



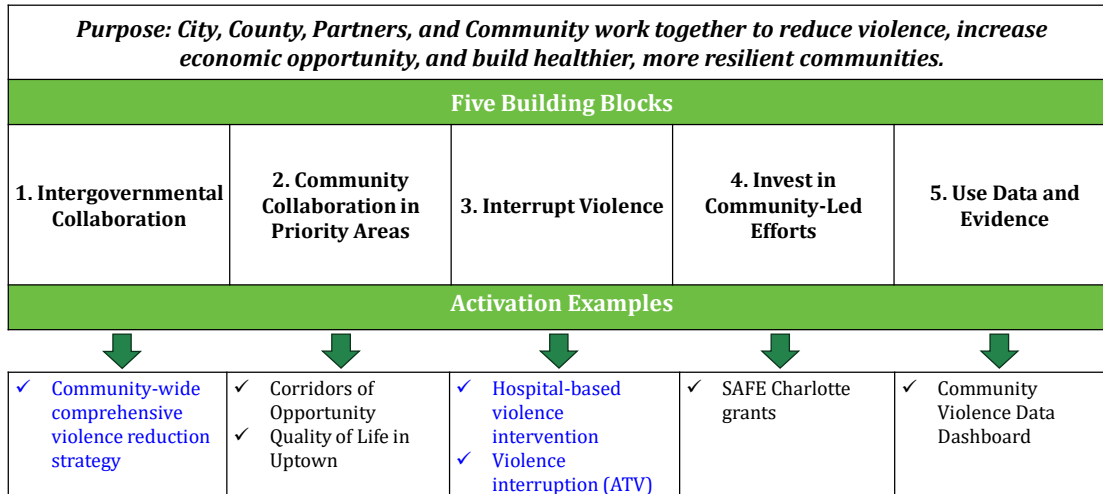
Public Safety: Violence as a Public Health Crisis

FEBRUARY 10, 2025

Schedule To-Date

- ▶ November 25: Setting the Stage
- ▶ December 9: Uptown & Street Racing Update
- ▶ January 6: Quality of Life Approach
- ▶ January 13: SAFE Charlotte Review & Update
- ▶ January 16: CMPD Annual Crime Report / Briefing
- ▶ February 10: Violence as Public Health Crisis

Framework to Address Violence Using A Public Health Approach (established by City Council in 2020)



Today's Topics

► The Way Forward: Mecklenburg County's Violence Prevention Plan

- Dr. Raynard Washington, Mecklenburg County Public Health Director

► Project BOOST: Atrium Health's Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Program

- Dr. Morgan Maxwell and Britney Brown, Atrium Health

► Alternatives to Violence: Community-Based Violence Interruption

- Dr. Raquishela Stewart, Deputy Director Housing & Neighborhood Services



Agenda

- Mecklenburg Office of Violence Prevention Overview
- Violence as a Public Health Issue
- The Way Forward Plan Overview and Progress
- City of Charlotte Partnership and Alignment

Community Violence:

A Public Health Issue

- Community violence is a public health issue with identified causes and patterns (risk factors) that can be prevented
- Public Health Approach focuses on prevention at three levels:
 - Primary**- Stops violence before it starts; understanding and addressing root causes
 - Secondary**- Addresses early warning signs and risks
 - Tertiary**- Supports those impacted by violence to prevent repetition
- Public Health prevention strategies include education, intervention programs, mental health support

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Levels of Prevention:

Intervention Examples

Primary prevention:

Approaches that aim to prevent violence before it occurs by decreasing things that lead to a higher risk of violence ("risk factors") and increasing things that protect someone from violence ("protective factors").*

Secondary prevention:

Approaches that focus on the more immediate responses to violence, which happen either during or immediately after it occurs.*

Tertiary prevention:

Approaches that focus on the longer-term impacts and consequences of violence to either prevent further harm or to prevent repeated acts of violence.*



