

# Summer of Peace 2013™:

## “Moving Beyond Gun Violence” Mini Summit Session 1 with William C. Kellibrew IV and Jamira Burley (Sep 10)

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Philip: Hello, everyone, and welcome back to the Summer of Peace, a celebration of our common humanity. This is Philip Hellmich, the Director of Peace at The Shift Network, and it's a delight to be with you again.

Today, we're going to have two sessions looking at a very, very critical issue, not only in the United States but around the world, is how do we move beyond gun violence? And these first sessions will be particularly powerful and poignant because we'll be talking with two people who experienced the loss of family members due to gun violence.

Before I introduce them, I want to remind you to join us on Facebook and Twitter. Please go to Summer of Peace on Facebook. Like us and exchange your ideas, comments and so forth. And then also on Twitter, you can look for @PeaceSummit or just look up [twitter.com/PeaceSummit](https://twitter.com/PeaceSummit). And again, we invite you to engage in conversation.

Our guests today are two people who really powerfully moved me. I'm just now meeting William but I've read about him. I've watched his video. And Jamira Burley. Let me start with Jamira's bio.

Jamira is part of the Wisdom Council to our Summer of Peace and she was a winner of the Shift Innovation Award for Peace in 2012. Jamira is focused on youth violence prevention working with the Peace Alliance and the Student Peace Alliance. In 2005, at the age of 20, Jamira's brother, Andre, was gunned down in his sleep. Instead of crawling back into the hole that was once her life, Jamira became inspired to not take what happened to her brother lying down but rather get up and do something about it.

At a young age, she overcame many adversities including homelessness and living in a drug and violent affected community. Many times, people labeled Jamira as a victim, but after the death

of her brother, Jamira refused to allow anyone to think of her outside of the work that she's accomplished. With the murder of Andre, she discovered a purpose and allowed her to live for something bigger than herself. As a result, she created the Overbrook High School Panther Peace Core, an anti-violence program operated by students for students and now she's working with the city of Philadelphia. And we'll learn more about that work also.

William Kellibrew IV is a native Washingtonian and an international advocate for civil, human, women, children and victims' rights. He is a sought after motivational speaker throughout the world on issues related to trauma and recovery, trauma-informed care, poly-victimization, has extensive experience developing and directing civic engagement campaigns, work around public policy issues, and campus organizing.

And again, William himself has experienced the loss of family members -- his mother and a brother -- to gun violence. Also, these people have risen up and are really profound peace builders now. So, Jamira and William, thank you for being with us on the Summer of Peace.

Jamira: Thank you for having us.

William: Yeah, thank you for having me.

Philip: Yeah. It's a real honor. You may know my own background of working in West Africa. I've also have had loved ones killed during the war there so I can empathize a little bit but I haven't gone through the experience that you have with family members.

Jamira, let's start with you. Can you tell us a little bit about your experience with the loss of your brother and how that, well, was a loss for you and how that catapulted you into what you're doing today?

Jamira: I think my experience is very similar to what many young people around the US or around the world in so many cases are facing which is the accessibility to weapons that have the opportunity to really cost someone their life. In 2005, my brother Andre was gunned down in his sleep by a friend of his and I think that experience really woke me up in many ways that one, violence

wasn't just impactful or impactful to the people in my community and people that look like me but really it could hit really home and that made that all too real for me when my brother was murdered at the age of 20 which was about a month before his 21<sup>st</sup> birthday.

For a long time, I was very depressed and I was very unsure of what I as a young person can do being just 15. But I think that incident, even though tragic, inspired me to really think outside my own comfort zone and think outside what I as a young person can do and change the trajectory of not only my own personal life but also the lives of the people in my community, which is where the idea of the Panther Peace Core came from which is to allow young people and train them in the tools that they need to really eliminate violence in their community and to give young people strategies to solve their problems without resorting to the use of violence.

**[0:05:14]**

Philip: Powerful. Okay. First of all, I'm just really sorry what you've had to go through and also just thank you for the way you're stepping up. And William, let's hear a little bit about your experience with your mother and brother.

William: Thank you and, Jamira, my sentiment for you as well. I sort of started at the age of 10 with my experience with gun violence. One day, I woke up to my mother screaming outside of our home and that was July 2, 1984. When that day ended, I had witnessed in our living room my mother get shot and my brother, 12 years old, get shot and killed. And the killer, who was my mom's ex-boyfriend, took his own life that day.

And then the next day, on July 3, 1984, my grandfather was triggered over an argument over a parking space and he shot the next door neighbor in front of me, and so I witnessed two shootings in two days. Then my family took me to a fireworks party the next day. So that was my three-day experience and it was long lasting. And so, I would follow a pathway of despair and suicidal ideation as a teen and subsequent hospitalizations, probably nine to ten hospitalizations along with lots of therapy and family therapy to get through.

