



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michelle Hinchey

## Senator Michelle Hinchey Announces \$130,000 in State Funding for Gun Violence Prevention in Kingston

MICHELLE HINCHEY October 29, 2021

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**KINGSTON, NY** – State Senator Michelle Hinchey (SD-46) today convened representatives from the Kingston Boys & Girls Club, Samadhi Recovery Community Outreach Center, Ulster YouthBuild, and the Everette Hodge Community Center operated by the Family of Woodstock to announce \$130,000 in state funding secured by her office to expand gun violence prevention and youth programming in Kingston. Since the fall of 2019, there have been a total of six fatal shootings in the City of Kingston, two of which were youth members

of the Kingston Boys & Girls Club where Hinchey and organizational representatives gathered on Friday for the announcement. [A livestream video of the press conference can be found here.](#)

The state funding secured by Hinchey will fund a range of services for at-risk youth and community gun violence intervention and prevention initiatives.

- **\$50,000 for Samadhi Resource Recovery Community Outreach Center** will be used to bring the SNUG program to Kingston for the first time ever — a proven model of success that deploys outreach workers who live in high-risk communities, are known to local residents, and have been involved with the criminal justice system themselves, but have turned their lives around. These workers will respond to violent incidents to prevent retaliation and help to resolve conflicts peacefully before they escalate into further violence.
- **\$30,000 for the Kingston Boys & Girls Club** will be used to expand programming for at-risk youth, including extending late evening programs on Fridays and the introduction of weekend programming.
- **\$30,000 for the Everette Hodge Community Center, operated by Family of Woodstock,** to expand the organization’s Gun Violence Prevention Initiative and continue critical modes of community support through early childhood development.
- **\$20,000 for Ulster YouthBuild** to develop initiatives focused on gun violence education and elimination for out-of-school young people who live in neighborhoods where violence is most prevalent. The funding will also be used to support the organization’s effort to equip students with hands-on career training in the construction trades.

“Gun violence in Kingston is an urgent public health crisis that demands increased state support for community-led solutions that will keep our kids safe and bring about the

transformative change we desperately need,” **said Senator Michelle Hinchey.** “The epidemic of gun violence has disproportionately affected the youth in our community, and we must respond with an all-hands-on-deck approach to ensure that not another young life is lost. I am incredibly proud to have secured \$130,000 in state funding for four leading Kingston-based organizations that are on the ground every day fostering safe spaces for young people and delivering critical violence prevention programming. This state aid will allow these organizations to greatly expand their work and confront this crisis from entirely new angles, including bringing the SNUG program — a nationally-lauded model of success — to Kingston for the first time ever and extending the reach of other key youth-centered initiatives. Every child has a right to grow up safely, free from violence and fear. This state funding will save young lives and help create a future where that’s possible. I thank these incredible organizations for all that they do to make our Kingston community a safer, more supportive place for our kids.”

**CEO of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Ulster County Dan Whalen said,** “Gun Violence in our neighborhood in Kingston has weighed heavily on our members and has put them in harm's way. Our youth have been exposed to far too many instances of gun violence, including the loss of two of our young, bright, and loved members. This funding will play a vital role in keeping our youth around positive role models and pathways for success while working to keep them safe from potential traumatic experiences. We aim to focus on extending our hours and programs to provide a safe place for youth to go during the times of highest risk. These extended services will keep our members focused on positive pathways and, in turn, save lives. This funding is coming at a perfect time as it is needed now more than ever before. On behalf of the members of the Boys & Girls Club of Kingston, we want to thank Senator Hinchey and her whole team for stepping up for our community.”

**Debra Long, Director of Samadhi Center's Anti-Gun Violence Prevention program said,** "Since

evidence shows that treating gun violence as a disease opens up new and effective modes of treatment and intervention, this investment by New York State in community-based interventions, under the leadership of New York State Senator Michelle Hinchey, offers new hope of interrupting cycles of gun violence that lead to preventable injury and death, particularly among young people. Samadhi's work with individuals in recovery from or dealing with substance use illness puts us in an ideal position to reach out to at-risk individuals and to work to make our neighborhoods safer for everyone."

**Bonnie Landi, Executive Director of the Ulster YouthBuild program, said,** "Gun violence has surfaced as a very serious and dangerous occurrence in New York's community neighborhoods. We want to thank Senator Hinchey for taking a proactive approach to the issue by providing funding to the agencies in her district that have the training infrastructure in place, and access to the most vulnerable young people in the community. YouthBuild intends to use the funds provided to expand our training related to gun violence education and elimination efforts. All agencies need to collaborate and come together to work on the best approach for addressing the issue in our community."

**Michael Berg, Executive Director of the Family of Woodstock, said,** "I would like to thank Senator Hinchey for making funding from the Gun Violence Prevention Initiative to help continue and expand the programming provided by Family of Woodstock, Inc. at the Everette Hodge Center in Midtown Kingston. In addition to the afterschool programming, summer recreation program, and the food security program which provides food not only to the youth in the Hodge program, but many other programs as well as individuals in motels, the funding will help us to expand a weekly program we are providing to older youth teaching life skills and providing support to prevent substance use and violence."

The number of shooting deaths, gun-related injuries, and firearm suicides in the United

States increased by more than 30% in the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, [a recent study has found](#). According to researchers, 28 states saw a significant increase in the number of shootings during the first year of the pandemic, with New York experiencing a more than 100% increase in the rate of gun violence.

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