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Violence prevention forum aims to combat teen violence



by Johnny Archer

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LOUISVILLE, Ky. (WHAS11) – The outbreak of juveniles causing violence through parts of downtown Louisville has sparked much debate within the city about how to prevent matters like it from happening again.

A youth violence prevention forum was held at Central High School. It's the latest of several debates held in Louisville over the past week about violence among youth.

“You don’t bring them to you – you go to them. You go where they are. They’re uncomfortable where we are. They’re uncomfortable in buildings, even churches. They’re uncomfortable in places they don’t go,” Reverend Geoffrey Ellis of Asbury Chapel AME Church said.

Reverend Ellis says community members need to reach out to their youth.

“They’re on the corners. They’re in the Boys and Girls Club. So we have the streets,” he said.

But Reverend Ellis believes the core values come from inside the home.

“You keep doing the little things that we’re doing in the community to bring those parents to a recognition that I have to be responsible,” he added.

Saturday’s forum was another to figure out the solution in preventing situations like what happened at Waterfront Park. Folks there say it’s just not the parents responsible, but also the community in ensuring that the children of Louisville are safe.

“I think they need more role models in the community and people who look like themselves and might have come from the same situation that are successful,” forum attendee Whitney Myers said.

Myers is a 23-year-old from Louisville and is one of a handful of young adults who came to the forum.

Even though the crowd was small, it’s still a step toward finding a solution.

“This is the beginning. It’s going to take some little steps to get up the ladder. We certainly have to do what we’re doing,” Reverend Ellis said.