Mayor Ballard Announces Chairs of Your Life Matters Violence Prevention Task Force
IBE President Tanya Bell and ICRC Executive Director Jamal Smith Will Lead Efforts

INDIANAPOLIS – Mayor Greg Ballard today announced his appointment of Indiana Black Expo President Tanya Bell and Indiana Civil Rights Commission Executive Director Jamal Smith to co-chair the Your Life Matters Violence Prevention Task Force.

Last month, Mayor Ballard joined community leaders to announce plans to address the recent surge in violence, including a public awareness campaign which initially included targeted public service announcements on radio stations operated by Radio One Indianapolis, an extension of 211 efforts to guide parents and others to appropriate counseling and social services, stiffer penalties for gun crimes, and a list of several organizations that provide parenting and mentoring programs in the city.

Part of the plan called for the Mayor’s appointment of a bi-partisan task force to research and review targeted evidence-based models in Indianapolis and other cities that break down barriers to success and help African-American men achieve their professional, educational and personal goals. The task force will consist of faith-based leaders, school personnel, community and business leaders, philanthropists, elected officials and youth.

“Tanya and Jamal are well-respected in our community and have a passion for working with youth and families,” said Mayor Ballard. “They both are strong leaders who will engage a diverse group to review evidence-based programs and initiatives across the country and make recommendations on program models that will impact the quality of life for African-American males in Indianapolis.”

The Your Life Matters Task Force will initially:
- collect and review data to better understand the challenges facing African-American men in Indianapolis;
- consult with experts, including service providers, non-profit organizations, philanthropists and academics;
- observe models of education, youth development, employment and juvenile and criminal justice in Indianapolis and other cities with the purpose of understanding gaps in service, program needs and opportunities for expansion or adjustment to more directly target African-American males; and
- search for revenue streams to fund the expansion of existing or new evidence-based programs.

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The Your Life Matters Task Force will focus its review on targeted model programs that directly target African-American men between the ages of 10 – 24 that are:

- not currently enrolled in school; academically struggling and at risk for dropping out of school or not graduating;
- middle or high school students or adults whose reading skills are below grade level;
- on probation, parole, on alternative-to-placement program, a court involved young adult, recently discharged from Marion County Jail or inmate housed in Marion County jail;
- receiving mental health treatment; and
- at risk of placement into foster care; or unemployed.

The Your Life Matters Task Force will provide findings and recommendations to Mayor Ballard within 90 days of its initial meeting. Meeting times and additional task force members will be announced at a later date.

EDITOR’S NOTE:
More information about Tanya Bell is available here or you can contact her at 317-925-2702 or tbell@indianablackexpo.com

More Information about Jamal Smith is available here or you can contact him at (317) 232-2600 or jsmith@gov.in.gov

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