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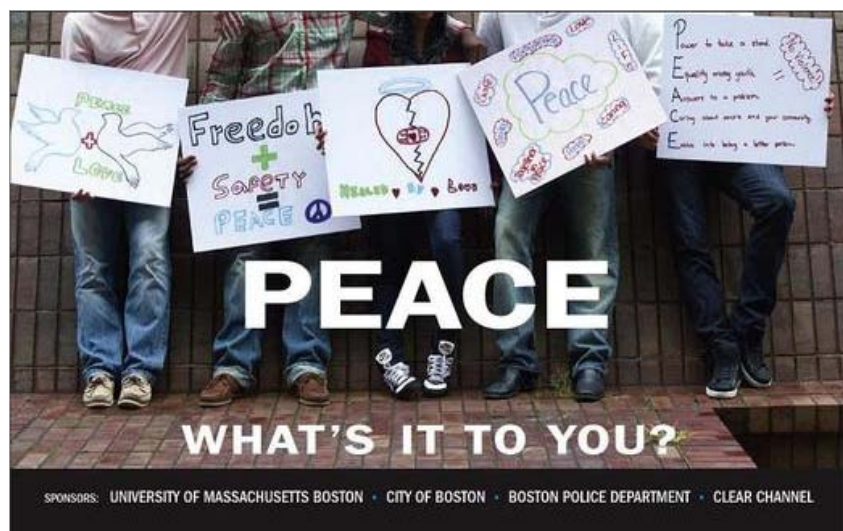
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DORCHESTER, MATTAPAN, ROXBURY

Peace billboards bring timely message to Boston

Posted October 7, 2010 08:15 AM

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(Courtesy UMass Boston)

One of two billboard designs promoting peace in three city neighborhoods.

By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

Though not a direct response to the city's recent wave of violence, eight billboards designed by local youth went up Tuesday to promote a very timely message for Boston: peace.

The campaign, which focuses on the Dorchester, Mattapan and Roxbury neighborhoods, had been in the works for more than one month before an [explosion of late-summer violence](#) – including homicides – in the city, said [University of Massachusetts Boston](#) communications director DeWayne Lehman.

Over 20 teens in two city police youth programs created their own posters on what peace means to them, and UMass Boston community relations staff and graphic design teams combined those posters into two billboard designs for the several-month long campaign, Lehman said.

UMass Boston wanted to give the city's young people a chance to speak out against street crime and gang violence by sharing their messages of peace, tolerance, and love

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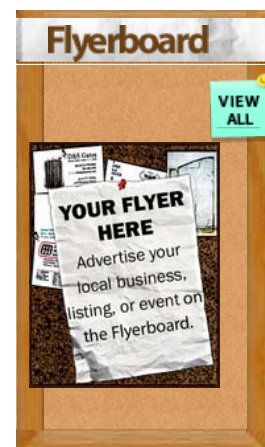
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in their communities,” said a university press release.

The billboard campaign is titled “Peace.

What’s it to you? Your Message - Your Neighborhood.” And the young Boston residents answered that question with such drawings as a broken heart patched with a Band-Aid, doves, peace signs, and anti-violence slogans of forgiveness, love and unity.

“I hope people see this and are impacted,” 15-year-old David Hale, who drew two of the posters featured on the billboards, said in the release. “I hope we can change opinions.”

All eight billboards, donated by **Clear Channel**, the company that owns the advertising space, went up on Tuesday at eight separate locations in those three neighborhoods, which were chosen because it is “where the challenge is the greatest,” Lehman said.

Lehman said the project coincided with other youth anti-violence work at UMass Boston and the school’s belief that it should work with the local community.

“These young people put their talent to work for peace,” said UMass Boston Chancellor J. Keith Motley in the release. “This is something for all of us to be proud of— our youth, neighbors, community members, seniors. We are partners in the revitalization of this community, and we’re grateful for that.”

Commissioner Edward Davis of the Boston Police department, which has struggled with both budget cuts and the increased violence, said this billboard initiative is unique.

“What makes this campaign special is it is all about young people. This campaign has been led by youth from the start,” Davis said in the release.

Billboards are at these eight locations:

- Washington Street/Bowdoin Street, Dorchester
- Columbia Road/ Stoughton Street, Dorchester
- Blue Hill Avenue/Harvard Street, Dorchester
- Dorchester Avenue (near Freeport St.), Dorchester
- Blue Hill Avenue, Mattapan
- River Street, Mattapan
- Washington Street/Bragdon Street, Roxbury
- Tremont Street, Roxbury

To view the two billboard designs and the peace posters, [click here](#).

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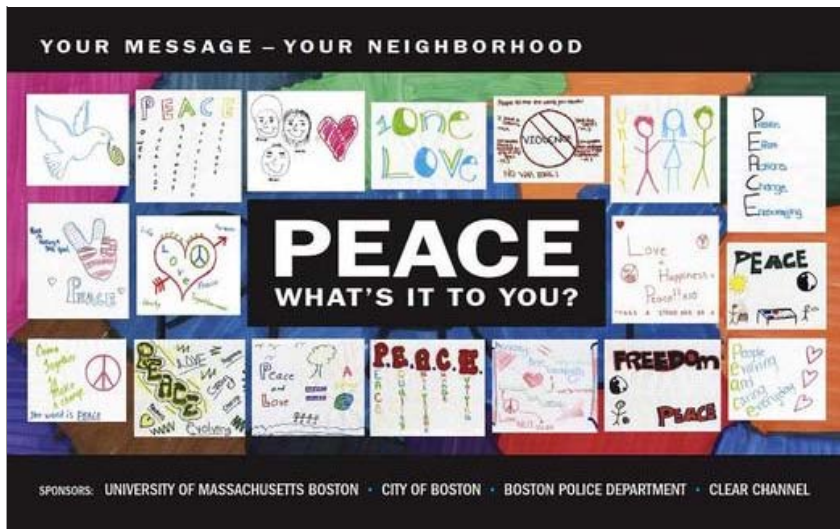
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