*Wilkins, N., Tsao, B., Hertz, M., Davis, R., Klevens, J. (2014) Connecting the Dots: An Overview of the Links Among Multiple Forms of Violence. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/connecting_the_dots-a.pdf

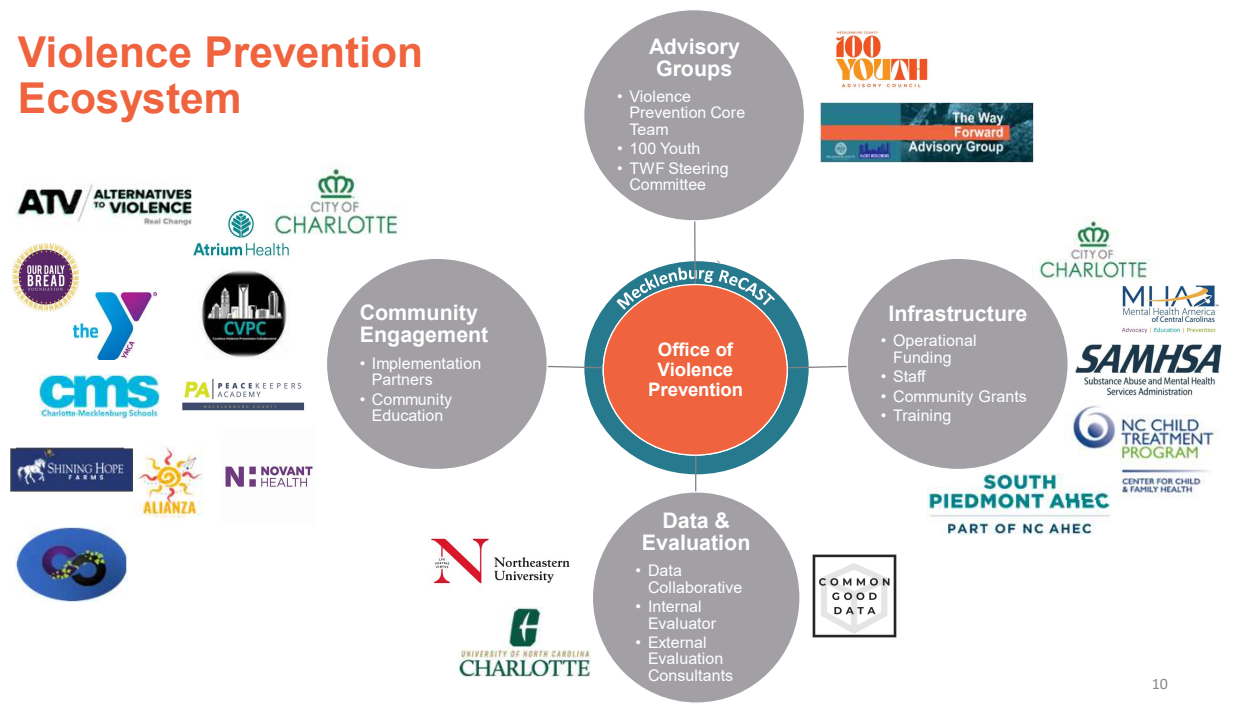
What is the OVP?

The Office of Violence Prevention (OVP)

- Leads the development and implementation of *The Way Forward* community violence prevention plan
- Facilitates local violence prevention partnership coordination, connectivity, and alignment through collective impact
- Monitors and evaluates progress to understand the impact, reach, and effectiveness of community violence and prevention efforts

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Violence Prevention Ecosystem



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The Way Forward

Five Year Countywide Violence Prevention Plan including:

- **2** overarching community violence reduction goals – reduce gun assaults and homicides by 10% each
- **5** core areas of focus
- **21** evidence-based and innovative strategies focused on addressing the root cause of violence



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Community Engagement and Partnerships

Advisory Groups

Highlights:

Established shared decision framework with community leaders through **three core advisory committees:**