But I ended up going back to going to school and I think on campus, I began volunteering and that's where I sort of opened up

in my world. Bill Cosby came to our campus one day and they needed someone who had survived through unspeakable tragedy. So that was the day I opened up for the nation and then Doctor Cosby took me on Oprah and began to talk about my story internationally.

The work I've been doing since then has really opened up. So now, I work with SAMHSA National Center for Trauma-Informed Care which focuses on helping people understand the role that trauma plays in the lives of people every day and how can we put our knowledge into practice especially around coping strategies and help people think strategies and understanding triggers and understanding how our body works and our brain and practical use of just everyday things we can do to be peaceful, to avoid re-traumatizing anybody else. So that's a lot of my work today and I do a lot of work in the victim services field as well, and just spreading peace and showing that there's another way to violence. To avoiding violence I should say.

Philip: Right. William, thank you. I want to stay with this subject just a little bit more because it's so powerful. I mean what both of you went through could be quite overwhelming. Jamira, as you said, unfortunately there's a lot of people who are experiencing exposure to this type of violence. And I know for myself when I went in and out of Sierra Leone after the war, it was really hard to see the impact of the violence. So let's talk a little bit more just for the benefit of our listeners, Jamira, a little bit more about this process that you went through of this healing, that process of healing, from healing to action.

Jamira: Well, my process actually is still happening. I don't think you can fully ever really overcome trauma like that, just specifically from – even though that had happened with my brother, I mean I grew up in a very drug and violence affected environment where the death by violence really grew with me. So by the time my brother was even a victim of gun violence, I had already watched it all until my older brothers become repeat ex-offenders. So I think for me, I'm still somewhat healing and a lot of that has to do with the fact that there's a lack of mental health resources in specific minority communities.

The second part is how I turned action into -- I guess healing into action. I did that very quickly actually. I remember going to school

maybe a week after the murder of my brother and my principal and my counselor saw just a different side of me that they knew wasn't done because of natural causes. So they had pulled me aside and after talking with them for hours, my principal turned to me and was like, "You can either allow this to make you a victim or you can get up and do something about it." And so I used that as a way to kind of say that I can do something about it no matter how old I was, that I as a young person can really help to create solutions for people in my community.

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Since then, I've been able to do some amazing work, work with young people all over the country and all over the world and I'm just - I'm excited. I'm excited in the sense that I think ten years ago, five years ago, people were not talking about gun violence the way they are now. We're at a point where I think real solutions can be developed, and I'm hopeful in the sense that this can be the starting block for those solutions to be created.

Philip: Okay, excellent. We'll get to those solutions here in just a minute, Jamira. Excellent, okay. So it sounds like there was an important role that teachers and principals of the school play. Would you say they were kind of a mentor for you, a catalyst in that way?

Jamira: Yes, definitely.

Philip: Okay. Excellent. I think that's important to acknowledge because we've had other dialogues particularly with Chief Phil Lane and others talking about the importance of intergenerational collaboration and mentorship.

William, let's go back to you. It sounds like - I mean, that is so fortunate that Bill Cosby came to your campus. Tell us a little bit more about your journey, man. I just appreciate the fact that you're so transparent about what you've already shared but if you could just say a little bit more.

William: Yeah. I think it's important. I think that what you may have mentioned about recovery and healing is such an important piece because I think I always start off by saying that healing is possible and that recovery is possible and it really entails a lot of work. And

it's ongoing. It could be for the rest of your life you could still be rebuilding in many ways.

I think what a lot of people may not understand is that trauma is not just physical but is hugely emotional and psychological. I mean it's really inside of you. A lot of people who go to emergency rooms think that the individuals who have a gaping open wound, they have to be careful first. But when you have somebody who has suffered such an emotional and psychological stress and trauma, you can't see that.

When I went back to school in the fifth grade, my family strategy was really to forget about it, not to deal with it. So everybody put pictures away. I wasn't allowed to speak like two sentences about my mom. I was a mama's boy. I was ten years old. I followed her everywhere. And everybody buried her. The day she was buried, we just didn't talk about it anymore. And so can you imagine going back to school in the fifth grade and the teacher asking everyone to stand up and say their names and where you're from and also tell us about your summer. What do you think my answer would be?

So it was devastating to go back and be re-traumatized and re-traumatized even though teachers and the assistant principals ended up helping me, they also didn't have a lot of education around how do you approach someone and how do you focus on trauma and help people to get through that. So in 1984, that wasn't the piece.

But now, as I work through helping systems adopt a trauma-informed system of care which includes education, which includes teachers and educators, we are helping them understand how to avoid re-traumatizing individuals who have been traumatized. And for those individuals who have been re-traumatized, how do we seek to do no harm, and I think that's a very key piece to us moving forward and being able to heal and recover.

A little bit about recovery for me. My first ever therapist helped me because I was going to jump off of a bridge at 13 years old. I mean I had gotten to a point where I just didn't want to live anymore and I couldn't breathe, just this breath on earth because it was so different and difficult to breathe, and ended up with a therapist at 13 years old. My first ever who would ever listen to me this way.

