local law enforcement, other data and “street intelligence” are most at risk of shooting some-

one else or being shot themselves. Using risk factor criteria, CeaseFire workers identify and build relationships with high-risk individuals. Working with anyone other than high-risk individuals will not reduce shootings and killings in either the short or long term.

## THE RIGHT WORKERS WITH THE RIGHT SKILLS

CeaseFire workers know the street; they are from the community and are willing to work with the community 24/7 to stop shootings and killings. There are four types of CeaseFire workers that form the right team for interrupting the spread of violence. For each role, CeaseFire has specific guidance in recruitment, hiring, training, supervision and support.

**Outreach Workers:** CeaseFire Outreach Workers are typically former gang-involved individuals who have had contact with the justice system and now want to improve their community. These are streetwise individuals with great credibility among those most likely to be involved in a shooting or killing. Outreach Workers persuade or influence the thinking of potentially violent individuals by





reading dangerous situations, remaining calm and using conflict resolution and intervention techniques. They use preset criteria to identify those at highest risk, and work with a minimum of 15 individuals through in-person and home visits to develop a risk reduction plan. Outreach Workers are passionate about changing the pattern of violence they were once a part of, and find personal renewal and hope in this work.

**Outreach Supervisors:** CeaseFire Outreach Supervisors not only understand the needs of the target population but are also committed to building the skills of Outreach Workers so they are able to succeed. Supervisors are competent program managers, excellent communicators and effective coaches who nurture and hold team members accountable. Supervisors are frequently recruited from the Outreach Worker pool. CeaseFire recognizes their strengths at the time they are hired as Outreach Workers, developing a plan to build the other skills they will need—including how to transition from community outreach to team leadership.

**Violence Prevention Coordinators:** Violence Prevention Coordinators are CeaseFire's primary point of contact with members of the community and other key allies—law enforcement, faith leaders, service providers, businesses, elected officials—whose support is essential for changing the thinking, behavior and lives of CeaseFire program participants. Violence Prevention Coordinators have strong speaking and writing skills, are able to develop and maintain coalitions, and empower residents to take action. While living in the target community is not essential, it has proven to be an advantage to many coordinators.

**Violence Interrupters:** Violence Interrupters go to the deepest level of peer relationships in communities with well-established multi-generational gangs and long-standing rivalries. Sometimes it takes an ex-gang member to understand and influence the actions of current gang members. Violence Interrupters are former gang influentials who still have the respect of active gang members.

They monitor relationships, intervene before a conflict arises or take steps to prevent retaliatory acts. Like Outreach Supervisors, Violence Interrupters are committed to repairing their communities through positive actions and personal growth.

## THE RIGHT PARTNERS

CeaseFire requires the collaboration of different groups. There is a lead agency in each community that is responsible for implementing and managing the CeaseFire model in its entirety. Lead agencies have a mission that includes ending violence, have close ties to the community, must work with the target population and those who will be hired to work with them, and are committed to making organizational changes that will promote the success of CeaseFire. Lead agencies are comfortable hiring ex-offenders, including felons, and manage and work with staff who may need significant training.



## THE RIGHT APPROACH

The right approach is composed of five main components—community mobilization, outreach, public education and collaboration with faith leaders and law enforcement. While one component may receive greater attention than the others at any point in time, all five must be present to some degree.

**Community mobilization** includes work with those who can influence the allocation of resources as well as the thinking and behavior of community residents and others. Community activities connect residents with one another. CeaseFire communities mount an immediate outcry to shootings in the form of “responses” such as marches, vigils, and moments of silence at the site of a shooting or killing. They structure activities for clients and prospective clients that fill their time and afford “teachable moments” when conflicts arise. They include door-to-door canvassing to explain the mission of CeaseFire and build a roster of residents who want to be “part of the solution.”

**Faith leaders** preach peace and send the “stop killing people” message in sermons, at funerals and while visiting survivors of shootings. They lead and urge con-

gregants to participate in responses to shootings, promote activities that connect community residents with one another, open gymnasiums nights and weekends so young people have a safe place to congregate, and link those who are at high risk to CeaseFire workers.