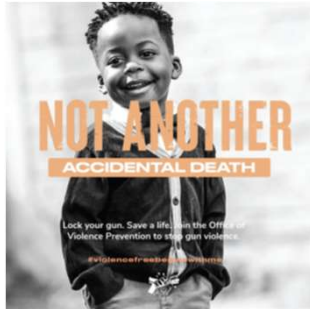
1. **Violence Prevention Core Team**- network of core executive and senior leaders representing city, county, and law enforcement to ensure connectivity and alignment of core violence prevention strategies
2. **The Way Forward Advisory Committee** – diverse network of up to **50 local advisors** including partners, residents, and others dedicated to decreasing community violence through strategic input and implementation of the local community violence plan; quarterly meetings hosted to review plan implementation and progress
3. **Youth Advisory Council** - platform for youth engagement to inform violence prevention initiatives and best practices within schools and communities; **125 YAC Participants provided 118 total recommendations** for local violence prevention strategies

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Community Engagement and Partnerships

Awareness and Education



Highlights: (Cont.)

Implemented 3 multi-media violence prevention awareness and education campaigns:

- **Gun Violence Awareness Month** education campaign implemented, reaching over **1,500 people**. The campaign distributed **1,140 gun** locks to encourage secure gun storage and increase awareness of gun safety. Geofencing safety messages have made more than **6 million impressions** with more than **22K clicks** to the OVP resource and education pages.
- **Not Another Campaign:** Emphasized the broad, lasting impacts of violence highlighting the need to stop future incidents.
- **Violence Free Zones Clean Graffiti:** Implemented across 118 locations in the following zip codes 28202, 28205, 28206, 28208, 28216, 28217, and 28273.



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Community Engagement and Partnerships



Highlights (Cont.)

Provide technical assistance and training to community-based organizations implementing violence prevention initiatives through the Peacekeepers Academy.

- Graduated two cohorts of **22 grassroots community organizations** through PA
- PA alumni supported the implementation of 6 TWF violence prevention strategies reaching **over 700 individuals** and received up to \$15K fund efforts
- Alumni engagement continues to provide ongoing support and connectivity to violence prevention strategies, resources, and peer-to-peer learning

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Support for Youth
& Families**Highlights:**

- **Handle with Care (HWC):** Program offered in partnership with CMS, MCPH, CMPD, and Pat's Place that notifies school staff of children encountering a traumatic event involving law enforcement. This notification enables school counselors, social workers, and other behavioral health specialists to provide trauma-sensitive support
- **Youth Engagement Resources:** Expanded access to no-cost youth development and support resources for youth at high risk of exposure to community violence via McCrorey YMCA, Our Daily Bread, and Shining Hope Farms
- **Talkspace:** Provides free virtual mental health services through online self-guided programs and certified licensed therapist to teens 13-17 (launching February 2025)
- **Youth Violence Prevention Summit:** In collaboration with the West Charlotte Parks and Rec, the youth summit aims to raise awareness of youth violence, foster collaboration between youth, empower youth to recommend solutions for positive change. (March 2025)

** 17 of 22 PA partners offer direct service programming to support this strategy*

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Safer & Healthier
Neighborhoods**Highlights:**

- Implemented Alternatives to Violence program at 3 sites within the city of Charlotte including 91 violence interruptions, 73 enrolled participants, 34 community events, and 3,310 community members engaged
- Implemented Hospital-based Violence Interruption programs at Atrium and Novant Health Systems
- Conduct an assessment to understand I-85 Sugar Creek and inform community violence prevention strategies; an area advisory committee is convening to identify evidence-based/innovative solutions to address the unique violence prevention needs of the corridor

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How is Project BOOST addressing violence as a public health crisis?

