

# Brighter Futures

**MYFDA Meeting Summary • February 19, 2008**

C/o Community Advocates, 4906 W. Fond du Lac Ave., Milwaukee WI 53216  
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## Police Chief Ed Flynn sees role for agencies in crime fight

*Makes visit to Brighter Futures Meeting in February*

When Milwaukee's new police chief, Ed Flynn, visited the Brighter Futures meeting on February 19, he was only in his 5<sup>th</sup> week on the job.

Arriving here from Springfield MA, the 59-year-old chief brings varied experience in law enforcement and a wide national reputation. He took off his coat, addressing the more than 80 community activists in the audience in his shirtsleeves exhibiting a "get down to business" attitude.

He praised the groups in the room for their efforts, which he said were vital if the city's crime rate is to be reduced and if crime prevention activities are to be successful. "Thank you all," he said.

Chief Flynn said his hope is to have police more involved in "preventing crime," instead of being "crime responders."

In his brief time in Milwaukee, he said he feels "good" about the prospects of success, largely because he sees developing good relations with police officers and that he is encouraged by the large turnouts at community meetings. "The ingredients are there: I think we can have a positive effect upon Milwaukee," he said.



**Norma Madison of Milwaukee Urban League poses a question to the chief.**

His plan is to focus upon the "hot spots" where there is a concentration of problems. One of his key goals is to strengthen the gathering of data so that such troubled areas can be identified quickly.

"There's a subset of kids about whom we must focus prevention," he said. "There's no question out there that it's difficult to be 'good kid.'"

"You can't help but be struck by the tremendous amount of victimization among young people," Flynn said. Of the 107 homicides, 80% of victims had prior police records. There have been seven homicides already in 2008 and all six of the suspects are under age of 20, Flynn noted. People don't start with homicide, but they start in crime at age five, he said.

"It's not front page news," except when a corporate executive gets murders.

One of the challenges for the police is "to drill ourselves to work in the community." Flynn said that "learning to read people takes time" so that it's possible "to tell the good kids from bad kids." He noted that the department is hiring lots of young officers who will need some time to achieve this ability to know the community.

The primetime for crime is 4 to 8 p.m., Flynn said. He noted the myth is that most crime happens later, but it doesn't, showing that curfews are "not a big deal" in fighting crime.

He said he was pleased to work with the Brighter Futures agencies, since the groups are working on parent education and parent training. It's a way to begin to "maybe break that cycle" of poverty that helps create crime, he added.



*(Continued on Page 2)*

# Chief Flynn urges connection with officers and community

*(Continued from Page 1)*

Flynn said he will seek to put more direction into the hands of the district commanders and he urged the Brighter Futures participants to reach out to get to know the commanders.

In addition, he said, he hopes to encourage all police officers to get more involved with community people, and he urged agencies also to develop strategies that could bring more rank-and-file officers into positive community relationships. "Look for opportunities for officers to find some good experiences in working with you," he added.

"This is a job that affects the officers," he said. "Officers spend most of the time saying 'no' or 'stop that,'" largely because officers rarely get to know citizens except in an adversarial relationship.

Working with the community, the police can find a way to make neighborhoods safe, he said. Also, the department will reintroduce the use of bicycles so as to get the officers closer to the people, he added.

Flynn continued: "Every day assumptions are made about

[the police officer's] motives." "We all need reinforcement."

Flynn said his mantra is three-fold: Police activity must be:

- community-based
- data-driven
- prevention-oriented . . .

In discussion, Norma Madison, of the Urban League, suggested that there is value in working the perpetrator's family, particularly the children of that family. The chief agreed that idea had merit.

Greg Lewis asked how they were going to build trust between the police and the community.

Flynn replied: "We need to have opportunities to have police talk with the communities . . . We tend to get defined by our worst behav-

iors. . . . The challenge is to develop as many relationships in the communities. . . . Those meetings can help."



**Rapt attention was given to Chief Flynn by the overflow crowd at the Northside YMCA for the February Brighter Futures meeting.**

## Safe and Sound program aims at reducing crime

Barb Notestein, executive director of the "Safe and Sound" program, said the program is running 34 safe places in 2008. The program was created in 1988 as a crime prevention strategy and running "after school safe places" is just part of it.

The overall goal of the program is to bring together all of the resources to reduce crime, she said. The three strategies of the program are 1) to operate after school "safe places" programs; 2) to run the Community Partners program, and 3) to work with the Police.

Joseph Kubisiak, program manager for Community Partners, explained that the program works with youth serving institutions and law enforcement. The program involves doing lots of door-to-door work in neighborhoods to talk to residents to give them strategies to resolve their issues. The agency is seeking to identify programs in the community that can be utilized as resources for the neighborhood.

**Barb Notestein and Joseph Kubisiak outlined the Safe and Sound programs**



He said, "We're talking about 'safe places' and we work with the agencies to work with people in the community and to build a youth group in each of the 34 safe places. We really try to do unique strategies."

Recruitment strategies are aimed at recruiting 14 to 17 year olds that are difficult to bring into the programs, he said, and he is asking the youth to assist in building tactics that will bring the youth into the group. Among the strategies are holding block parties to involve residents, he said.

The program also addresses "quality of life" issues, which often are difficult for police to handle.

## Youth Survey finds 14% of youth 'violent'; Strategies being sought to address the issue

As a result of the Brighter Futures Survey, Jan Wilberg told the February Brighter Futures meeting that there may be greater focus on working with the small percentage of youth who are considered violent.