**Law enforcement** plays a critical role in launching CeaseFire—and determining if the model is appropriate for a particular community. Law enforcement provides aggregate data that allows identification of “hot spots,” areas where shootings and killings are concentrated, as well as developing criteria that suggest who is most likely to be involved in a shooting or killing. And they help prevent shootings and killings by informing CeaseFire staff when a shooting occurs so preparations can be made to conduct a response and prevent an act of retaliation. However, this does not make CeaseFire a part of law enforcement or the “eyes and ears” of the police. Such perceptions among the target audience undermine CeaseFire’s street credibility, its neutrality and its ability to change social norms and behaviors through peer pressure. Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy program director Vance Henry remarked on the benefits of such partnerships: “Crime is down in many

neighborhoods, and that has a lot to do with the partnerships that we and CeaseFire have been working on in Chicago neighborhoods.”<sup>3</sup>

## THE RIGHT MEASURES OF EFFECTIVENESS

CeaseFire is a research-based, data-driven public health approach that incorporates elements of other disciplines. The ongoing availability of official law enforcement data to establish a baseline, identify hot spots and measure reductions in shootings and killings is essential to monitor progress. Equally important is access to other data maintained by law enforcement, such as “unofficial” reports of shootings and killings. Sharing of this information in a timely manner allows CeaseFire workers to take actions that may prevent acts of retaliation or even prevent the initiation of violence. Also essential is data collected by CeaseFire itself that describes who is being served and the extent to which each of the core components is implemented. Performance measures and a system for their capture and analysis are in place at the outset of the campaign to measure progress toward outcomes and inform implementation.



A photograph of three people standing in a snowy courtyard between brick buildings. The person in the center is wearing a black and orange jacket and blue jeans. The person on the left is wearing a brown jacket and blue jeans. The person on the right is wearing a black jacket and blue jeans. The courtyard is covered in snow, and the buildings are made of red brick. There are windows and a set of stairs visible on the buildings.

Criminologists praise **CEASEFIRE'S FRESH APPROACH** to suppressing violence and give the group extra credit for **TAKING ON THE HIGHEST-RISK GROUPS IN THE WORST NEIGHBORHOODS**, rather than just giving lectures in high school auditoriums, as many anti-crime programs do.

—U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT, JUNE 2006

# CEASEFIRE: EVIDENCE BASED WITH PROVEN RESULTS

CeaseFire has an immediate, on-the-ground impact in the lives of individuals, communities, cities and states. It has reached high-risk individuals through midnight barbeques, chili nights at hot spots, summer car shows, juking performances and community responses against shootings. It has advanced role models for acceptable behavior, steering hundreds away from violence and imprisonment toward education, work and productive lives. It has given hope and the promise of health to communities where there was none. And, it has been proven to work.

An external evaluation of CeaseFire-Chicago commissioned by the U.S. Department of Justice and led by Northwestern University’s Institute for Policy Research found dramatic gains for communities and individuals. The study identified significant drops in violence in six of the seven areas it examined, finding that “the broadest measure of shootings (which included attempts) declined an additional 17 percent to 24 percent, due to the program. In four overlapping sites there were distinctive declines in the number of persons actually shot or killed ranging from 16 percent to 34 percent.”<sup>4</sup> The study also noted the human transformation CeaseFire creates: “In interviews, 99 percent of clients reported

that the program had a positive impact on their lives. Outreach Workers seem to have earned their status as mentors; they were named only second to clients’ parents as the most important person in their lives.”<sup>5</sup>

This makes CeaseFire a solid investment in reversing the costly cycle of violence. On average it costs Illinois taxpayers \$486,080 to incarcerate a prisoner sentenced for murder.<sup>6</sup> Most victims are not insured, so the state also picks up the cost for hospitalization, surgeries and rehabilitation. CeaseFire saves money as it saves lives and changes communities.

## CHANGES IN VIOLENCE DUE TO THE PROGRAM\*

	SHOOTINGS AND KILLINGS DOWN	HOT SPOTS COOLER	GANG HOMICIDE DECLINE
Auburn-Gresham	-17%	-15%	gang involvement in homicide down/reciprocal killings down
Englewood	-34%		
Logan Square	-22%		gang involvement in homicide down/reciprocal killings down
Rogers Park		-40%	
Southwest	-24/-27%		gang involvement in homicide down
West Garfield Park	-24/-23%	-24%	reciprocal killings down
West Humboldt Park	-16%	-17%	
East Garfield Park	not evaluated	not evaluated	gang involvement in homicide down/reciprocal killings down





## MIGUEL ARCOS, OUTREACH AND IMPACT

“When I was younger I was entrenched in it, running with the crowd,” Miguel says. At 17, he was sentenced to 12 years in prison. When two of his close friends were killed in the old neighborhood while he was in prison, Miguel decided to turn his life around and do something positive.

CeaseFire was there for Miguel—and Miguel was there for CeaseFire and his community. Helping change the lives of high-risk youths with few opportunities is at the core of CeaseFire. Outreach Workers like Miguel Arcos are at the core of its success.

Today, Miguel runs a small tree-cutting and cleaning service—and for the past three years has worked as a CeaseFire Outreach Worker in Southwest Chicago. Miguel has regular meetings with young men and women trying to escape the cycle of violence, as well as providing high-risk conflict mediations by going to the source of potential violence. He and the CeaseFire program have had a positive impact on the lives of young people in this violence-torn section of Chicago—getting them back in school, helping them find a job or just having someone to talk to who has a different perspective on life.

