

# The March on Washington For Mentors and No Violence

*Health, History, and Hope*



Violence reigns as a troubling health epidemic across the nation in our schools, communities, and homes, often a reaction to a minor conflict and certainly far too often without rationalization. Perhaps the most horrific is the use of senseless gun violence. In the United States, we lose an average of more than 9 children and youths ages 5 to 18 to homicide or suicide per day — a total of 3,000 children each year. According to the National Survey of Children Exposed to Violence (NatSCEV), an estimated 46 million of the 76 million children currently residing in the United States are exposed to violence, crime, and abuse each year.

Violence is recognized as a public health problem, but just 30 years ago the words “violence” and “health” were rarely used in the same sentence. A report from the Surgeon General of the United States: *Healthy People: The Surgeon General’s report on health promotion and disease prevention* identifies violence as one of the 15 priority areas for the nation. The report states that violence can be prevented and should not be ignored in the effort to improve the nation’s health. Public health is placing greater emphasis on disseminating and implementing effective violence-prevention programs and policies.

On May 3, 2013, Boris D. Lushniak, United States Deputy Surgeon General, and Helena O. Mishroe, Associate Director for Minority Health Affairs in the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) were among the distinguished guests to join Kiamsha and the National Capital Region CARES in writing new history as over 500 mentors, mentees, and supporters converge in a march on the National Mall in Washington, DC to advocate for health, honor history, and uplift hope as steps to reduce violence and recruit mentors. The efforts were a part of the PEN OR PENCIL™ Writing A New History Initiative and support of the Let’s Move Outside Campaign of the National Park Service.

PEN OR PENCIL™ offers an extensive menu of structured activities with options to each site to assess environmental and risk profile and the target population. Each youth centered developmental activity is aligned with national core education standards, measurable outcomes, and performance objectives as outlined by support from the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Implementation of POP occurs during five thematic cycles within a school or calendar year. Training and support includes on-site mentor orientation, an annual summer national mentee/mentor and site leader summit, and access to ongoing web-based media and print tools/exercises which incorporate advocacy/teaching roles for mentors and generous opportunities for parental engagement.

POP™ integrates criminal justice policy/intervention strategies and translates resilience, self-determination, and lessons learned from little and well-known persons which span the period from civil war to civil rights, to include the Underground Railroad history as caveats to ethnic identity and transformational intervention.





## To Serve This Present Age Outside

Under the direction of Barbara Dunn, Director of Kiamsha Youth Empowerment Organization, and Roxanna Bilal, Circle Leader of the National Capital Area CARES Mentoring Movement, the March on Washington for Mentors and No Violence was a tremendous success. The high visibility event demonstrated an opportunity for parents to participate with their children and for an opportunity to call attention to the need for mentors, to advocate less violence, and to promote **Let's Move Outside**.

Regular exercise is proven to improve children's physical and mental health. Outdoor activities can help kids and adults maintain a healthy weight, boost immunity and bone health and lower stress. **Let's Move Outside**, administered by the Department of Interior, was created to get kids and families to take advantage of America's great outdoors, an activity we will do as we honor historic sacrifices.

The March on Washington for Mentors and No Violence brought together over 600 mentors and mentees to remember the strategic bravery, powerful examples of peer recruitment and engagement, and the student/adult-supported activism which changed the city of Birmingham, Alabama and the country.

Inspiring collaboration between the U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Department of Interior, we continue to support possibilities of our youth in solving today's challenges and injustices.

Visit [www.penorpencilmovement.org](http://www.penorpencilmovement.org)

One of the most compelling chapters of American history is told through the parks and monuments in the National Park Service.

Each national park and monument tells a part of the story, and the National Alliance of Faith and Justice (NAFJ) is pleased to become an NPS key partner in bringing the frequently told and less told stories of African Americans to and through the voice of youth.

