

THE WHITE HOUSE  
Office of Communications

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**White House to Honor Gun Violence Prevention Champions of Change**

WASHINGTON – On Thursday, April 3, the White House will honor 9 grassroots leaders taking critical steps in their communities to reduce gun violence. Although a minority of the Senate voted down common-sense legislation, the Administration is continuing to take key steps to reduce gun violence by implementing more than [23 executive actions](#) and elevating successful local efforts. This week, the Administration will highlight the critical work some of these local leaders have spearheaded to make their neighborhoods safer and to keep firearms out of the wrong hands.

In his [State of the Union Address](#), President Obama declared, “Citizenship means standing up for the lives that gun violence steals from us each day. I have seen the courage of parents, students, pastors, and police officers all over this country who say ‘we are not afraid,’ and I intend to keep trying, with or without Congress, to help stop more tragedies from visiting innocent Americans in our movie theaters, shopping malls, or schools like Sandy Hook.”

The White House created the Champions of Change program to feature individuals doing extraordinary things to empower, inspire and support members of their communities.

The event is closed to press but will be live streamed on the White House website. To watch this event live, visit [www.whitehouse.gov/live](http://www.whitehouse.gov/live) at 10:00 am ET on April 3<sup>rd</sup>. To learn more about the White House Champions of Change program and nominate a Champion, visit [www.whitehouse.gov/champions](http://www.whitehouse.gov/champions).

**James Johnson, Chief of Police, Baltimore County; Chair, National Law Enforcement Partnership to Prevent Gun Violence  
Baltimore, MD**

Baltimore County, MD, Police Chief Jim Johnson began his career with the Baltimore County Police Department in 1979 as a Cadet in the 911 Center and served in every sworn rank in the Department before being named Chief of Police in June 2007. Chief Johnson holds memberships in several professional organizations, including the Major Cities Chiefs Association (MCCA). He is MCCA’s representative to and Chairs the National Law Enforcement Partnership to Prevent Gun Violence, a coalition of nine national law enforcement leadership

organizations.

Chief Johnson works daily in his own jurisdiction to reduce incidents of gun violence and make his community safer. A highly respected leader in his state and at the national level, Chief Johnson is an active voice for law enforcement on the policies and practices that will help reduce gun violence. A gun owner and hunter, Chief Johnson has been an effective advocate for sensible policies that protect the rights of law abiding gun owners while keeping guns out of dangerous hands and excessive firepower off our streets. In 2013 Chief Johnson testified before Congress in support of expanding background checks to all purchasers, and was instrumental in changing Maryland's law prohibiting assault weapons and limiting high-capacity ammunition magazines. He holds a Masters Degree in Applied Behavioral Science from Johns Hopkins University and a Bachelor of Science Degree in Criminal Justice from the University of Baltimore.

**Glenn Garrett Grayson, Pastor of Wesley Center A.M.E. Zion Church; Founder of the Center That C.A.R.E.S. Pittsburgh, PA**

Rev. Glenn Garrett Grayson, M.Div is currently the Pastor of Wesley Center A.M.E. Zion Church in Pittsburgh, PA and also served for 17 years as the presiding elder of the Pittsburgh District. In 2000, Rev. Grayson founded The Center That C.A.R.E.S. (Children/Adults Recreational and Educational Services). Presently, The Center That C.A.R.E.S. is highly noted for its after school tutorial and enrichment programs, serving over 125 families from grades Pre-K through college throughout the Hill District Community of Pittsburgh. C.A.R.E.S. recently purchased a new site for its permanent location with the hope of increasing the amount of families they are equipped to serve and further promoting their gun violence prevention initiative; as well as preparing the youth to become leaders in their community and beyond.

**Jamira Burley, Executive Director for the City of Philadelphia, Youth Commission and Co-Founder GenYNot Philadelphia, PA**

At 25 years old, Jamira Burley works as the Executive Director for the City of Philadelphia, Youth Commission. As an advocate for authentic youth civic engagement, global citizenship, comprehensive education reform, black male achievement and gun violence prevention. Jamira is the United States representative to the United Nations Global Education First Initiative, Youth Advocacy Group. She is also the cofounder/co-host for GenYNot, a youth platform that allows young people to be the experts of

the own experience and create solution-driven dialogue. In 2005, Jamira's brother was shot and killed, since then she has worked to employ her personal experiences as the driving force to improve the lives of others. Currently, Jamira works on both local and national initiatives to eliminate gun violence and help create safe living and learning environments for youth. From advocacy to program development, Jamira helps lead the youth engagement on the working group for the National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention, Cities United and is a member of the Roosevelt Institute Millennial Gun Violence Prevention Task Force.

**John Woods, Texas Violence Prevention Advocate; Member of Texas Gun Sense Advisory Board  
Austin, TX**

John Woods, Ph.D., graduated from Virginia Tech in May 2007, just weeks after the worst mass shooting in American history. As a doctoral student in molecular biology at the University of Texas at Austin, he became involved in the gun violence prevention movement after members of the Texas Legislature tried to use the Virginia Tech tragedy to push an ideological agenda having nothing to do with campus safety: forcing colleges and universities to allow guns in classrooms. Texas violence prevention advocates successfully organized against the so-called "campus carry" bills in three consecutive legislative sessions, and several special sessions, despite a majority of Texas lawmakers registering as sponsors of the legislation. In the wake of the Sandy Hook shooting, Dr. Woods helped found Texas Gun Sense, a state-focused educational charity which promotes a fact-based dialogue on gun policy, and which incidentally coined the term "gun sense." In its first eighteen months, Texas Gun Sense has worked to educate lawmakers and the public on universal background checks as they would apply to Texas. Dr. Woods now serves on Texas Gun Sense's advisory board, and is a post-doctoral fellow at West Virginia University's Applied Space Exploration Laboratory and the West Virginia Robotic Technology Center.

