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Gads Hill Center to Host Youth Peace Summit

South side youth, elected officials will work together to end violence in local neighborhoods

Chicago, IL – Gads Hill Center (GHC) will host the Peace Summit on Saturday April 7, 2018 from 10am to 6pm at its Pilsen location on 1919 W. Cullerton St. The Peace Summit will focus on increasing leadership skills for youth between the ages of 13 and 18 in key areas such as analytical thinking, conflict resolution, relationship building, and mental wellness to play a greater role in deterring violence in their communities

In the wake of the March for Our Lives rally, GHC's Peace Summit will continue to mobilize and elevate the voices of Chicago's young people. The Summit will convene 100 Latino and African American youth from across south and southwest Chicago where widespread community violence is a reality in their daily lives. Brighton Park, one of the communities targeted by the Summit, experienced a [300% spike](#) in shootings from 2013-2016. Chicago as a whole saw a [60% increase](#) in homicides from 2015-2016. Though Chicago witnessed a drop in total murders in 2017, it still ranked as the city with [the most homicides in the country](#).

Throughout the Summit, youth will analyze the root causes of violence and identify the short and long-term strategies to build stronger communities based on social justice. Youth will engage in a dialogue with elected officials, and other community leaders to discuss proposals, identify roles, and build accountability. Speakers include Cook County Commissioner and 4th Congressional District Candidate **Jesus "Chuy" Garcia** as a morning guest speaker, Illinois State Rep., **Theresa Mah** (D-2), Illinois State Rep. **Sonya Harper** (D-6) and Chicago Police Captain, **Philip Kwasinski**, as part of a midday panel and college counselor and Democratic candidate for State Rep. of the 1st District, **Aaron Ortiz**, will give the event's closing remarks.

"The perspective and voices of youth are critical to find solutions to social problems, including violence. However, those voices have been missing for too long in policy discussions. It is urgent to increase the skill level of youth to be subject and not objects of social change. Events like the Peace Summit equips Gads Hill Center's youth to increase their capacity and involvement in the national and local policy discourse," **said Maricela García, Chief Executive Officer, Gads Hill Center**

About Gads Hill Center

A social service organization established in 1898, Gads Hill Center (GHC) creates opportunities for children and their families to build a better life through education, access to resources, and community engagement. GHC currently works with more than 4,000 children and their families on Chicago's west and southwest sides by providing high-quality programs that include early childhood education, youth services, mental health services, and comprehensive family support. To learn more about Gads Hill Center, visit <http://www.GadsHillCenter.org/>.