There were 14% of the kids defined as violent in the survey, she said, and "we're trying to find a way to work with violent youth." While the truly violent youth represent a smaller portion of overall youth they have an impact on others and threaten the community, she said. To address these youth, there is need for different strategies, she said.

Wilberg said a hopeful sign was that the youth found to be violent were also engaged in some of the programs. "The kids were involved," she said.

Wilberg, the independent consultant who conducted the survey along with support from IMPACT, said the results of the survey show that "a new way of

thinking" is required to bring about positive change. The survey offers that hope to be able to drive the change, she added.

The Youth Survey was taken in October 2007, covering close to 500 youth, ages 12-17, who participate in programs at various Brighter Futures agencies. Since its release on Jan. 1, the report has been featured in newspaper stories and on radio reports. In addition, there have been presentations of its results before various groups.

There are discussions with the Public Policy Forum to consider expanding the discussion of this issue, she said.

The report is also beginning to identify gender differences, she said. "This is our third study, but this time we go it right, since we got to the kids we needed to reach," she said.

Emilio Lopez noted that the safety issue was an issue in the report, in

which it noted that only 20% of the youth felt safe at community centers; Lopez noted that the issue isn't with the centers themselves, but rather involves safety issues arising from the trip to and from the youth center.



**Mario Hall of the Northside YMCA welcomed Brighter Futures members to the Center.**

## Brighter Futures Notes

**TEEN PREGNANCY PREVENTION NETWORK.** The Milwaukee BF coalition's Teen Pregnancy Prevention Network regularly meets the second Thursday of each month at noon at Silver Spring Neighborhood Center, 5460 N. 64th St. For information, contact Racquel Bell, 449-4777.

**MCAPS SUMMARY.** Jan Buchler said the Milwaukee Child Abuse Prevention Services Coalition has met with Reggie Bicha, the new head of the Wisconsin Division of Children and Family Services, to discuss proposals for the new state department that will

go into effect next July. Also, the group's Teen Parent Task Force continues to meet to discuss strategies for teens who are parenting to improve their like prospects. The Teen Parent Task Force meets at 1:30 p.m. on the second Monday of each month with the MCAPS Public Policy meeting following at 3 p.m. The meetings are being held at United Way, 225 W. Vine St.

**February 2008 MYFDA Attendance**  
(Listed by Agency)

Tanya Torres	Abri Health Plan	Mary Hoerig	Milwaukee Police Dept
Janeen Boone	Agape Community Center	Norma Madison	Milwaukee Urban League
Kassandra Tarkington	/ AGAPE Community Center	Rita O'Gorman	Modjeska Youth Theatre Co.
Cyndi Odyia-Weis	/ Bethany	JoAnn Craft	Neighborhood House
Natalie Cooper	Boys & Girls Club	Odell C Chalmers	Neu-Life Community Resource Ctr
Jamar Wills	Boys and Girls Club-Reality Check	Jody Rhodes	Neu-Life Community Resource Ctr
Stephen Adams	c/o Riverworks	Daryl McNeil	New Concept Self Dev. Ctr.
David Riemer	Community Advocates	Jeffery K. Roman	New Concept Self Dev. Ctr.
Racquel Bell	Community Advocates	Jan Buchler	Parenting Network
Aricka Evans	Community Advocates	Trudy Ranallo	Parents Plus, Inc.
Ken Germanson,	/ Community Advocates	Linda Mayfield	Pearls for Teen Girls
Joe Volk	Community Advocates	Marge Kreuser	Perez-Pena, LTD
Christina Morris	Counseling Center of Milwaukee	Lisa Drouin	Planning Council
June Paul	Department of Health & Family Services	Joseph Kubisiak	Safe & Sound
Wendy Mc Carty	Dept. of Health & Family Services	Greg Lewis	St. Gabriel's COGIC
Mark O'Neil	Diverse & Resilient	Kathy Stresman	Stop It Now
Allen Schoessow	/ HACM	Jennifer Brumm	TABS - Boys and Girls Clubs
Peggy Neal	Heartlove Place	Andrea Libber	Task Force on Family Violence
Rachel Thomas	Housing Authority	Lisa Gumm	The Counseling Center
Karen Kolberg	IMPACT	Erin Ebert	The Parenting Network
Bob Waite	IMPACT	Laraine Patterson	United Health Care
Maria Kolda	IMPACT, Inc.	Shaunte James	Urban League
Clarence Rice	Innerworks	David Bowen	Urban Underground
Michael Bersch	Journey House	Jeannie E. Berry-Matos	/ Vincent Family Center
Reyna Gengler	La Causa	Tiffany Sartin	Vincent Family Center
Laura Wojciuk	Lad Lake Inc.	Andre Olton	Walker's Point Youth & Fam. Center
Yolanda Espino	Latino Community Center	Mary Pat O'Hara	Walkers Point Youth and Family Ctr.
Sandy Dotson	Managed Health Services	Anne Osterwind,	WCS
Patricia Martinez	MATC Childcare	Lt. Edward Benish	West Allis Police Department
Deborah Bryant	Milwaukee Adolescent Health	Sally Ladky	WI Abstinence Coalition
Lenora Shaw	Milwaukee Adolescent Health Program	Monica Lawrence	Wis Dept of Health and Human Serv.
Emilio Lopez	Milwaukee Christian Center	Mario Hall	YMCA - Northside
Julie Bock	Milwaukee LGBT	Tom Spellman	

Please send any corrections to [general@communityadvocates.net](mailto:general@communityadvocates.net)

**NOTE: All Brighter Futures funded agencies are expected to attend monthly MYFDA meetings, according to their contract.**