

September 6, 2016

Mayor Rahm Emanuel
City of Chicago
121 N. LaSalle Street
Chicago, Illinois 60602

Dear Mayor Emanuel,

As one of the most violent summers in Chicago's recent history comes to a close, I am writing to enlist your support for a group working to end violence in our community: Mothers Against Senseless Killings.

As of the date of this letter, there have been nearly 3,000 shooting victims in Chicago this year. Over Labor Day weekend, 13 people were killed as the city recorded yet another grim statistic: its 500th homicide in 2016. Amidst this bloodshed, however, Mothers Against Senseless Killings (MASK), led by its founder and president, Tamar Manasseh, has courageously made one of the city's most dangerous corners into a safe place for members of the Englewood community by organizing daily gatherings on the corner of 75th Street and South Stewart Avenue. With their bright pink shirts, MASK members work to unite parents and community members against violence, inviting children and families together to meet over hot dogs, games, and conversation with neighbors.

Following an ongoing dispute with a building manager whose property abuts the corner where MASK congregates, Ms. Manasseh recently met with the office of 6th Ward Alderman Roderick Sawyer, the Gresham Police District Commander, and the building manager. An agreement was reached in which MASK would finish this summer at its current location, but move to an empty lot across the street next summer, since MASK's gatherings correspond with Chicago Public School's summer break schedule.

During the meeting, MASK communicated that it would like to purchase the empty lot, which I understand is composed of two plots: one owned by the City of Chicago, and the other by Cook County. To ensure MASK is able to continue its efforts in the Englewood community next summer, I urge you to work with Cook County to assist MASK as it seeks to acquire these properties. I am also making a similar request to Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle regarding the adjacent county-owned plot.

I have met with Ms. Manasseh and believe we need organizations like MASK to continue their important work to stop the violence in Chicago. I appreciate your cooperation in helping ensure that MASK has the resources it needs to acquire the empty lot and put it to good use, as it continues its mission to make our city a more peaceful place to live for all of its residents.

Thank you for your timely attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Mark Kirk
United States Senator