

Around the State, and Close to Home, Gun Violence Is Deadly

Almond

Bellevue Beloit Crandon

Cross Plains Edgerton Fitchburg

Fond du Lac Grand Chute Green Bay

Horicon Hudson Janesville Kenosha

La Crosse Luck Madison Marinette

Menomonie Milwaukee Mineral Point

Mount Pleasant Nelsonville Owen

Phillips Portage Racine

Redgranite Sturtevant Wausau

Wauwatosa West Allis

West Bend Wisconsin Rapids

These are just some of the communities in our state that have experienced firearm homicides in the past two years. It seems no matter where you live, gun violence is always nearby.

See inside to learn more about the work for statewide solutions – including criminal background checks on all gun sales in Wisconsin – and how you can get involved.

Anyone, Anywhere Can Help Save Lives

Gun violence is a statewide tragedy that knows no boundaries. All types of people – approximately 450 individuals each year – are killed in our state by gunshots that ring out in all types of places.

A drive-by shooting on a busy city street and a domestic violence homicide in a secluded farmhouse can have much in common. In far too many cases, the person doing the shooting should not have had easy access to a firearm in the first place. But they did.

That's because nearly half of all guns sold in Wisconsin change hands without a criminal background check being conducted.



Signs such as "No Background Check" or "Private Sales" are a common sight at gun shows. Some dealers are willing to sell to anyone, no questions asked.

Photo courtesy of Dr. Garen Wintemute, © University of California

Here's what you can do:

- 1)** Visit WaveEdFund.org and click the "guns and cash" photo to sign a postcard demanding that all gun sales include a background check. (If you have already signed a card, thank you! But don't stop yet; take steps 2 and 3!)
- 2)** Get your Wisconsin friends and family involved. Send them an email with a link to our website, asking them to sign a postcard. Or, if you prefer to collect signatures in person, let us know. We will send blank cards to you.
- 3)** Volunteer in other ways or make a donation through the website.

Felons, domestic abusers, minors and others prohibited by law from buying a gun will continue to get them from this vast unregulated market until state law is changed.

Background checks save lives, yet Wisconsin law allows individuals who don't have a federal firearms license to sell guns to anyone without conducting a check or even asking for ID.

WAVE has been working hard to close this deadly loophole. To help achieve this, we have been collecting postcards that support background checks on all gun sales. So far, we have thousands from all across the state, but we need more from many areas.

It's a travesty that many state legislators are choosing to ignore their constituents and side with the pro-gun lobby. They will continue to do so only if we let them - only if we remain silent.

Will you take a few minutes to help this campaign to save lives by signing a card or collecting cards in your neighborhood?

We will be hand-delivering the postcards to your legislators, so that they know that you care and that you expect them to prevent gun violence in Wisconsin.



Community leaders and violence prevention advocates spoke at each stop on the Journey.



A Journey for Justice Highlights WAVE's State Outreach Activities

A compelling display of 450 shirts, representing the victims of gun violence, was the centerpiece of A Journey for Justice, WAVE's 450-mile tour of Wisconsin in April. The Journey visited Appleton, Stevens Point, La Crosse, Madison and Milwaukee. Tremendous media coverage helped us raise awareness and engage the public in the work to prevent gun violence.



Reflections from “Up North” and the “Big City”

Two WAVE Board Members Share Local Experiences with Gun Violence

My View



Becky Lee - Marshfield

As a little girl growing up in central Wisconsin, I remember the excitement in the fall that surrounded deer hunting. It truly was, and is, a “family tradition.” My father, brother, grandfather, uncles, and male cousins all got together to go “out in the woods.” I desperately wanted to go also, to be a part of the group. But, alas, I was a girl in the 1970’s and was not allowed.

My father had very strict rules about his hunting rifles. In the wood cabinet with a glass door, unlocked, my sisters and I never thought twice about touching them. We respected my father, and we respected his guns!

As an adult, I began working with WAVE, and – after convincing my father that we were not out to get his guns – he and I had a very civil discussion about gun legislation we could both easily agree on: safety locks, background checks, waiting periods, etc. In fact, we agreed much more than we disagreed. Most of my other hunter relatives and friends also agree with the work I am doing with WAVE.

