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**Strides for Peace Announces 8th Annual Race Against Gun Violence
To Bring Chicago Together and Support Community Organizations
Serving on the Frontlines of Three Pandemics**

CHICAGO (February 1, 2021) -- In the midst of uncertainty and hardship brought on by the pandemic and a city struggling with escalating gun violence, Strides For Peace announces the launch of its 8th Annual Race Against Gun Violence (RAGV) to support more than 50 community organizations across Chicago and provide an opportunity for people who want to help to get involved.

As Mary Stonor Saunders, Strides for Peace Executive Director states, "Community organizations have stepped up and worked tirelessly at the intersection of three pandemics -- COVID-19, racial inequity and gun violence! They have literally saved lives. They need our support more than ever, and more than even people throughout Chicago want to help make our city better."

At the heart of RAGV is the belief that we all have a stake in ending gun violence, and that everyone can play a part. That is why RAGV convenes a broad range of individuals and stakeholders including nonprofit organizations, the business community, and Civic Partners including the Mayor's Office, Senator Dick Durbin, the Wu Tang Foundation, the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce, the UChicago Crime Lab, and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's Negaunee Music Institute to name a few.

Following a year in which Chicago was devastated by a 55-percent increase in gun violence, the 2021 RAGV offers multiple ways for people to get involved and learn about and connect to community organizations saving and changing lives throughout Chicago. 100% of fundraising proceeds from the race benefit nonprofit organizations working to end gun violence in Chicago.

After moving the race to virtual last year, RAGV returns to Grant Park and the lakefront where 2,500 runners and walkers are expected to participate. A virtual option will still be available to those who are unable to attend and continue to provide an opportunity to people across the country to be part of building peace.

"People are eager to come together and connect to a common cause, across a diverse range of lived experiences," Stonor Saunders stated. "Our beautiful location and USATF-certified course are a real draw, but the biggest driver is that in this time of isolation, people crave community, and want to be part of something bigger than themselves."

As Chicago's largest athletic event devoted to ending gun violence, RAGV offers USATF-certified 8k and 5k races along the lakefront, a 2-mile walk, and a Tots For Peace Sprint. RAGV continues to grow, drawing support from a range of communities, professions, neighborhoods and ages. In 2020, nearly 2,000 runners and walkers from 362 different zip codes and 30 states supported the more than 50 participating nonprofits by raising more than \$150,000.

But more than a single event, RAGV is a dynamic platform for fostering collaboration among, and building capacity within, nonprofits committed to changing and saving lives. Last year's virtual race served as a launch pad for the [Choose Hope](#) and [Why I Run](#) film series, which opened new paths for people to connect to communities despite the pandemic, by transporting viewers to the frontlines of the communities facing the greatest challenges.

Early registration is open now and in June we will launch our Choose Hope Community Campaign in honor of National Gun Violence Awareness Month and Wear Orange Day to increase awareness not only of our problems, but the incredible people and organizations working to solve them.

To register for the race and for more detailed information, go to Stridesforpeace.org

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About Strides for Peace

Founded in 2014, Strides for Peace is a registered 501(3)(c) that envisions a Chicago where all can thrive and live free of the fear of gun violence. Our mission is to increase the collective impact of community organizations working to end gun violence, save lives and build a stronger Chicago.

Connect. Commit. Contribute. Change. Be part of building peace.