Britney Brown, MPA
Dr. Morgan Maxwell, PhD, MA

Monday, February 10, 2025



History of Violence Intervention Program

Initial Funding

- Pilot program funded for a 2-year contract by the City of Charlotte in 2021(\$500k)
- This was matched with in-kind support from Atrium Health, now a part of Advocate Health

Current Funding

- City of Charlotte renewed 2-year contract (\$250k) with \$250k matching from Atrium Health to end June '25
- Recipient of FY24 Byrne Discretionary Fund from 2025-2028 (\$963k) with the Department of Justice

Current HVIP Team

- 2 FTEs (Program Manager - **Britney Brown** and Intervention Specialist – **Derrick Glover**)



Project BOOST



Building Optimal
Outcomes
for Survivors of Trauma

Key Goals of Program



Identify the Needs of Our Participants

Accurately track the identified needs of our participants to work with community on developing growth opportunities



Connect Patients to Community Resources

Facilitating connections between patients and community to ensure holistic care delivery and support



Grow Our Community Connections

Develop a strong referral network that will serve our population at the highest level by building the Community Resource Hub



Reduce Recidivism

Prevent individuals from coming back to the hospital for the same reasons

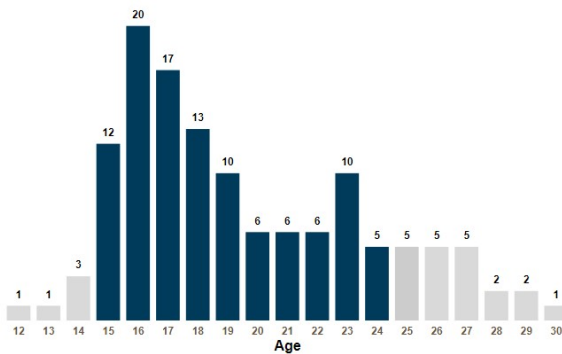


Program Demographics and Enrollment

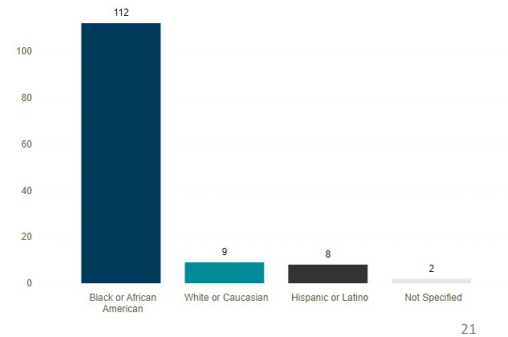
January 2022 - December 2024, we have encountered **270 patients** and enrolled **131 patients**.

95% of participants are male.
85% of participants are Black/African-American.
91% of participants are injured by firearm.

Participants By Age



Participants by Race



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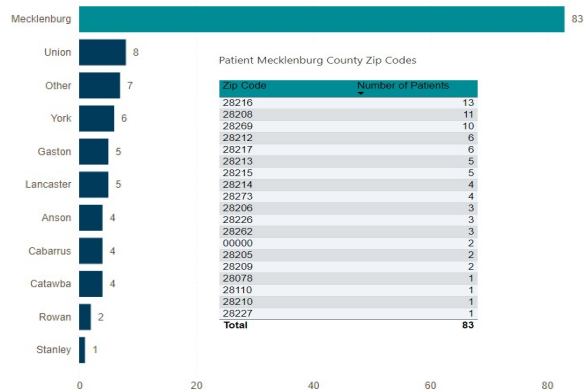
Participant Geography

Project BOOST aims to serve community residents in the Greater Charlotte- Mecklenburg area.

However, as Advocate Health proudly offers the only Level I trauma center – Carolinas Medical Center (CMC), in the region, Project BOOST also supports patients from surrounding North Carolina and South Carolina counties.

Nonetheless, over 63% of enrolled patients reside in Mecklenburg County, representing 19 zip codes. Most reside in the "crescent" region of the county.

