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## Teen's Murder Prompts Town Hall Meeting

Written by [Chandra R. Thomas](#) on Jul 15, 2010



Eighteen-year-old Katerius Moody was in the midst of belting out a verse of the song he'd penned with fellow Polo Boys singing group members, when bullets peppered the crowd during their performance three weeks ago at an East Point block party. The young crooner, a recent Mays High School graduate, was gunned down and four other teens were wounded before he could finish the lyrics to "We Go."

The June 26th tragedy, and others like it, have inspired an Atlanta community leader to call an emergency town hall meeting Monday, where she says "frontline" child services workers, local leaders and, more importantly, young people themselves, will get to suggest ways to curb youth violence in metro Atlanta. Atlanta Public Schools staffer Tanya Culbreth contends Moody's death and a recent outbreak of teen violence during the popular Screen On The Green event at Atlanta's Piedmont Park inspired her to coordinate the event. Culbreth says she wasn't satisfied with the outcome of a similar town hall meeting Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed called following the Piedmont Park incident.



"I applaud the mayor for calling an emergency meeting, but there wasn't enough representation there from young people and those of us who work directly with young people every day," contends Culbreth, the Home-School Parent Liaison for B.E.S.T. Academy, an all-male middle school in Northwest Atlanta. "We're the experts and more of our voices need to be heard. We just walked away (from the meeting) feeling like there needed to be more conversation."

The response has been overwhelming, she says, to the event, slated for 6-8 p.m. Monday at B.E.S.T. Fulton County District Attorney Paul Howard, community activist Brenda Muhammad and famed civil rights activist Al Sharpton's brother Kenneth Glasgow are among the scheduled participants. Organizers will also circulate surveys asking input from the audience on ways to alleviate the violence problem. The findings will be compiled into a comprehensive report that will be submitted to local policy makers.

Tanya Culbreth organized Monday's "Squash It" Emergency Town Hall Meeting.

"It's about time we hear from the kids who live in the communities affected by this violence every day," says event moderator Erik Underwood. "This is an opportunity for them to speak to the community, elected officials and policy makers. We need to stop talking about what we need to do and take the suggestions made and implement them. This is going to be great; there's going to be a lot of good to come from this."

Shooting victim Moody's best friend and bandmate Anthony Ray, 18, of Southwest Atlanta's Adamsville community, also plans to address the audience.

"For me it took losing my best friend to see that this violence cannot continue; we don't need anymore people hurt or killed like this," he says. "I want (young) people to realize that violence is not the way to go."

Culbreth says the event will emphasize solutions to youth violence; not the problems.

Adds Ray of his friend, who was scheduled to join the U.S. Marines with him next month. "It hurts me to lose him; we were so close," he says. "The outcome has been all positive though because him dying is bringing people together."

*The "Squash It" Emergency Town Hall Meeting is Monday July 19, 6-8 p.m. at B.E.S.T. Academy, 1890 Donald Lee Hollowell Pkwy., Atlanta, Ga. 30318.*

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## 2 Responses to Teen's Murder Prompts Town Hall Meeting

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Mischandra

July 15, 2010 | 8:56 pm

Not exactly sure meetings get to the heart of the solution. Seems that a meeting of the minds is necessary. However, the meetings purpose should be to 1) generate new fresh effective methods to attack the problem and 2) identify ways to get the young people most effected by the violence engaged and committed to the solution.

Ruby Thomas

July 21, 2010 | 10:11 pm

The Emergency Town Hall Meeting was an excellent start to addressing, and hopefully, combating an ever growing trend of callous and heinous violence among and by our youth with deadly consequences. To achieve this major objective, everyone in the village must step up and take time with and responsibility for our youth – starting with parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, mentors, churches, mosques, temples and community service providers – else there will not be a village of which to speak.

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