



Strides for Peace



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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City Council to Vote on Resolution in Recognition of Strides for Peace Race Against Gun Violence

CHICAGO Illinois February 19, 2020 – Today Alderman **Ariel E. Reboyras** will introduce a resolution to the City Council in support of the **Strides for Peace Race Against Gun Violence (RAGV)**, taking place in Grant Park on June 4, 2020. Called the **“Switzerland of Chicago,”** RAGV embodies a Chicago that works together towards a common vision: a Chicago where all can thrive, free from the fear of gun violence.

Accompanying Strides for Peace will be several of their community partners from neighborhoods experiencing the worst of the gun violence: **Kids Off the Block/Roseland, Chicago Police Memorial Foundation, BUILD/Austin, Paving the Way/Washington Park, West Town Bikes/West Town, I Grow Chicago/Englewood and New Life Centers/Little Village.** Representing a range of strategies and approaches, these nonprofits are the cornerstones of their communities and represent the best of our city.

“While Chicago has made significant progress since gun violence peaked in 2016,” Mary Stonor Saunders, Executive Director of Strides for Peace said, *“2020 has gotten off to rough start – including 11 children shot this weekend which should be inconceivable. **And even while overall numbers are declining, the homicide gap and disparities are on the rise – this is no time to sit back and think our work is done.**”*

Now in its 7th year, RAGV is much more than a single event. Rather it is the culmination of months of collaboration and capacity-building, provided free of charge to Chicago nonprofits who share the common goal of ending gun violence and saving lives. Launched in 2014 as a resource to community and grassroots organizations who may not have the capacity to plan their own event and reach new audiences, RAGV has grown every year on every level. Last year, the race drew 49 nonprofits, 2,000 participants, and Civic Partners ranging from Senator Durbin to the Wu-Tang Foundation, the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce to the Chicago Police Department, the Negaunee Music Institute of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra to Chicago CRED.

Raising more than \$120,000 (2019) in small, individual donations to support communities ahead of the summer when gun violence typically escalates, RAGV offers multiple ways for Chicagoans to get involved, including a single event where people from throughout the city can come to learn about and connect with dozens of organizations.

Central to RAGV is the goal of bringing people together who typically don't cross paths, which is why Strides hosts the event downtown. In 2019, RAGV attracted people from more than 215 zip codes, representing both the wealthiest and poorest communities. *“The race offers a great way to bridge the proximity gap.”* said Mary Stonor Saunders, Executive Director of Strides for Peace. *“We not only bring many organizations together -- the nonprofits as well as across the business, healthcare and civic sectors -- but we create a one-of-kind way opportunity for people to get close, humanize one other, celebrate what we share in common, and plant the seeds for deeper understanding and involvement.”*

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