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She hoped for me and she helped me bounce back from what happened just that year I needed some help and so she came to my rescue and my assistant principal came to my rescue and helped me. My grandmother took over when my mother died so she also became my strength. And so I had a really good team growing up, but it didn't stop me from going into drugs and alcohol, trying to self-soothe and just trying to deal with and manage my emotions which was very difficult to do.

Philip: Uh-huh. And what are some of the resources that you see available for people who have gone through a similar experience or people going through trauma? What are some of the resources that you've seen developed over the last five or ten years?

William: Well, I'm working with Trauma-Informed Care which is an emerging practice. I mean it was something that people were doing before but it wasn't really named. And now, SAMHSA, which is within the US Department of Health and Human Services and the Federal Government, they have an administration called the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration who - they have a National Center for Trauma-Informed Care. In fact, it's [samhsa.gov/nctic](http://samhsa.gov/nctic). So [samhsa.gov/nctic](http://samhsa.gov/nctic) talks about trauma-informed care.

In fact, the Federal Government has an application for organizations and systems, hospitals, what have you to apply for technical assistance and training. So it's free. I mean you could also cost share if there are issues with the payment but it's a free training that talks about trauma-informed care which is essentially really being trauma, trauma-sensitive and focusing on populations who've had at least some traumatic experience.

Philip: Okay, okay. Thank you, William. And then, Jamira, for yourself, what have you been seeing emerging in this area? Can you talk about resources or in the communities that you can note of? Jamira?

William: She might be on mute.

Philip: Yeah. All right. Jamira, are you on mute there? We may need to call --

Lindsay: It looks like we lost her.

William: I can finish with – go right ahead, Philip.

Philip: Yeah. I was just going to -- Lindsay, if you go ahead and text Jamira the numbers, that would be great. Let's see if we can get her back on the line. Okay, William. So go ahead and tell us a little bit more there about the resources.

William: Yeah. Just to frame I think trauma-informed care because a lot of people will say -- many people don't understand what trauma-informed care is and having a trauma-informed approach is. But trauma-informed care, it has four points to it if you take a look at the website.

Number one, it's about the prevalence of trauma that we say that 61% of men and 51% of women according to Kessler's study have had at least one lifetime traumatic experience in the general population. Given that number, that means more than half the people that you walk around or see in a mall or at a movie, at the movies, on a cruise, have had at least one lifetime traumatic experience. Given that, we avoid re-traumatizing the individual who's been traumatized and do no harm to the person who hasn't had any trauma or traumatic experience.

Number two is understanding the role that trauma plays in the lives of the people that we engage every day and serve in our system. Then number three is putting our knowledge into action.

And then of course number four about trauma-informed care is really starting with the heart and kind of working your way out when you engage people. For instance, if you start with your heart, one judge said in Indiana once at a conference, she stated, "If you always operate from your heart, you'll never be wrong." That there are certainly opportunities to make mistakes, but if you start with your heart, then you're showing your compassion and how much you care. And that's really what trauma-informed care is about. It's really operating from the heart whenever you are engaging someone, whether it be at your workplace or at home with your family or on a bus going home with the driver.

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Philip: Uh-huh. It's interesting, William. I was just thinking about coming from the heart and imagine it takes a while to even open the heart again.

William: Uh-huh. It really does take a while, yeah, to open the heart. And maybe recoveries – when we talk about recovery, resiliency, the resiliency is the ability to bounce back from adversity. But there's some research that's coming out of the University of Texas, Austin which is focusing on resiliency especially in the life of the staff person or the persons working in the field to better equip individuals who are working and working with trauma survivors. They have asked the question in their research, what are people bouncing back to? It's important to know what people are bouncing back to because when you've had trauma, when you've had a victimization happen, what was your life before? What are you bouncing back to?

It will never be the same, but do you have coping strategies? Do you have people around you who can support you? Do you have those things in place? And if you don't, then you may be bouncing back to a place where there's not much support, where you could be isolated, where you could be at a loss or deficit for hope and value.

Jamira: I think that's a really good point and I say that only because some of the young people I work with, a lot of times the trauma or the incident that they get treated for is only one of a few. And so a lot of times, they have previously experienced trauma multiple times and that doesn't get addressed properly, but also they go back and if you don't change the community, they always say young person or that person in general – I don't want to say a victim but that person goes back to, they're going to go back to an environment that doesn't support the progress that's been made and it's, in many cases, only going to revert back to the original situation.

William: Absolutely. I totally, totally agree with that. And in that study that Kessler did for 61% of men and 51% of women who have had at least one lifetime traumatic experience, most of them have had re-traumatizations. But when we talk about the prevalence and the mental health system, more than 90% of the individuals who actually access mental health in the US have had a traumatic event or a traumatic experience.

