



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Malcolm Smith

Senators Malcolm A. Smith; Gustavo Rivera and Rev. Al Sharpton Joined Community and Civic Leaders for Don't Shoot N.y. March and Rally

MALCOLM A. SMITH February 28, 2011

| ISSUE: **GUN CONTROL**

(New York, NY)- New York State Senators Malcolm A. Smith (D- St. Albans); Gustavo Rivera (D- Bronx) and the Reverend Al Sharpton, joined community and civic leaders for a rally and march titled *Don't Shoot NY*. The rally was presented by Operation S.N.U.G., a statewide anti-violence initiative that works with local civic, religious and law enforcement officials to get illegal guns off the streets and to reduce killings and violence. Although they were unable to attend the march and rally, NYPD Commissioner Ray Kelly and Media Mogul Russell Simmons are avid supporters of Operation S.N.U.G.

The march began at the United Nations on First Avenue at 42nd Street in New York City. Participants marched from the United Nations Plaza to Times Square at Broadway and 42nd Street.

“It is our responsibility as elected officials to keep our constituents safe. For too long, the deadly specter of illegal guns has torn families apart. Our children are dying at the hands of gun violence, but through our commitment to S.N.U.G., we can put a stop to that and return our streets back to the people of New York. We cannot afford to lose another young person in our community to senseless gun violence,” said Senator Smith.

Senator Rivera said: “As the new ranking member of the Crime Victims, Crime and Corrections committee, I have been impressed by the work of Operation S.N.U.G. Today, we must stand together to fight for funding for the 10 existing programs that have proved to be successful and start new programs throughout the state in communities riddled with violence. That is why I have joined Sen. Smith and that is why I am working to bring S.N.U.G. to the Bronx which is the district I represent. Engaging residents, community organizations and law enforcement with S.N.U.G. has made a difference in New York and I believe it will have a tremendous impact in the Bronx.”

Operation SNUG was born out of gun violence in Senator Smith's community when, within a three-day span in May of 2008, the Far Rockaway Peninsula became a violent battleground with five men shot and two teenagers killed.

Following these shootings, an initial “summit” of elected officials was held, led by Senators Smith, Eric Adams, Bill Perkins, Congressman Charles Rangel, Assemblyman Darryl Towns, and Brooklyn District Attorney Charles Hynes. Operation SNUG stands for:

S: Street intervention and stopping the violence

- violence interrupters and outreach to high-risk youth
- support for and coordination with police and law enforcement
- clearly communicating community values against shootings and violence
- engaging schools and educators as part of the solution

N: National, state and local funding support

- funding for all alternatives
- legislation to help implement solutions
- public and private support for intervention and prevention as part of the response

U: Use of celebrities and centers

- development of a comprehensive public relations effort, including celebrity PSAs and materials
- reopening and revitalization of existing community centers, creation of new bunkers and community “safe haven” storefronts for youth

G: Gangs, guns, gainful employment

- real-world gang awareness and prevention initiatives
- new efforts to stop the spread of illegal guns, including new law enforcement efforts targeting “middlemen” and gun-running
- connections to employment and economic alternatives

There are 10 Operation SNUG programs across New York State: **Operation SNUG Albany**- University of Albany School of Social Welfare / Trinity Alliance; **Operation SNUG Buffalo**- Community Action Organization of Erie County; **Operation SNUG Brooklyn** - Man Up!; **Operation SNUG Harlem** - New York City Mission Society; **Operation SNUG Mt. Vernon** - Ujamaa Community Development Corp.; **Operation SNUG Niagara Falls**- People and Possibilities; **Operation SNUG Queens** - King of Kings Foundation; **Operation SNUG Rochester** : Pathways to Peace; **Operation SNUG Syracuse**- New Justice Services and **Operation SNUG Yonkers** - Yonkers YMCA.

Lance and Todd Feurtado, Co-Founders of the King of King Foundations said: “Society says that there’s no hope for our children. We know that the youth are the future! If there’s no hope, there’s no future!! Young people instead of proven them right, let’s prove them wrong!! ”

Lisa Good, Project Director of Operation SNUG Albany said: “It is imperative for our children that they should be free of violence. Public health is about keeping people safe and healthy. Shootings disrupt the physical/emotional safety and health in our neighborhoods. The public, mothers and fathers who reside in our neighborhoods expect this.”

Robin Holmes, Project Director of Operation SNUG Harlem said: Thousands of people will likely die this year as a result of gun violence, and many of them will be young people. Operation S.N.U.G. is vital to a new age of community safety in the 21st Century.”

A.T. Mitchell, Project Director of Operation SNUG Brooklyn said “Illegal guns are plaguing our communities. It is time for us as a people to step up and do our part to end senseless acts of gun violence immediately. ”

Darrell Perez, Project Director of Operation SNUG Mt. Vernon said: Gun Violence affects every race, color and creed. We must all work together as a collective unit to put an end to it.”

John Thompson, Project Director of Operation SNUG Yonkers said “Operation S.N.U.G. will provide the support that our local anti-violence programs need and will help us save lives.”

Every urban community in New York has fallen victim to the tale of children and guns. Two women that live in Smith’s district who lost their sons to senseless gun violence attended the march and rally as a way to pay homage to their sons.

Shanee Johnson, whose 18-year-old son was shot and killed after a party last summer, said: “I became involved with S.N.U.G. after my son was murdered. Programs like these are needed in our communities. Our lives depend on it.”

Donna Graves, whose 13-year-old son was killed by a stray bullet, said: “No mother should have to bury their child. No mother should have to endure the pain that I have had to endure. If Operation S.N.U.G. can touch just one life, that would be one less mother that had to bury their child.”

Operation S.N.U.G. is modeled after the highly successful Cease Fire Gun Violence Prevention Model currently used in Chicago. That program directs targeted outreach and prevention efforts to “high risk” communities, and works through existing and experienced community-based organizations. Through coordinated efforts between police, counselors, and community outreach specialists, this model has helped cut violence in Chicago, and has reduced the risk of “retaliation” murders, and helped students remain in schools and find jobs as they detach from gang life. Cease Fire will serve as a voluntary advisory to Operation SNUG-qualified programs.

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Malcolm A. Smith is the New York State Senate Immediate Past President Pro Tempore (2008-10). He currently serves as Secretary of the NYS Democratic Conference and ranking member on the Banking Committee.