

Andrews University

Digital Commons @ Andrews University

Lake Union Herald

Lake Union Herald

3-2023

Bringing Hope to the Harbor

Nicholas C. Gunn

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/luh-pubs>



▲ Harbor of Hope Church and community volunteers gathered for prayer before going out in the community to minister through music, food, prayer, games and messages of hope geared toward putting an end to violence.



Bringing Hope to the Harbor

Over the summer of 2022, Taurus Montgomery, pastor of Harbor of Hope Church in Benton Harbor, Michigan, began to see a rise in violence. The violence hit home for him.

“I had two young men who attended my church who I had baptized recently,” explained Montgomery. “Both of their brothers were killed here in Benton Harbor due to gun violence. Then one of them ended up killing someone in retaliation. That just hit hard so we said we had to do something.”

Montgomery and his church hit the ground running and decided to come up with an idea, which they titled “The Stop the Violence Tour.” Montgomery said, “Essentially what we did was identify at least ten communities, apartment complexes, housing projects — we really focused on areas that had a high concentration of young people so we could get our message out.

On Saturdays at 4 p.m., church and community volunteers would gather for prayer and a short meeting, then disperse to a newly planned location. The church ministered through music, food, resources, prayer, games and sermons with a focus on coming together and putting an end to violence. Harbor of Hope visited multiple neighborhoods throughout

Benton Harbor to spread change and instill hope.

Recently, Harbor of Hope distributed 1,000 door hangers with information on how citizens can help address gun violence, as well as 200 yard signs with positive messages. The signs displayed messages such as “Prison is not for me,” “My life has a purpose,” “Save our youth,” “Together we can end gun violence,” “Think twice, don’t take a life” and other positive affirmations.

Many people in the community expressed their support and thoughts on how they’ve enjoyed the church’s response to the violence.

A student volunteer from Andrews University, Chauntanique Briggs, shared, “I really enjoyed serving the community and want to see an end to the violence. I would love to see God’s love reach the heart of every individual and see a true change.”

On Sat. Oct. 8, the final “Stop the Violence Tour” event for the year was held. Over 50 volunteers and members of the church formed groups and visited several neighbors they had interacted with before. The goal was for each group to go out and pray for as many people as they could. At the end of the night, over 420 prayers were offered up throughout the community in about two hours.

“Ultimately,” said Montgomery, “if a community is going to end gun violence, it is not just going to be only up to the police

or only up to the local government. It’s going to take the people in that community and everyone doing their part to truly make a difference.

To find out more about what Harbor of Hope is doing in the community or how you can volunteer and serve with them, visit harborofhopepmc.org. ■

Nicholas Gunn is a freshman at Andrews University.