**Mark Barden, Director of Advocacy, Sandy Hook Promise  
Newtown, CT**

As Director of Advocacy, Mark Barden leads policy and outreach efforts for Sandy Hook Promise and frequently serves as a spokesperson for the organization. Since the tragic loss of his son Daniel at Sandy Hook Elementary School, Mark has dedicated himself to bringing people together to prevent future tragedies and spare other families the pain of losing a child to gun violence. His journey has taken him from a Tea Party congressman's Florida town hall to introducing President Obama in the Rose Garden to meetings with Members of Congress, governors and state legislators, media interviews and speaking to civic groups, faith groups and colleges. An accomplished professional musician, Mark still finds time to perform and be with his wife Jackie, his son James and

daughter Natalie. The extended Barden family has also created a foundation, What Would Daniel Do? to honor the extraordinary spirit of Daniel Barden.

**Nosheen Hydari, Crisis Therapist, Community Counseling Centers of Chicago (C4)**

**Chicago, IL**

Nosheen Hydari, AMFT, is a crisis therapist for the Emergency Services On-Call team at Community Counseling Centers of Chicago (C4). C4 is a leading community mental health agency in Illinois, providing a comprehensive range of mental health services, crisis intervention and substance use treatment to more than 10,000 low-income children, adults, and families each year. In her role at C4, Nosheen provides crisis assessments for hundreds of children and adults in severe psychiatric distress, many of whom are victims and/or perpetrators of violent acts. She supports individuals and families by helping to de-escalate their psychological symptoms, offering an appropriate level of care in either psychiatric hospitals or outpatient therapy settings. Much of Chicago's inner-city gun violence involves individuals and groups whose psychological distress has been overlooked. Nosheen's role at C4 serves to battle the root cause of these overlooked problems by helping people access the appropriate resources they need to address their mental health challenges.

**Pamela K. Simon, Survivor, Gun Violence Prevention Advocate  
Tucson, AZ**

Pam Simon served as the Community Outreach Coordinator for Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords following a career of two decades teaching middle and high school. On January 8, 2011, while staffing the congresswoman at a Congress on Your Corner event at a local grocery store, Pam was shot in the arm and the chest. Twelve others including the congresswoman were wounded and six people died on that day. Upon retiring from the congressional office, Pam helped launch the Mayors Against Illegal Guns' Demand a Plan initiative that asked the Presidential candidates to offer a plan to reduce gun violence. Since that time she has spoken out in news media interviews, documentaries, rallies, forums, survivor events and speaking engagements. She has worked with numerous organizations including Moms Demand Action, Arizonans for Gun Safety, Moms Rising, Organizing for Action, Tucson Community Against Gun Violence and Americans For Responsible Solutions as a voice for common sense gun legislation. Pam has traveled extensively to meet with local, state and national leaders to share her story of survival and to seek ways to reduce the national epidemic of gun violence. She is currently writing a memoir about her experience with violence and the healing power of speaking out for change.

**Sarah Clements, Founder and Chairwoman, Jr. Newtown Action Alliance  
Newtown, CT**

Sarah Clements founded and serves as Chairwoman for the Jr. Newtown Action Alliance. She is a senior at Newtown High School in Newtown, CT. On December 14th, 2012 her mother survived the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School. After the shooting, Sarah began using gun violence prevention advocacy to transform her painful experience into positive action. Jr. NAA is the student branch of the Newtown Action Alliance, and the group focuses on educating, empowering, and collaborating with other Millennials to address gun violence in every type of community, through legislative action, cultural change, and bridge building. The group's goal for 2014 is to bring together urban, suburban, and rural youth to share stories and work together to reduce gun violence, as the issue so disproportionately effects the millennial generation. Sarah is also a Gun Violence Prevention Network Volunteer Lead at Generation Progress, the youth advocacy branch of the Center for American Progress, where she assists in creating a national network of young people working on gun violence prevention on high school and college campuses.

**Teresa A. Crawford, Volunteer for Gun Violence Prevention  
Henderson, NV**

Teresa A. Crawford, BA and RN, is retired from a career in health care. She is the Organizing for Action Nevada State Lead for Gun Violence Prevention and a board member of ProgressNow Nevada. To support federal and state legislation and executive action that addresses gun violence, Teresa has helped organize and delivered remarks at more than twenty events since Jan. 19, 2013 and developed a list of GVP activists. These events include rallies, vigils, phone banks, petitioning, petition delivery and press conferences. Teresa presented on grassroots strategies at trainings in 2013 and 2014. In addition to providing sound bites, Teresa has appeared on Ralston Reports and My News 3, in interview format to advocate for gun safety legislation. Teresa has participated in lobby sessions with senior staff of a senator and congressman and asked questions about pending background checks legislation at Town Halls hosted by a congressman. At the Mayors Against Illegal Guns "No More Names" bus tour in July, 2013, Teresa delivered an overview of presidential action and GVP legislation and introduced the state legislator who championed a background checks bill. Through involvement in every Gun Violence Prevention organization active in Nevada, Teresa encourages collaboration and shared resources, the key to making our schools and communities safer.

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