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FROM THE OFFICE OF STATE REPRESENTATIVE LA SHAWN K. FORD

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Rep. La Shawn K. Ford Creates Violence Prevention Task Force to Organize and Train Advocates, Provide Alternatives to Crime

CHICAGO – State Rep. La Shawn K. Ford (D-Chicago) announced today that he has formed a Violence Prevention Task Force to work with existing violence prevention agencies, train new advocates, and organize recreational, social and educational initiatives to provide safe havens from violence.

The mission of the task force is:

- To increase awareness of resources, jobs, and opportunities to prevent violence in our communities;
- To assist other violence prevention groups, churches, mosques, shrines, temples, lodges, community groups, block clubs, etc., in providing safe havens for children, youth/young adults, and seniors; and
- To create, develop, and implement recreational, social, and educational initiatives for at-risk youth

In addition to coordinating anti-violence efforts and organizing events, the Violence Prevention Task Force will be training all interested residents to become community organizers, field organizers, neighborhood team leaders, data coordinators, and event coordinators. This training will help sustain a legacy of positive action that will allow anti-violence efforts to reach even more residents.

“We have a lot of great social service agencies in the area working on a variety of issues, including violence prevention, and by creating a task force to organize all advocates, we can ensure that our efforts are as efficient as they can be during times of scarce resources,” Ford said. “I look forward to working with the task force, and we have some fun and exciting programs planned.”

Jim Allen, who was selected by Rep. Ford to Chair the Violence Prevention Task Force, brings a wealth of community development experience, including sports coaching, that he will use to help build programs that are engaging for the community. Allen and the task force will be working with the Chicago Park District, Chicago Public Schools, YMCA, YWCA, Boys and Girls Clubs of Chicago, among others, to provide top-quality sports and violence prevention programs for children, youth, and adults. An Adult Football League for ages 21 and up is also in the process of being formed. The League will run from September to December, and will be hosted at various public parks.

“I'm excited to be named Chairman of State Representative La Shawn K. Ford's Violence Prevention Task Force,” said Jim Allen. “The task force is designed to assist in providing jobs, resources, and opportunities for at-risk youth and young adults. We will also create, develop, and implement programs centered around recreational, social, and educational events and initiatives. Our focus is to prevent crimes committed by at-risk youth by providing them with alternatives, resources and mentoring. We look forward to working with community groups, social groups, religious leaders, business leaders, sororities, fraternities, and law enforcement at all levels.

“The Violence Prevention Task Force is extremely needed, mainly because it gives various organizations, non-profit and for profit, a platform to network with government,” Allen continued. “It also gives the average citizen an opportunity to participate in creating, developing, and implementing strategies of peace in various neighborhoods and communities. I want to thank State Representative La Shawn K. Ford for this great opportunity. I look forward to exercising my time, energy, and resources into this noble and much needed task force.”

For more information about the Violence Prevention Task Force or to inquire about upcoming programs or training, contact Rep. Ford's constituent service office at 773-378-5902 or e-mail violenceprevention@lashawnford.com.

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