Eighty-five percent of the women who are going to prison have had some form of physical or some sort of childhood assault or abuse happen to them. There was a study in South Carolina that showed that 97% of homeless women actually had some form of some experience with trauma. So, the prevalence is there and it's about how can people bounce back from that if they're in an environment where it's not conducive to healing and recovery.

Philip: Okay, great. Well, Jamira, it's good to have you back on the phone. You two have had such experience and you're both so articulate about it and passionate. I mean this gives me hope. So let's get into some of the nitty gritty about how you're now really trying to move forward and help people move beyond this kind of violence. Jamira, you want to jump in here now that you're back on the line?

Jamira: Sure. Well, there's a multilayer of the work that I do in regards to moving beyond gun violence. For instance, I run the mayor -- well, the City of Philadelphia's Commission on Youth in Philadelphia, which is a body of 21 young people between the ages of 12 to 23 that advise the mayor and city council on issues that impact youth.

Being in Philadelphia, one of the most high crime rates in the country, one of our main focus is gun violence particularly around black males and boys because we find especially across the country that when you talk about violence and violence victims and perpetrators, 80% of the victims are normally black males and boys to teenagers of 16 to 24. And when you talk about perpetrators, those numbers are very similar.

And so, one of the things that we're trying to do is find ways to engage them, to uplift their voices, but also create situations in their community that makes their lives flourishing. So whether that's creating jobs, whether that's improving the education system, whether that's creating safe havens, whether that's providing mental health initiative, we recognize that there are multifaceted solutions that need to happen and that one solution doesn't solve it all.

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In addition to that, I'm working with the mayor on his initiative for the National Forum on Youth Violence which is through the

Department of Justice which looks at violence or gun violence specifically from prevention, intervention, reentry and enforcement and thinking of ways that we can be innovative in regards to those separate buckets but also how they all correlate with each other.

My goal personally is to not only uplift the voices of people who have experienced trauma but also find ways that we not only – I don't want to say reinforce the laws that are in place but also recognize that those laws may not be as equal and fair to everyone and try to provide services to the people that need them particularly young people of color.

So that's one thing that I'm doing. I don't want to take up too much time, but I recognize that a lot of this work has to be through empowering young people to create solutions in their communities because this is in 10 to 15 years, the adults are going to kind of age. So how can we now provide young people the tools and resources they need to kind of take ownership and take the baton and really leave with some of those solutions moving forward, whether that's around policy, whether that's around community solutions, whether that's around providing resources. I think there is a lot of ways to engage young people to be kind of the leaders in that.

Philip: Uh–huh. Jamira, it's so powerful to hear you talk because you're talking about really a comprehensive overview of looking at what are the root causes of gun violence and then what are systematic ways to approach it. Do you ever get overwhelmed by the work that needs to be done and the complexity of it?

Jamira: I do and I don't, and I do in the sense that it's a lot. I'm not one of those people that assume that it's going to be followed in the next year or two years, but I'm very hopeful that with enough people putting in the work and putting in the hours that we can really start to make some realistic and effective changes.

But I think for me, this is very personal. I mentioned early I grew up in a violent and drug-infected community. But to go further than that, I'm one of 16 children and I have 10 older brothers and five younger brother and sisters. And so when I think about the people who have the possibility of being victims of violence or being perpetrators of violence, in many of those cases, they have been my brothers and they were my brothers. And so how can I now

create avenues for other young people who don't have the exact same kind of adversities and how to create safe spaces where they're still like their voices and their issues are being represented in a way that is conducive to their thoughts and concerns?

Philip: And what's been your family's response to the work that you're doing?

Jamira: My family is – it definitely changed the way they view themselves and also ways that they feel like they can also contribute. A lot of my brothers who are ex-offenders have now went a step further and actually are talking to young people in the community about ways to avoid that kind of avenue but also ways to recover after it. And so I can only hope that they can continue to get involved and get engaged. So I'm excited about the future and I am very hopeful that we can really start to make some concrete solutions moving forward.

Philip: Okay. Excellent. And then William, you're going in pieces to this large complex – the complexity of gun violence. Tell us a little bit more about the work that you are doing now.

William: Well, I'm on a deep dive right now. I'm like far into the ocean on the issue of trauma because I realized that trauma, like many in our country are starting to move towards the direction, just focus, making sure we focus on the cause versus necessarily always the behavior and the symptoms of trauma. What I mean by that is that all behavior has meaning and when we stop with behavior and we judge behavior, we often miss on the meaning behind what is really happening.

So I've been focusing a lot on trauma at this point and through my work with the Department of Justice's office on victims of crime, and do my work at SAMHSA's National Center for Trauma-Informed Care. It has really given me an opportunity to focus on it. There are a few videos out that I'm actually a part of that are on the internet that focus on violence, that focus on trauma.

