



Mayoral Candidates Respond to The Kids Agenda

How will you, as Mayor, make sure every neighborhood has great rec centers, parks, libraries, safe places, and afterschool and summer programs?

HELEN GYM

Research shows that investing in neighborhoods experiencing disproportionate amounts of violence has a direct impact on gun violence reduction. My plan for investing in communities across Philadelphia includes the much-needed delivery of services and physical improvements to city facilities, particularly the 57 blocks where the majority of violent incidents occur.

My vision for creating safe havens for Philadelphians, particularly youth living in neighborhoods with high rates of violence includes the following:

- Fully fund our libraries and recreation centers.
- Fill all vacancies across the Free Library of Philadelphia and the Parks and Recreation Department.
- Ensure that recreation centers and libraries are open on all nights and weekends, especially during the summer—no excuses.
- Station clinical social workers, housing counselors, and job counselors at recreation centers in the zip codes most impacted by gun violence after hours to help youth and families with family case management, connections to therapeutic interventions, general emotional support, and access to resources.
- Provide universal and ongoing training on strategies for gun violence interruption, conflict resolution, de-escalation and trauma-informed care approaches to all adults stationed in recreation centers.

Finally, as important as increased and stable funding, my administration will work with the Civil Service Board and unions to modernize our hiring process to ensure we can appropriately meet the public's need for services.

CHERELLE PARKER

Every child deserves to have access to green spaces in their neighborhood. Additionally, recent studies have shown that properly designed and maintained outdoor green space has the potential to help reduce violent crime and gun violence, in addition to keeping residents healthier, and reduces the effects of urban heat islands. As Councilperson, I worked tirelessly to support our neighborhood assets, such as parks, recreation centers, and libraries. These assets serve as anchors for our neighborhoods, and their success determines the surrounding neighborhoods' success. This requires us to address the rise of violent crimes in our neighborhoods by having additional police out walking the block, getting to know the community.

Currently, the majority of the foot patrol officers are assigned to the highest crime areas. Once the City has filled their depleted ranks through hiring to fill vacancies on the force, the City should disperse beat officers across the City – to neighborhoods, rec centers, parks libraries, and commercial corridors beyond just the highest crime areas. This will allow for the officers to become known in these areas and to act in a proactive manner. Research has found that there were statistically significant reductions in reported violent crime in areas patrolled by beat officers, but the effect faded once the officers were removed from their targeted

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beats. And when the officers know the residents – know their names and where they live – there is a natural accountability on both ends, and the likelihood of excessive force is reduced. We know community policing works; we now must commit to it.

REBECCA RHYNHART

Families need more access to support – Social Workers, counselors, and doctors. The Rynhart Administration would ensure that our city's health centers have the hours, capacity and services necessary to meet the needs of the communities where they exist. In addition, we must ensure parents have access to excellent and affordable daycare and that working parents have access to and training for family-sustaining jobs.