It’s working. When outreach began in Southwest in July 2000, there were five shootings per month. Killings steadily declined from this high level each month through December 2005, when there were no shootings.


But around Southwest, Miguel is famous for the camping trip sponsored by CeaseFire a couple of years ago. The kids want to know when there will be another. “They still ask about it. It had an impact, because it got them out of their neighborhood into a new environment. They never get out of the neighborhood.” With Miguel’s help, more will.

## PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN PROPORTION TO RECIPROCAL MURDERS\*

	PROGRAM	CONTROL
<b>Auburn-Gresham</b>	<b>-100%</b>	-25%
<b>Englewood</b>	<b>-100%</b>	-100%
<b>Logan Square</b>	<b>-100%</b>	+100%
<b>Rogers Park</b>	no change	n/a
<b>Southwest</b>	<b>-100%</b>	no change
<b>West Garfield Park</b>	-46%	+41%
<b>West Humboldt Park</b>	-50%	-57%
<b>East Garfield Park</b>	<b>-100%</b>	+60%

\* Evaluation of CeaseFire-Chicago, Institute for Policy Research, Northwestern University, Wesley G. Skogan, Susan M. Hartnett, Natalie Bump and Jill Dubois, May 2008.





**SEEING IS BELIEVING.** You can't afford to not find money for CeaseFire.  
— REV. ROBIN HOOD, THE ASSOCIATION OF  
COMMUNITY OUTREACH ORGANIZATIONS FOR REFORM NOW



# BRING CEASEFIRE TO YOUR COMMUNITY

Recognizing the impact CeaseFire has on improving the opportunities for health in at-risk communities, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation provided a grant to expand the program to new cities.

One such program, Safe Streets, is run by the Baltimore City Health Department. The Chicago Project for Violence Prevention and the CeaseFire staff have provided counsel, technical assistance and training to the Baltimore staff, and will monitor their status and incorporate their data and learning into the refinement of the CeaseFire model.

There has been a great deal of interest in CeaseFire from other cities across the nation, as well as internationally. Many have come to study CeaseFire. They soon appreciate that CeaseFire is a relatively simple concept that requires a complex set of structured and coordinated actions to guarantee success. They see a proven model that requires initial and lasting community support, as well as significant human and financial resources. In order to produce the immediate and lasting impact CeaseFire has demonstrated in Chicago,

those who wish to bring CeaseFire to their community must have in place the political will, funding and partnerships necessary to make the program work.

CeaseFire does not directly fund programs beyond its core sites in Chicago. Those seeking to adopt CeaseFire for their communities must align the necessary resources to implement the program locally. We've found that a full investment in CeaseFire creates a greater sense of ownership, appreciation for its value and the foundation for sustainability. For these reasons, CeaseFire has established two programs to help communities create their CeaseFire program—one that helps lay the foundation for a successful program and one that aids in its implementation:

- **Our Understanding CeaseFire program** provides technical assistance to help communities gain a full understanding of the CeaseFire model, as well as develop the context, partnerships, capacity and funding necessary to sustain a CeaseFire program. This program is a prerequisite for implementing the CeaseFire model.

- **Our Creating CeaseFire program** is for those communities that have developed the capacity to implement the CeaseFire model and have the resources and partnerships in place to do so. They receive ongoing training, technical assistance, data monitoring and counsel through the implementation phase and beyond—becoming active partners in refining and updating the CeaseFire model, as well as teaching others how to bring CeaseFire to their communities.

We welcome your interest in CeaseFire and would be happy to share our experiences and expertise through these two programs. Together, we can reverse the epidemic of violence in our communities by changing social norms and behaviors in at-risk communities. Join us in changing lives, creating upward mobility for troubled communities and opening the window of opportunity for a healthier society.

**Find out how by calling 1-312-996-8775, or emailing [info@ceasefireillinois.org](mailto:info@ceasefireillinois.org).**



**THE REDUCTION IN SHOOTING RATES** is much larger in areas that implemented CeaseFire than in those areas that did not.

— INSTITUTE FOR POLICY RESEARCH, NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY



<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2007, retrieved on January 3, 2008, from [www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/CostOfViolence.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/CostOfViolence.htm).

<sup>2</sup> Illinois Department of Corrections, *2002 Statistical Presentation*, p. 12.

<sup>3</sup> "CeaseFire at War With Gunfire," *Chicago Tribune*, May 20, 2002.

<sup>4</sup> Professor Wesley G. Skogan, *Brief Summary: An Evaluation of CeaseFire-Chicago*, Institute for Policy Research, Northwestern University.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Illinois Department of Corrections, *2002 Statistical Presentation*, p. 12.

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Photography by Ed Kashi.



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