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I've also focused on youth empowerment as well because I realized that hope and empowerment is part of the recovery model, is part of moving people ahead in life towards healing. I actually do a lot

of work right now with Michael Mauldin with Mauldin Brand. Michael Mauldin is Jermaine Dupri's dad and we're focusing on leadership through our Next Generation Leaders program.

We are focusing on empowering young people around the country through our Scream Tour, and we've got Bow Wow who has been really good about helping us out and leading the effort, Mindless Behavior and Diggy Simmons. So we've got a real young cadre of artists including our social depth artists who are focusing on what tools does the next generation of leaders need in their hands to make things happen.

Now I remember - I watched my family get executed but I was also a kid leader. I mean I was a real leader in my community. I loved programs that worked with me and helped me propel to the next level, and that was spelling bee, being in the spelling bee or being into music or being in the school play or the school dance. It was always something that I was able to do. Including sports, I did a lot of sports.

So, I mean programs that helped me do that. So that's what we're doing now. We're talking about leadership, we go across the country and do the Teen Town Hall and have a discussion about how can you be a leader, what do you do if you're a leader, and also talk about violence and talk about how that's affecting you, your family, and how can you cope, how do you cope. I focus on a lot of coping strategies today and I visit hospitals, I visit forensic centers, I visit prisons, I visit juvenile justice centers, domestic violence shelters, schools, I visit every single human service setting so that I can engage youth and also the people that serve youth to make sure that they are trauma informed.

The last thing I'll say about this is that I realize also that focusing on trauma is about prevention. It's about what you do when someone has had trauma happen in their lives. They could be re-traumatized very easily sometimes. I talk about the three universal triggers, the things, the three universal traumatic reminders of things that might set people off. One of them is loss of control. The second one is a power differential and the third is lack of predictability.

With loss of control, you lose control when you have a traumatic incident happen. Like you, Jamira, when you lost your brother, you

couldn't control that. That was something that you couldn't control. So when down the line, if someone taking your control away, it could really be a traumatic reminder for you when you didn't have control in that situation. So it might set you off.

The power differential piece, people have power over another person, one person having power over another person. It could also trigger you. And if lack of predictability, you don't know what's going to happen in the next moment. It could also be a trigger for you. We focus on those triggers as ways to prevent further re-traumatization, and there's plenty of examples that I have that provide more of a context.

Philip: Excellent. Jamira, would you like to jump back in here? Jamira?

Jamira: I was just going to say I'm really impressed with the work that he's doing because it shows me just how important it is for people who have been victims of violence and have been traumatized how important for those voices and those people to get involved and engaged with creating solutions because one, they know what it feels like to go through that situation, but also how important it is to have these intergenerational conversations.

Too often we assume that elders know everything and the young people know nothing, when really it's about sharing a space where we all can contribute to the conversation and provide each of us with new knowledge and new opportunities to kind of grow. And so I think that has been missing largely from this conversation. If you look at the president on what has been done around gun violence or whatever, something to talk about, he pulled together a commission on gun violence and most of it consisted of police chiefs from around the country, many of whom have never experienced trauma, and older people who are so far removed from the young people who are creating incidents of violence.

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So I think we have to have more opportunities for our more seasoned folks and also our younger folks to sit down at the table and really start not just talking about solutions but really talking about what the problem really looks like and how important it is for these kinds of relationships to continue to grow.

Philip: Excellent. Go ahead, William.

William: If I may, Philip.

Philip: Yes, please.

William: Yes. Jamira, it's interesting you mentioned that. The President formed this commission or a task force to focus on gun violence, preventing gun violence in December following the Newtown shooting. I was a part of the dialogue and the convening of that task force at the White House. I can remember sitting in that room with Vice President Biden, and the conversation led to what was happening around policy in gun violence.

But I mentioned in that room, and I was one of the only ones that mentioned this, one of my colleagues actually pointed to me and said William's probably going to talk about trauma. And that was what I talked about at that table that we often miss what has happened in this gun violence discussion. We often miss talking about trauma and the impact that it's had on our community and we're also trying to find ways to do it but we have to focus on trauma as a cause.

And then, Jamira, you talked about this whole collaborative partnership between adults and youth and I think it's so important. That talks to a strength-based approach versus a deficit-based approach and one example of a strength-based approach is when we talk about strength, we focus on ability and when we talk about a deficit, we focus on presumed inability. Imagine meeting someone and focusing on the fact that they can do their best and then - or they can do their best and they can actually accomplish something versus looking at them and saying they probably can't do it. They've been a victim. They probably can't do this.

If your teachers have looked at you like that, Jamira, when you went to school and said, "Well, she's a victim of this and we're going to kind of leave her alone," and "She probably can't do anything right now," it will be a deficit-based approach. You're already at a deficit when you come into school because you don't have your brother. There was a deficit there. So how do we focus on the strength of our young people and empower them so that they move forward versus looking at what they can't do and looking at what they're not able to do.