While hunting is the prominent use of guns in my community, there is also the acquaintance who attempted suicide with a handgun, surviving but paralyzed. There is the man (history of drug abuse and felony assaults) who shot his girlfriend in the head, then killed himself while their children slept upstairs.

Finally, there is the man who shot his 8 year old daughter in the head, killing her and then himself before a bitter divorce was finalized. I sat with my 3 year-old daughter just the other day – in the reading garden her school created in the victim’s memory – praying that she is always safe from gun violence, even here “up north.”

My View



Olusegun Sijuwade - Milwaukee

In my work as a non-violence consultant and domestic violence counselor, I hear firsthand accounts detailing the destruction wrought by violence. Although all forms of violence are horrible, gun violence occupies a special niche in the minds of many people. They tell me about witnessing loved ones arm themselves for control, personal gain, fear, or selfishness.

In just the last year, I have met and spoken with:

- a 16 year-old boy whose brother was shot while at a birthday party;
- a 9 year-old girl whose uncle was shot in a gunfire exchange he instigated in his backyard when his feelings were hurt;
- a 27 year-old man who shot his fiancée in the face in their home when she wanted to leave him;
- a 13 year-old girl whose family reunion was ended by her cousin’s gunfire during an argument in the park;
- a 42 year-old man who lost his nephew, who was playing with a loaded gun at a friend’s home.

The common denominator in these stories was easy access to a gun through family, friends, or secondhand purchases.

As a non-violence educator for 24 years, I have helped people process their reasons, options, and choices regarding handling their feelings. I am increasingly amazed at how access to a gun changes the mood of a person from emotional distress to violent recourse. I know that the wrong environment and circumstances can sabotage the most cherished and intimate human interactions.

I look forward to the day when reason, understanding, and patience become our first line of defense against gun violence. In the meantime, I support the work of WAVE because it exemplifies what needs to be done to create the proactive environment and hopeful circumstances that give people the chance to express their emotional hurts, fears, and other feelings with total regard and respect for human life.

WAVE Educational Fund, Inc., is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to reducing firearm deaths and injuries in Wisconsin through education, outreach and advocacy.

Staff and Board: Jeri Bonavia, Sandra Brown, Bill Christofferson, Gilbert Church, Verdell DeYarman, Aria Duax, Peter Earle, Pete Karas (President), Becky Lee, Mary Lerner (Vice-President), Kristina Paris, Heidi Rose, Olusegun Sijuwade (Secretary/Treasurer)



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► **No matter**
where **you live...**
gun violence is
always nearby.

WAVE Staffer and Board Member Honored at Annual Peace and Justice Conference

Olusegun Sijuwade, WAVE Educational Fund Secretary/Treasurer, and staff member Kristina Paris were among 15 area activists recognized for lifetime dedication and achievement at the 7th Annual National Conference of the Peace and Justice Studies Association on October 8.

Those honored at the conference welcoming session at Marquette University comprise a virtual “who’s who” list of especially impactful past and present peacemakers.

Congratulations, Olu and Kristina, for this richly deserved recognition.



“*Guns, Democracy, and the Insurrectionist Idea* recasts the gun debate by showing its importance to the future of democracy and the modern regulatory state... This book is an important first step in demonstrating how reasonable gun control is essential to the survival of democracy and ordered liberty.”

-- Saul Cornell, Ohio State University

Our cherished freedoms don’t come from guns, but rather from open debate and free elections. Yet recently, the NRA has been saying, “The guys with the guns make the rules,” and gun-toting protesters have been showing up at political events. Is democracy under attack?

Guns, Democracy, and the Insurrectionist Idea

A Provocative Book by Joshua Horwitz and Casey Anderson

Order through [www. freedomstatesalliance.org](http://www.freedomstatesalliance.org) – click the Amazon logo on the right – and a portion of the purchase will be donated to Freedom States Alliance, a coalition of state gun violence prevention groups (including WAVE).

WAVE supporters had an opportunity to meet Josh Horwitz, one of the co-authors and the executive director of the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence, at a benefit gathering in Milwaukee on October 22. Thank you, Josh!