

Recent shootings in DC lead the community to come together to find solutions to gun violence

Youth for Human Rights hosts roundtable discussion to get the community involved in building peace in our Nation's Capital.

WASHINGTON, DC, USA, October 1, 2019 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Less than two weeks ago, nine people were shot, two of them fatally, in two incidents in Northwest Washington, DC. Although the rates of violence in Washington, DC, have decreased, instances of violence, particularly gun violence, still occur in the capital city. In the interest of reducing such violence, the local DC chapter of [Youth for Human Rights International](#) (YHRI) held a community roundtable to address how to combat gun violence and police brutality on International Day of Peace.

Erica Rodgers, Director of the National Office of Youth for Human Rights International and organizer of the roundtable, opened the discussion by saying, "We are here to create solutions together that can contribute to building a more peaceful community."



Azhar Hag, President of Youth for Human Rights DC; Erica Rodgers, Director of the National Office of Youth for Human Rights; and Rev. Travis Ellis, Youth for Human Rights supporter

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Reverend Travis Ellis

Speaking about his experience combating violence in the DC community, Reverend Travis Ellis was both a featured speaker and participant in this roundtable discussion. As the founder of the organization [Yaay Me!](#), a mentoring, workforce development, program design, and non-profit consulting group located in the DC Metropolitan area, Reverend Ellis works to empower inner city youth with tools to lead them to success. Reverend Ellis talked about his use of the Youth for Human Rights education curriculum with at-risk youth to give them an understanding of their fundamental human rights. He is educating youth on human rights and then taking them to

talk with local police officers to “flip the script” and read the officers their human rights which contrasts with the more expected scenario of these inner city youth being read their Miranda rights. “Flipping this script produces constructive conversation between these youth and police,” declared Reverend Ellis. He feels strongly that lack of communication skills can cause violence to escalate very quickly which underscores the necessity of developing respect for one another to avoid violent crimes. The Youth for Human Rights educational materials are the main tools Reverend Ellis has used to teach youth to respect one another's human rights and use dialogue

rather than turning to violence. “We need to teach our young people that the best way to resolve arguments is through good communication skills and respect for one another’s rights,” stated Reverend Ellis.

Another issue brought up by participants of the round table was the shortage of parks and recreational facilities for use by youth. “Places like parks and basketball courts that provide safe spaces are being turned into dog parks rather than a place for our young people to constructively get out their energy and play! This is a violation of children's [right to play!](#)” said a concerned mother attending the roundtable. In the 1980s, then-DC Mayor Marion Barry created a program that kept the lights on at basketball courts late into the evening with police on duty to play basketball with local youth. This program helped develop trust between inner city youth and the police. Creating a similar program today was presented as a solution by the roundtable, along with establishing more community sporting events and activities to engage youth and keep them busy with constructive activities.

Concluding the roundtable, Ms. Rodgers highlighted the following quote from United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres: “Discrimination diminishes us all. It prevents people — and societies — from achieving their full potential.”

Ms. Rodgers said, “One of the best ways to end violence and promote peace is through creating respect for human rights. This is done through promotion and education about basic rights.” To celebrate their commitment to promoting peace and tolerance through human rights education, attendees of the roundtable signed a petition to incorporate human rights education into local schools.

The Founding Church of Scientology of Washington, DC, hosted the community roundtable. The Church supports Youth for Human Rights International's initiative of broad human rights education in the community. Humanitarian and Founder of Scientology, L. Ron Hubbard, firmly supported the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In 1969 he issued a directive to all of the staff of Churches of Scientology around the world that “Human Rights must be made a fact, not an idealistic dream.” The Church of Scientology therefore sponsors Youth for Human Rights International to help fulfill Mr. Hubbard's vision of a better world where human rights are a living reality.



Rev. Travis Ellis talks about the need for broad human rights education as he tell the story of a youth trying to legally sell water on a corner that inadvertently caused a turf dispute between youth, escalated to involving adults and guns and deadly forc



Erica Rodgers, Director of the National Office of Youth for Human Rights speaks about the 30 human rights in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights – including Human Right #3, The Right to Life.

About Youth for Human Rights:
Youth for Human Rights International (YHRI) is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to teach youth about the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and inspire them to become valuable advocates for tolerance and peace. YHRI teaches human rights education both in the classroom and in nontraditional educational settings such as art exhibits, concerts and other interactive community events. Their most recent campaign has included #KnowYour30 with the deliberate purpose of increasing awareness of the 30 human rights every person has and how they are a part of everyday life. To learn more go to <https://www.youthforhumanrights.org> or watch a documentary on how Youth for Human Rights began by going to www.scientology.tv

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Rev. Travis Ellis shows article about his youth interacting with police to “flip the script” and create dialog by reading them their rights – the 30 rights of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.



Community members signed the petition to implement the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights more broadly

This press release can be viewed online at: <http://www.einpresswire.com>

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