And the last thing here is when you do experience trauma, you lose two things: your voice and choice. You lose voice and choice. And so you want to be a part of a system that promotes your voice and choice, not shut you down. You've already lost voice and choice, and for me, I remember going to school and not being able to talk about my mom at all. And so my peers, a lot of them did not know what happened to me. I sat there in that school for a long time with no one not ever knowing what happened to me. So my voice and choice had already been taken away when I was watching this incident and then all of a sudden, I go to school and I don't really have voice and choice either. It can lead to some very long-lasting effects that could be tragic. So voice and choice is so important in what we do.

Philip: Excellent, excellent. And Jamira, let's hear a little bit more about the nuts and bolts of how you're translating this in Philadelphia. It sounds like it's an intergenerational team there also that's working. Is that right?

Jamira: Yes, yes, that is correct. The mayor formed a coalition. So there are two initiatives that he and Michael Nutter is working on. One is the National Forum on Youth Violence which is through the DOJ, and then there is also his initiative through the United States Conference of Mayors called Cities United.

The National Forum on Youth Violence is a collaborative of all of us so you have everyone from the police chief to the head of human services for the city. You have the lead judge or the department head for Youth Core. And so it's a very comprehensive group looking at how violence can be prevented from prevention, intervention, re-entry and - enforcement, re-entry, prevention. Wow, I totally went blank. But looking at it from four buckets of opportunity and really start to think about ways that we can prevent gun violence and provide people the resources.

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We are looking at it from a mental health aspect. We are looking at it from providing resources. We are looking at it from how we know that people who commit crimes come back out of the system and don't have resources to be re-engaged with the society. So how can

we better prevent violence through that way, through that means without just locking them up and throwing away the key?

The second initiative is the Cities United which is the mayor's initiative and that is focusing on working with cities around the country who have similar issues around regarding black males and boys and how can we now be preventative and creating solutions versus being reactive. And so you have close to 50 cities who have signed on around the country, both small and large, everyone from Chicago to the mayor of New Orleans, Mayor Landrieu, to really taking the lead in creating some viable solutions and a table for mayors to kind of share ideas. Within those conversations, each city has its representations that are really helping to create solutions on the ground that can help support the mayor's initiative in public office.

Philip: Okay. What are some progress that you've seen? And William, I'll come – this question to you also. What were some tangible progress you've been seeing over the last few years?

Jamira: I think the two tangible acts of progress, one is that people are now talking about mental health. That wasn't happening before. And they're talking about it in a way that is representative of what's going on. So there are now conversations between people and the mental health guild and people in law enforcement and people in government. The fact that it happened prior to maybe Newtown and the shooting in Chicago, but now those conversations are happening, I don't think that they're happening in a way that is –

For instance, when the Newtown shooting happened, the first reaction that came about was that clearly something with mental health was involved with the shooter. But whenever we see violence that happens on the city of Chicago, that conversation about mental health normally never comes into contact until after an arrest or after a prosecution and then we find out through the process of him being incarcerated that there was an incident of mental health. And so I don't think that is happening enough.

The second part that I would say is our progress. It's a fact that young people are now being involved in the solution and not just sitting at the table and voicing concerns. We're now empowered to create solutions and help implement those solutions in our community. So whether that's creating youth councils, whether

that's creating task force, whether that's working on policy that is realistic to young people, what's happening in youth communities.

Those are the two biggest avenues that I think are happening around violence prevention. I've been doing this since my brother was murdered in 2005 and I think much has happened but not enough has happened because I think one death is too many.

Philip: Okay, all right. And then William, how about you? What's some progress that you've been seeing?

William: Well, I completely agree with Jamira. I think that the conversation for mental health has taken shape. The president just a couple of months held the White House Conference, a national conference on mental health which I was a part of and it really brought together the mental health community in our country. It brought us together to talk about the issue. What can we do in our own communities? What can we do in our own local and state governments to really make a difference in terms of bringing this issue to the forefront?

I think one of the issues is that a lot of Americans have had traumatic experience or have had the stress. A lot of people don't know how to actually address that or cope. I think that we're moving more towards prevention and coping with things, social and environmental interventions at the beginning when things happen, what do you do, so I think the conversation has really taken shape on mental health.

And then I think that training in technical assistance for police departments, for the criminal justice field is taking shape. I'm even the keynote speaker at a mental health and criminal justice conference that's happening in Virginia tomorrow actually. So the conversation is happening. For instance, what's happening down in diversion court and diversion program in Miami-Dade, Florida where they're trauma-informed at this point. Instead of releasing prisoners from jail to the streets -- oftentimes, they don't have clothes, they don't have support. And so a lot of support is going around, helping them not readmit back into jail or not readmit back into prison but really helping them along the pathway. They've even helped them with their social security, getting social security and other types of services.

[0:45:17]

I think that's so important because the man who killed my family, he had already been convicted of second degree murder for killing someone on the base at Quantico, Virginia, the marine base at Quantico, Virginia, and then he served 11 and a half years and then he got out and he met my mom. What resources did he have? What did he have to help him build his self-esteem and his self-confidence to come back to a community and be a part of it, be an asset to the community?

