



Strides for Peace

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Chicago's Race Against Gun Violence Announces Live Stream Celebration

Featuring Remarks by Mayor Lightfoot and Community Leaders

Performances by the Negaunee Music Institute at the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, C.A.M. and DJ Hot Rod

CHICAGO – September 16, 2020

Strides for Peace is pleased to announce a Live Stream Celebration on September 26, 6PM to cap off their 7th annual Race Against Gun Violence (RAGV). Featuring music, community leaders and remarks from Mayor Lightfoot, the program which celebrates community organizations and Chicagoans coming together, will be broadcast from the Public Media Institute and Lumpen Radio. While this year's race is "virtual," Strides is more committed than ever to engage people and organizations in the collective effort to build a city where all can thrive, free from the fear of gun violence.

More than a "race," RAGV is a dynamic platform to raise awareness about and funds for community organizations working in the intersection of gun violence, Covid-19 and racial inequity and provides concerned citizens something positive to do in the face of so many challenges. With more than 50 participating nonprofits, leading civic partners from every sector, and concerned citizens from throughout Chicago and more than 20 states, RAGV is on course to break records in participation.

Mayor Lightfoot, who released a "Why I Run" video as part of RAGV's engagement campaign, will provide remarks early in the program. Leaders in community gun violence prevention will also be on hand to highlight the essential role community organizations play during these unprecedented times and how they continually "Choose Hope" no matter what the challenges. Power 92.3 radio personality and Pep Rally Takeover founder Rodney "Hot Rod" Washington will DJ the event.

Anchoring the Livestream Celebration, the Negaunee Music Institute at the Chicago Symphony Orchestra is facilitating performances of three songs written as part of its Notes for Peace project. Produced in partnership with parent survivor group Purpose Over Pain, Notes for Peace has collaborated with more than fifty parents who have each written original songs in tribute to loved ones lost to gun violence. Performances during the livestream will feature singers Keanon Kyles, Megan McNeal and Sarah Ponder, as well as Andres "Bam" Colon and Evangelist Harriett Holmes, with instrumentals by members of the Civic Orchestra of Chicago. To learn more, visit notesforpeace.org.

"We are so grateful for this opportunity to showcase some of the inspiring music parents have written to honor their loved ones lost to gun violence," says Jonathan McCormick, Director of the Negaunee Music Institute. "In their songs we hear messages of love, hope and courage – their words are an anthem for us all as we work toward a more peaceful Chicago."

"Music has the power to convey meaning that words can't always hold." said Mary Stonor Saunders, Executive Director of Strides for Peace. "To end gun violence, we must remember that behind every number, every statistic, there are real people who were loved and dreams that were shattered. I can't think of anything that humanizes this more than Notes for Peace and we are beyond grateful for their partnership."

The event will also showcase an emerging musician and mentee of Guitars Over Guns' Haven Studio, C.A.M. (Creative Artistic Mind) who will perform his original composition "Loud Silence" about finding strength in challenging times. Led by critically acclaimed artist Andre "Add-2" Daniels, Haven Studio mentees 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 Strides for Peace: Founded in 2014, Strides for Peace is dedicated to increasing collective impact of nonprofits working to end gun violence and create a stronger Chicago. To that end, we work to empower existing community organizations, promote collaboration and elevate solution-driven dialogue of those on the front lines of ending gun violence. We believe all of Chicagoland has a stake in ending gun violence and that by working together, we change more than the narrative of our city — we save lives.

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 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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