



**For Immediate Release**

### **Amani Youth Council Works for Peace, Unity**

MILWAUKEE — “Our Council is all about bringing greater peace to our neighborhood,” said Amani Youth Council President Soleil Harvey. “Not only are we about peace, but we are also uniting youth from all neighborhoods and positively changing the way elders think about the new generation.”

More than 50 youth, residents and partners came together in Milwaukee’s Amani neighborhood on July 31 to support the Amani Youth Council in their inaugural event, a March Against Gun Violence. The March was proposed and planned by youth. Dominican Center, Amani United and Safe & Sound came together to assist them in bringing their vision to life. “One of the myths that I hope this march has dispelled, is the myth that young people in the Amani community are disengaged,” said Dominican Center Youth Organizer Amanda Clark. “They want to live, they want to grow up and they want the community to know that their (youth) lives matter.”

Participants gathered in masks and PPE at Moody Park. Youth handed out signs handmade the day before with phrases like “I want to grow up” and “Guns down MKE!” and everyone gathered to hear remarks from organizers and leaders, including State Rep. Kalan Haywood II.

The Amani Youth Council was inspired by the REAL-ationships and REAL-leadership groups held in Moody Park last year, which were a collaborative effort by COA Goldin Center, the Ziedler Center, Safe & Sound, Friends of Moody Park and Community Advocates. Programming allowed youth to engage with law enforcement, discuss and learn about issues they face, and build community amongst themselves. Nineteen youth from Amani graduated the 6-week program. “During these six weeks of programming, the Milwaukee County Sheriff’s Office and Milwaukee Police Department reported that there was a significant decrease in calls for service in the neighborhood,” said Clark.

Council President Harvey was among the 19 graduates. Her work, along with a personal connection to violence in her neighborhood, pushed her to lead the Council and plan the March. “I feel that everything happens for a reason, and I think because my brother has been shot, that pushed me even more to change my community because I have personal issues with violence,” said Harvey. “I love my neighborhood. I have lived in Amani almost my whole life, and this is where I am going to be. (The Council) is what I want to do, because it’s better to start early if you want to make a change.”

The Council, along with many community organizations, are also coming together for a “Remembering Tay” Moody Park beautification project to honor the life of Tay Jackson, a young community activist murdered after a 3 on 3 basketball tournament at the park, only one day after the REAL-ationship and REAL-leadership youth were honored for their accomplishments at COA’s Beyond the Bookbag event. Artists Working in Education have begun to outline murals on the pathways and Amani youth have been invited to submit drawings to be made into collages for the backboards on the basketball courts, which will receive a full makeover to complete the project.

If you would like more information about the Amani Youth Council, please contact Amani Youth Organizer Amanda Clark at (414) 444.9930 or [amanda@dominican-center.org](mailto:amanda@dominican-center.org).

#### **About the Dominican Center**

Dominican Center with Amani residents and partners to build a better future. Please contact Christina Chronister for additional information at (414) 444.9930 or by email at [christina@dominican-center.org](mailto:christina@dominican-center.org)

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