So I think that the Justice Department is looking at that and they have done well with their Justice Reinvestment Act and their work. They're looking at prison rape now with PREA, with a policy called PREA, Prison Rape Elimination Act. So if you go to prison, you get raped, then become a victim then you could have services. So they're looking at those things of how the system is re-traumatizing and then they let people out and then they have no resources. So those things I think are changing.

I also want to mention, Jamira, that my youngest brother was sentenced and convicted of 18 felony counts and serving a 97-year prison sentence today in a federal penitentiary, and I have my oldest brother who served 18 months in prison and back out. He's doing vey well. So the change, I can see the change happening on the ground as I speak. My brother went through three rehab programs as well as we have family support around that. So things are changing and I think it's moving in a great direction. But again, there needs to be more done.

One time I met with the U.S. Attorney General, Eric Holder, and he mentioned that less than 6% of black boys or African-American boys actually access services that will help them as victims. We have a long way to go but a lot of work is happening.

Philip: All right. Jamira?

Jamira: He said it all.

Philip: Again, I'm just really powerfully moved how you both are coming from difficult context and really rising up. I also wanted to ask if you've heard much about restorative justice because we have a series hosted by Molly Rowan Leach whose mother is in prison and because of that experience Molly has really become interested in

restorative justice. Has that been discussed in Philadelphia much, Jamira?

Jamira: Yes. And both the school system and the city system, we are talking about restorative justice, restorative method as a way and prevent violence in the future. So that has become an interesting conversation for many people who haven't or who aren't aware of it but I still think there's much progress in bringing people on board; but yes, that conversation is happening.

Philip: Okay, great. And just so you know, we've got lots of recordings of the Summer of Peace on Restorative Justice. And Molly Rowan Leach, we'd be happy to put you in touch. She's quite a champion for it. And William, are you seeing much with restorative justice also?

William: Oh, absolutely. In fact, I just went to a hospital for sex offenders. Oh, I should say a forensic hospital -- state hospital -- where I went to the sex offender unit which is called SORTS, Sex Offender Rehabilitation Treatment Services unit, where I spoke with individuals who had history of sexual abuse and many of them towards children. And then of course many of them have been also victims themselves as children. In fact, it was 100% of the men who were sitting with me has that happen.

But they are actually working with this whole restorative justice piece and taking different classes and understanding it. But it's so interesting. I was actually sexually abused myself as a child at six years old and so imagine sitting in a room with all six of these men who have had sexual abuse as well but they've also committed sort of what the public has thought the heinous crime of sexual abuse towards other children. I think that it's a double-edged sword here. Many people who have been perpetrators of the crime have also had crime perpetrated against them.

**[0:50:06]**

For instance, one man told me that his father used to make him watch scenes on television and also have relations with other children. When he grew up, he stopped watching television. He never watched television. The hospital actually was making him watch this training program on television and he decided that he didn't want to watch it and they sort of penalized him for not doing

it. But they didn't understand why he wasn't watching television because he never told them that this is happening to him as a child.

So, the situation actually did work out for him. They finally understood why he didn't want to watch the television and they stopped penalizing him for it and started to figure out other ways. But how many times that our system continues to re-traumatize individuals and not to say that their behavior is an excuse because there's no excuse for the behavior that they had. We are only talking about a reason. We're only talking about explanations so we can understand what's happening so we can work to prevent it. And that is really the key.

A lot of what's happening in our streets in terms of violence, that's the behavior. We're looking at behavior, but what is the meaning behind behavior? Why are people committing acts of violence? What is happening around that? A guy named Richard Mollica wrote this book, *Healing Invisible Wounds*, and he says behind every act of violence, there's humiliation.

So, the person who is pulling the trigger or stabbing another person or whatever they may be doing or verbally assaulting someone, where is humiliation coming from? And if there is something beyond the behavior and we stop and judge behavior and call kids ADHD and ADD and oppositional defiant or these kids will never get better, we have to start looking at the meaning behind behavior and why people are doing what they're doing so we could start to prevent things.

Philip: Okay, all right. And let me just ask you. We've got just a few more minutes here. At this point, what is personally motivating you in your work? So Jamira, let's start with you. What's personally driving you at this point? You've been in several years into it now.

William: Well, what's driving me at this point, every day I wake up with my passion in my hand. When I speak all across this country and different parts of the world, I know that I'm making a difference. I know that people want to hear how do you get through this, and with a lot of my trainings and a lot of my speeches or a lot of my interaction, one-to-ones with people, we come out of it – we come out of this very hopeful. Very hopeful, resilient and know that

healing is possible and recovery is possible and just to know that people can do this and that I've come from this place myself.