Patient County Residence

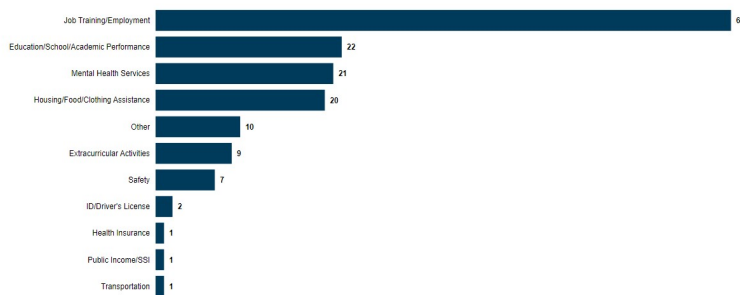


Goals Setting and Completion

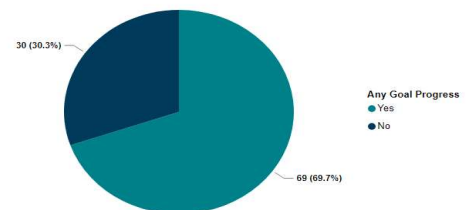
To support optimal healing, each **Project BOOST** participant identifies program goals to accomplish during enrollment.

Total Number of Identified Goals: 162

BOOST Participant Goals Set



Participants Making Progress Toward Goals



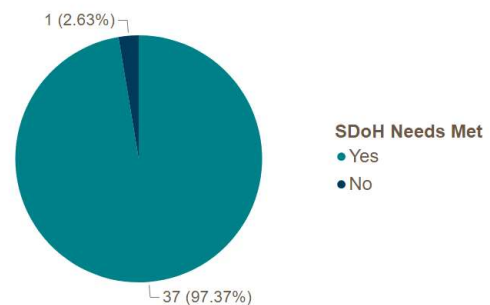
Social Drivers of Health Needs

To address the health and social care needs of **Project BOOST** participants, each is screened for Social Drivers of Health Needs (SDoH). Referrals are sent to community-based organizations (CBOs) according to these needs and personal goals set.

Positive SDoH Screens



% of Participants with SDoH Needs Met



Accomplishments

✓ Successfully added over 50 new CBOs to referral network

Through this network over 129 referrals have been made to support BOOST participants with achieving optimal healing.

✓ Submitted a manuscript for model replication

As the first HVIP in NC, seeking to share model and its successes with other limited resource programs.

✓ Presented at Inaugural NC OVP Conference

BOOST team represented Atrium Health on panel discussion.



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GeDavien's Story

- GeDavien sustained a firearm injury just weeks before starting college, leading to the loss of his athletic scholarship. This devastating setback jeopardized his pursuit of higher education.
- Our Intervention Specialist, Derrick Glover, worked closely with GeDavien to identify and apply for alternative college funding, ultimately ensuring financial stability for his education.
- With BOOST support, GeDavien successfully enrolled at Winston Salem State University, where he earned a spot on the football team in Fall 2023.



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The Look Ahead

✓ Hiring Credible Messengers

Peer support is a catalyst for achieving holistic success with HVIPs.

✓ IRB approval to conduct focus groups

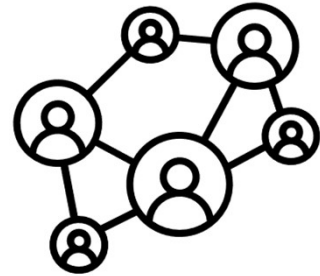
Spring 25', BOOST will document the stories of past participants to evaluate the effectiveness of the CBO model and make program improvements.

✓ Community Resource Hub (CRH) expansion

All CBOs with regular communication with BOOST will be added to the CRH, a digital social network powered by FindHelp.

✓ Building external committee

BOOST is seeking to gain additional external support for program enhancement.



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**ALTERNATIVES
TO VIOLENCE**
Real Change





Program Overview

- ▶ Alternatives to Violence is a community-based violence interruption program implementing the evidence-based Cure Violence Global program model
- ▶ Started in 2021 in the Beatties Ford Road area, expanded in 2023 to West Boulevard/Remount and Nations Ford/Arrowood areas
- ▶ Primary focus is mediating conflict and preventing retaliatory violence with young people ages 14-25
- ▶ Program is operated by Youth Advocate Programs, Inc. and Urban League of Central Carolinas with funding from City of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, Wells Fargo, Greenlight Foundation, and federal grants



