

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT



AN INTERVIEW WITH
JANET ROBINSON
CO-FOUNDER G.U.N.S



GAINING UNITY THROUGH NON-VIOLENT SOLUTIONS

HOW ARE YOU CONNECTED TO THE ISSUE OF YOUTH VIOLENCE PREVENTION?

I am co-founder of G.U.N.S. along with Pamela Smith, former Police Chief Joseph Thomas, and Ronald Jenkins. G.U.N.S. is an initiative in Muskegon County to reduce gun violence in our community by working together. G.U.N.S. is unique because we work directly with our youth and listen to their voices. Emphasis is placed on UNITY. We come together, have conversations, and find innovative ways to meet youth needs and prevent violence together.

WHAT IS THE MISSION OR PURPOSE OF G.U.N.S.?

Our mission is to reduce gun violence in Muskegon County. We partner with residents and community agencies across sectors (e.g. law enforcement, hospitals, public agencies, faith-based, and grassroots) to come up with non-violent solutions. Our purpose is to be there for our youth and to bring the necessary resources to help make life less cumbersome. We want our youth to feel comfortable coming to us, knowing we are listening and are there to help, without any hidden agenda. Just betterment for them.

HOW DOES G.U.N.S SUPPORT YOUTH TO THRIVE?

G.U.N.S. supports youth to thrive by providing mentoring, life skills training, and ensuring youth have the resources to be successful. We create opportunities for youth to speak with positive adults and Law Enforcement about their lives and concerns. We provide summer employment where youth can learn construction trades. We partner with Lake Hawks in Flight Foundation (LHIFF) to offer recreational opportunities like basketball camps/clinics, open gym time, and free fishing weekends. LHIFF recently purchased a building in the center of Muskegon Heights that will be designated as a youth community center. The center will provide a safe haven for tutoring, gaming, and sharing.

HOW CAN YOUTH BE PART OF THE SOLUTION TO GUN VIOLENCE?

Youth can be part of the solution because they know what issues our youth face better than we do. They can tell us what resources are lacking and what's needed to prevent gun violence. Youth need to reach out and be the voice of prevention because their peers will listen and will also speak out about gun violence.

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE IN HONOR OF NATIONAL YOUTH VIOLENCE PREVENTION WEEK?

We need to be there for our youth and look for innovative solutions on how to reach them. We also need to support more grassroots organizations than those that are nationally recognized, as every community has different needs and deserves to be recognized. Sometimes the smallest organizations can be the most heartfelt.

WHERE CAN WE FIND YOU ONLINE?

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1316871025173693/>

To Learn More, Visit
<https://yvpc.sph.umich.edu/>

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