



Strides for Peace

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**Strides for Peace Race Against Gun Violence
Announces Collaborative Performances featuring
Vic Mensa, Civic Orchestra of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Takesha Meshé Kizart-Thomas**

CHICAGO – May 23, 2019

Strides for Peace is pleased to announce a special partnership for their 6th annual Race Against Gun Violence (RAGV) on June 6, 2019 in Arvey Field, Grant Park.

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra's Negaunee Music Institute is facilitating two live performances at RAGV as a testament to the common goal of ending gun violence and promoting peace in Chicago.

The first performance features a song composed as part of the Institute's songwriting project that provides participants with opportunities for creative expression, healing, empowerment and community-building. For the 2018/19 season, the Institute again has collaborated with **St. Sabina Church's Purpose Over Pain** program, which works with parents who have lost children to gun violence. "Song for Terrel," composed by **Trevon Bosley, brother and B.R.A.V.E. Youth Activist**, will be performed at the top of the race, featuring musicians from the Civic Orchestra of Chicago and soprano **Takesha Meshé Kizart-Thomas**. To learn more about the project visit notesforpeace.org.

The second performance features **Vic Mensa**, internationally renowned hip hop artist and co-founder of **SaveMoney SaveLife**, a Chicago-based nonprofit that aims to provide vital resources to those who need it most and foster civic action through arts and entertainment to facilitate sustainable change. A key program, **Street Medix**, trains civilians as trauma and mental health first responders within neighborhoods of Chicago that suffer from the highest rates of violence. **Mensa will perform his anthem, "We Could Be Free," with members of the Civic Orchestra of Chicago.**

These projects and the performances demonstrate music's power to bring people from diverse communities together, and inspire seeds of peace through the arts, which is integral to the ongoing work of Strides for Peace, Negaunee Music Institute at the CSO and SaveMoneySaveLife.

"The Institute's work with Strides for Peace builds on the partnership we formed as a result of our first "Concert for Peace" led by Yo-Yo Ma at St. Sabina Church in June 2017," stated Jonathan McCormick, Director of The Negaunee Music Institute. In addition to **Yo-Yo Ma's** performance at St. Sabina Church on Chicago's South Side in 2017, he also held an impromptu mini-concert in Strides for Peace's "Peace Mobile" outside the church on the day of the concert.

"No doubt, Chicago faces many challenges. But it is also true that people and organizations work together to stop gun violence every day," explained Mary Stonor Saunders, Executive Director of Strides for Peace. "As 'Song for Terrel' and 'We Could Be Free' demonstrate, music creates a space where people can come together and experience a shared humanity – and maybe even healing and hope."

The event will also showcase an emerging musician and mentee of **Guitars Over Guns' Haven Studio, Steven "Evn Stevn" Smith**, who will kick off the race finish celebration with original composition "Headlines" to lift up the crowd and

celebrate hope. Led by critically acclaimed artist **Andre “Add-2” Daniels**, Haven Studio students receive instruction and mentorship from some of Chicago’s most accomplished music professionals, who guide and empower them to discover meaningful connections through artistic self-expression.

About the Race: Founded in 2014, the Race Against Gun Violence features several components to bring diverse stakeholders together to raise funds for and awareness about what is being done to reduce gun violence and build Chicago’s future. RAGV’s goals are to build capacity, promote collaboration and celebrate hope. This year, 46 nonprofits and 12 Civic Partners are participating in the race, as well as concerned citizens from over 175 zip codes. The race takes place Thursday, June 6th, 6:30-9:30PM. More than 2,000 people are expected to attend. 100% of donations go to community organizations.

About Strides for Peace: Founded in 2014 by Margaret Baczkowski, Strides for Peace is a registered 501(c)(3) with a mission to increase the collective impact of community organizations working to end gun violence, save lives and build a stronger Chicago.

About the Negaunee Music Institute: Across Chicago and around the world, the Negaunee Music Institute connects individuals and communities to the extraordinary musical resources of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Under the visionary leadership of CSO Zell Music Director Riccardo Muti and Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant Yo-Yo Ma, the Institute creates opportunities for people of all ages with diverse backgrounds to participate actively in the life of the Orchestra.

About Save Money Save Life: Founded by Vic Mensa and Laundi Keepseagle, Save Money Save Life is a 501(c)(3) with a mission to foster civic action through arts and entertainment, facilitating sustainable change. A key program, Street Medix, is dedicated to training civilians as trauma and mental health first responders within neighborhoods of Chicago that suffer from the highest rates of violence. Street Medix is a movement to empower Chicago communities.

About Haven Studio: Located in Chicago’s Bronzeville neighborhood, Haven is Guitars Over Guns’ first community-based recording studio. In partnership with Mt. Pisgah Missionary Baptist Church, this unique program features a fully equipped professional music studio, allowing young people on Chicago’s South Side to use industry standard technology to develop original music and learn vital, career-track skills in music production and engineering. Through this program, Haven aims to build confidence within each student through music, mentorship, and community service.

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