Program Model



- ▶ **Key Strategies:** Focuses on detecting and interrupting conflicts, identifying and supporting high-risk individuals, and changing harmful social norms that perpetuate violence
- ▶ **Community-Centered:** ATV team members are trusted community messengers and use conflict mediation and violence interruption to prevent violent activities or retaliation
- ▶ **Comprehensive Support:** Outreach workers engage high-risk individuals and connect them to critical services such as housing, employment and health supports

Program Activities



76 community activities
with **3,500** residents
staff logged **6,500**
canvassing hours
139 interruptions
engaged **84** participants
and **4,800** key individuals

Program Accomplishments

► Year 1 Process Evaluation Completed in 2023

- Program Strengths – Staff credibility, training, and strong partner engagement.
- Positive Outcomes – Participants demonstrated improved academic achievement, educational aspirations, and behaviors that reduce violence risk.
- Early Impact – Beatties Ford saw a decrease in firearm-related homicides after ATV implementation, compared to similar neighborhoods.

► Cumulative report and evaluation that details longer-term outcomes is in process, expected spring 2025

ALTERNATIVES TO VIOLENCE

Real Change

Stories of Impact

Marcus's Story

Marcus was known on the streets for his quick temper and involvement in disputes.

The ATV program helped him understand the root causes of his anger and develop conflict resolution skills. He learned to de-escalate situations and communicate his needs effectively.



"Transformation is Possible"

Donell Gardner

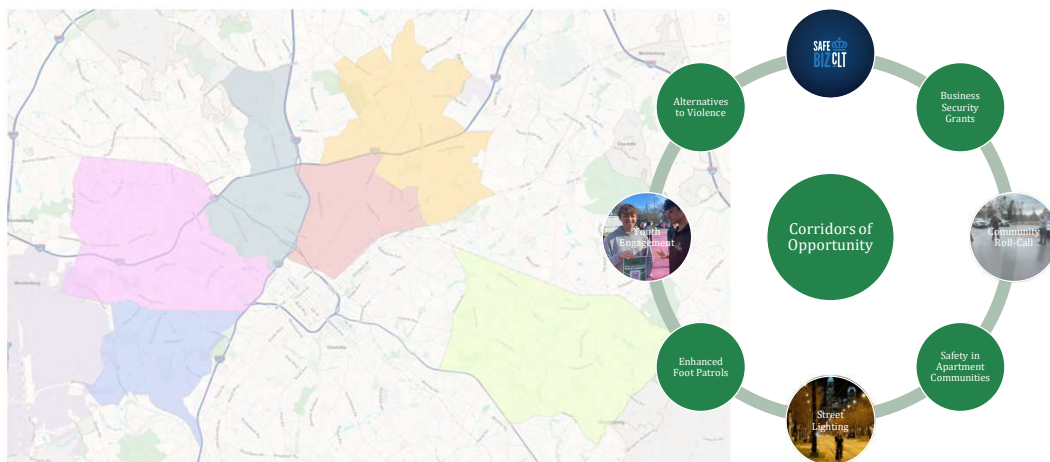
Program Manager/Violence Interrupter

Named one of the great 28: Black Charlotteans that are shaping our City (2025)



"I put forth all my efforts to make a difference in the community, and that's just what I've been doing."

A Place-Based Approach

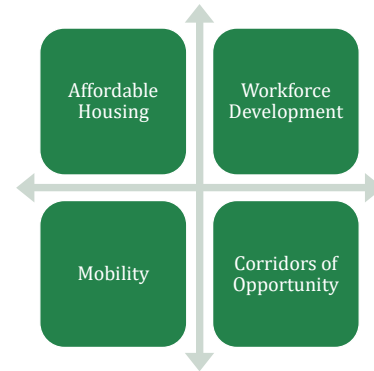


Closing Themes

Public Safety is Driven by Community-Wide Efforts and Collaboration



City of Charlotte Strategic Initiatives are Foundational to Public Safety



Areas for Further Exploration?

