

# **Lessons from an Evaluation of Baltimore's Safe Streets Program: A Community-Based Public Health Approach to Prevent Gun Violence**

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# Paving 'Safe Streets' - Ex-offenders are mentoring the young and mediating disputes to stop violence that may be a trigger-pull away

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By Stephen Kiehl  
Sun reporter  
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# Roll Out of Safe Streets Baltimore

- McElderry Park (East) - July 2007 – present
- Union Square (SW) – Nov. '07 – July '08.
- Ellwood Park (East) March 2008-June 2010
- Madison-Eastend\_Nov. 2008 – June 2010
- Cherry Hill (South) - Nov. 2008 - present
- Mondawmin (West Balt) April 2012 – June 2016
- Lower Park Heights (NW) – May 2013 - present

# Attitudinal questions on legitimacy of using guns to settle disputes.

<i>Do you think it's okay to shoot/ threaten someone with a gun when ...</i>	Yes	No	Maybe
I am at a club with my girl and this guy is dancing with her.			
I see a guy on the street who beat up my brother last week.			
I see a guy on the street who robbed me of \$50 and my Timberland boots			
I see a guy who has not paid me the \$100 he owes me.			
A guy disrespects me on the street in front of my friends. I think the guy is carrying a gun.			

# Risk factors among participants across neighborhoods

	McElderry Pk	Union Square	Oliver	signif.
Ever shot/shot at wave 1	50%	52%	62%	.369
wave 2	47%		40%	.452
Sibling shot/shot at wave 1	43%	48%	53%	.597
wave 2	56%		31%	.007
Ever arrested wave 1	72%	60%	71%	.322
wave 2	89%		58%	.002

# Estimates from multinomial logistic regression on strong support for using guns to resolve conflicts in survey wave 1.

	aOR	Signif.
Age	1.23	.107
Ever arrested	0.49	.239
Ever shot or shot at	2.96	.079
Sibling ever shot or shot at	1.33	.625
<b>Friends' support for gun violence</b>	<b>1.46</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>
<b>McElderry Park / Safe Streets</b>	<b>0.14</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>

# Estimates from multinomial logistic regression on strong support for using guns to resolve conflicts in survey wave 2.

	aOR	Signif.
Age	0.98	.469
Ever arrested	2.49	.209
Ever shot or shot at	2.62	.146
Sibling ever shot or shot at	2.59	.625
<b>Friends' support for gun violence</b>	<b>1.28</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>
<b>McElderry Park / Safe Streets</b>	<b>0.13</b>	<b>.008</b>

# Effects of Program on Youth Attitudes in Lower Park Heights

Milam et al., 2016 in press, J Urban Health

- Pre-test – Post-Test with Comparison Community (N=1329). Anonymous street surveys of youth ages 18-24. Attitudinal measures reliable and valid. (Milam et al., 2016)
- 43% of the attitudes in intervention community post-intervention improved over 1 year vs. 13% improvement in the control community. Intervention X time interaction associated with less support of using guns to resolve conflicts.



# Estimating Program Impact on Gun Violence

- Multiple interrupted time-series with non-intervention comparisons – monthly counts for each police post.
- Controlled for law enforcement practices directed at violent offenders, neighborhood redevelopment, month, and year.
- Variance adjusted for correlated data. No spatial autocorrelation.

# Estimates for intervention effects on homicides through May 2012

	% change	z	P> z
VCIS deployment	-23	-2.02	.043
Safe Streets – McElderry Park	-21	-2.24	.025
Safe Streets – Elwood Park	+13	1.27	.204
Safe Streets – Madison-East End	+203	5.41	<.001
Safe Streets – Cherry Hill	-34	-4.26	<.001

# Model estimates for effects on nonfatal shooting incidents through May 2012

	% change	z	P> z
VCIS deployment	-15	-1.61	.108
<b>Northwest Dist. offender call-in</b>	<b>-40</b>	<b>-3.23</b>	<b>.001</b>
Safe Streets – McElderry Park	+5	0.85	.398
<b>Safe Streets – Elwood Park</b>	<b>-34</b>	<b>-6.15</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>
<b>Safe Streets – Madison-East End</b>	<b>-41</b>	<b>-4.52</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>
Safe Streets – Cherry Hill	-9	-1.20	.231

# Connecting dots between program implementation and violence reduction

- Overall program-related reductions in gun violence.
- Positive spill-over effects in some adjacent posts
- Safe Streets staff effects similar to detectives in violence unit (later disbanded due to abuse).
- Homicide reductions connected to conflict mediations.

# **Evidence on the Effectiveness of Strategies to Reduce Homicides and Shootings in Baltimore**

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# Estimated Impact Through 2015

	Homicides % change	Shootings % change
Aggregate	-3%	-27%**
McElderry Park	-22%	-12%
Elwood Park (20 months)	+151%**	-29%
Cherry Hill	-44%*	-41%*
Mondawmin	+50%	-18%
Lower Park Heights	-44%	-28%

# Estimates of Safe Streets effects on gun violence (homicides + NFS)

	% change	P value
Average Safe Streets effect 2007-2014	-19%	.068
McElderry Park	-23%	.197
Elwood Park (18 months)	+6	.810
Cherry Hill	-45%	.007
Mondawmin	+18%	.559
Park Heights homicides	-38%	<.001
nonfatal shootings	0%	.914

# Other Relevant Findings

- Safe Streets had larger impact on shootings than any law enforcement intervention.
- East Baltimore Redevelopment: -33% homicides, -24% shootings.
- Focused deterrence gang/drug intervention – no effect on homicides, linked to more shootings.
- Surges in drug arrests followed by increased shootings. Detectives focused on illegal guns and offenders linked to fewer shootings.



# Concluding Thoughts

- Program can work if implemented well.
- But it should be strengthened. More robust effort to change norms with media, community allies.
- Need economic incentives – jobs, stipends.