I think about it coming from a room where I watched my family get executed to being in the White House in 2011 named as – I was recognized as the White House Champion of Change working to end domestic violence and sexual assault. I couldn't believe I was sitting there with my grandmother who has helped me through this. But also to know that you can make it, that I had gotten to this place because people helped me out, I stand on their shoulders and I've never forgotten where I came from. I never forgot it.

And you know what? It's very hard to forget. You **[0:53:51]** **[Indiscernible]**, so I don't forget it every day and I don't take it for granted that I wake up and I know that I have to do this work. And it's healing as well as Jamira said earlier. There's some healing going on and every day I get up, it's been 29 years. But you know what? I'm still healing. I'll never be in the place where I won't have missed my mom or missed my brother or missed my family members.

Philip: Powerful. Powerful, William. And Jamira, how about yourself? Lindsay, do we still have Jamira on the line there?

Jamira: Yes, I'm sorry. What did you say now?

Philip: Jamira?

Jamira: Yeah, I'm sorry. What did you say?

Philip: Now that you've been in this work for a few years, what's really driving you and motivating you at this point?

Jamira: I think the biggest thing that is motivating me at this point is the fact that you sit down and you have conversations with young people, and you have conversations with people who are removed from what's going on and to then see them lead your conversation and go back to create solutions, to create action.

**[0:55:03]**

For instance, I met a young woman named Mary-Pat Hector who's 15, she's in Atlanta and she's the president of the youth chapter for

National Action Network which is one of the oldest civil rights organizations. And she was one of the youngest ones to speak at [0:55:18] [Indiscernible], but I've been working with her over the last year. You can see her growth and her passion for really changing the youth structure of her community that inspired me to recognize that there are young people who care about these issues. They are creating opportunities so every young people could get engaged. So how do we now elevate those voices that provide [0:55:38] [Indiscernible] for them to create change?

Philip: Okay, all right. Excellent.

William: Philip, I was going to say one more thing. I think that I know a time when I didn't have voice and choice, the opportunity to choose what I could do in life and have a voice about it. And now, today, that's what I have. I have the ultimate voice, I get ultimate choice and knowing that, it moves the needle for me.

Philip: Excellent, excellent. Very good. We're going to wrap up here in a second. William, how can people learn more about your work?

William: Well, lots of different ways. I think some people just go to Google and sort of see a lot of the breadth of the work, but specifically they can go to [williamkellibrew.com](http://williamkellibrew.com) or you can go to [wkfoundation.org](http://wkfoundation.org) which is the William Kellibrew Foundation. You should be able to find those things on Google just in case you don't have the right spelling.

But William Kellibrew Foundation, we focus on breaking the cycles of violence and poverty by focusing on trauma and trauma-informed care. And [williamkellibrew.com](http://williamkellibrew.com) is my own website but a lot of the work that I do is really out there. I'd love people to chime in. And then follow me on Twitter at @willkelli. And I'm on Instagram at willkelli too.

Philip: Okay, excellent. And Jamira, how about yourself?

Jamira: The ways to get involved and to learn more information, you can go to the Philadelphia Youth Commission website which is [www.phila.gov/youthcommission](http://www.phila.gov/youthcommission), or you can contact my office at 215-666-2159. Youth Commission is also on Twitter. You could follow us at @philayc, or you can get in contact with me and I can be reached on Twitter at @JamiraBurley.

Philip: Okay, excellent. All right. And any final words there from you, Jamira, for our listeners?

Jamira: Any what?

Philip: Any final words?

Jamira: Yes. One thing I will say is that you don't have to wait for someone to create a safe or a platform for you to voice your concerns and to get involved. Create your own space. Create your own opportunity to really engage with people who are doing the work and create your own solution. And it doesn't matter how old you are or how young you are. You can really start to get engaged with this work immediately because we need all hands on deck.

Philip: Okay, okay, on deck, excellent. William, how about yourself?

William: Boy, I get all that that Jamira just said. And also, find the person who cares about you. Link up with somebody who really cares about you. You could take that one person. I had that one person in my life and so find somebody who cares about you, who supports your work, who believes in you. And believe in yourself. Believe that you can do it, but be proactive. Find that person and make sure that you have a mentor and somebody who can guide you along and you can learn from and they can learn from you as well.

Philip: Okay, great. All right. Excellent. So, William and Jamira, again just thank you so much for both who you are and what you're expressing in the world today, and thank you for being with us here on the Summer of Peace.

William: All right, thank you.

Jamira: That was fun. Thank you for having us.

Philip: All right, my friends. In an hour from now, we're going to have the second session of Moving Beyond Gun Violence. We're going to be going to Gainesville, Florida and talking with people from the River Phoenix Center for Peacebuilding. We'll have Dot Maver, Heart Phoenix and Jeffrey Weisberg. That is one hour from now and so look forward to you joining us there.

Again, thank you all for being with us, whether it's morning, afternoon, evening or night, and we'll talk with you again shortly. Thank you. Bye-bye.

**[1:00:05] End of Audio**

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