



**StreetSafe Bridgeport (SSB)** was established to motivate and empower young people directly affected by group/gang life by mediating their individual conflicts, supporting their personal growth, and connecting them to transformative opportunities. Our goal is to contribute to the reduction of violence primarily in Bridgeport by implementing interventions focused on prevention, interruption, and suppression within approximately five of the city's most active group/gang neighborhoods disproportionately affected by violence. We are committed to supporting proven-risk individuals (PRI's) to be safe and become productive citizens while they develop life, educational, and employment skills.

There are several issues plaguing our communities; poverty and gun violence are two of the most common issues affecting youth and families. There are many reasons why people suffer from poverty it could be generational or lack of access to financial, medical, and educational resources. In most cases, people turn to violence as a means of survival.

Since we are all aware that violence is a public health issue we need to work together to come up with solutions to these issues. Violence prevention workers are assets in the community. They can mediate conflicts, which lowers the crime rate, as well as the hospital and detention recidivism rates, which in turn saves taxpayers money and helps the economy. There are similar programs in Hartford and New Haven that are beneficial to the families and communities they serve as well. Our program like many of our community partners understands the issues that our youth and families face every day. Programs like StreetSafe Bridgeport, Family Reentry, CT VIP, Hartford Communities That Care, Project Longevity, and Programs that Support Mothers after the loss of their children are assets to the community. All of the above mention programs need to have sustained funding because they work.

The SSB Team has built trusting relationships within our respective communities. When families feel voiceless or feel that law enforcement or state officials do not hear them, they look to us to be a liaison. StreetSafe Bridgeport meets regularly with PT Partners. PT Partners is a group of mothers that live in the PT Barnum housing complex. The mothers have the desire to live in a safe clean environment where their children can play outside worry-free and thrive. Last week the mothers asked if we would be willing to go door to door to meet with some of the senior residents. We met with Ms. Liz a 71-year-old resident who does not feel safe in her home. The prior day, as she walked out of the bathroom her outside door was, sprayed with bullets that entered her home. Paralyzed with fear she slept on the floor that night. Ms. Liz reached out to the police but did not feel she was getting adequate help. She contacted PT Partners they reached out to StreetSafe Bridgeport. Due to the relationship between our E.D. and one of the lieutenants at the Bridgeport Police Department, we were able to put Ms. Liz directly in touch with Lieutenant Paul, who came out and made a report. The next day we took Ms. Liz to apply for senior housing. While there is a waitlist for senior housing, she was pleased that we cared enough to listen and assist her.

***Submitted by: Ebony Epps, Program Director***