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ROXBURY

## In wake of fatal shooting, planned peace event gains added meaning

Posted by Matt Rocheleau August 23, 2011 01:06 PM

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(Matthew J. Lee/ Globe Staff)

Police and residents look to the second story of a house on Kensington Park -- the scene of a double shooting last night in Roxbury. A resident of that Warren Gardens housing complex, who has been planning a back-to-school, peace-promoting block party for early September, said the violence has left the neighborhood on edge, but is an added reminder of the importance of engaging and uniting the community.

By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

Roxbury resident Monica Cannon has a good reason why she's organizing a second annual back-to-school block party to promote peace in her neighborhood.

"I have children growing up here, and I want people in this area to do better," she said Monday afternoon. "We can do better."

Several hours after that phone conversation, she called to her three children playing outside to come in for dinner. Moments after the family sat down to eat, nearby gunfire rang out.

Two men in their 20s were shot. One was shot several times in his head and later pronounced dead at the hospital.

The other suffered non-fatal gunshot wounds to his leg. He [stumbled through the Warren Gardens](#) public housing complex from a parking lot off Kensington Park about one block to Fenno Street, where Cannon lives and on the street she plans to hold her block party on in less than two weeks.

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“It’s ridiculous. You’re kids can’t be outside and feel safe,” the 30-year-old said this morning.

Cannon’s two daughters are 8 and 10 years old. Her son is on the verge of becoming a teenager.

Hours before Monday night’s shooting, she said, “The last thing I want is for him to be in the wrong place at the wrong time, or to get pulled into getting involved with the negative things that go on around here.”

Today, she recalled how that fear had nearly become a reality the night before.

“My kids were outside playing, and I had just called them in for dinner. We sat down and we heard around five or six gunshots,” Cannon said.

The fatal shooting came just two days after Warren Gardens residents [had gathered for a peace rally](#) – similar to the one Cannon said she is planning, but on another part of the complex. There was singing, free food, a moon bounce and pony rides, Cannon said.

“We just had a stop the violence peace rally, and I’m trying to plan the block party. In the process of us trying to fight for peace, there’s gunfire,” she said. “I’m at a loss for words, but it makes our efforts that much more important.”

As police swarmed much of the housing complex and cruisers lined the street-turned-crime-scene in front of her home, Cannon said she tried to comfort her children.

“They were scared. My son has heard [gunshots] before. Unfortunately, he knows what they sound like.” But, her daughters, particularly, “had a lot of questions.”

“It’s tough. You have to sit and explain to them, ‘I don’t want you to play out back or in this certain area’ because it can happen at any time of day,” said Cannon. “You just never know where it’s going to come from.”

A seven-year resident of Warren Gardens, she organized the first “Back to School Block Party for Peace” at the end of last summer. Around 200 attended and around 35 donated backpacks filled with school supplies were raffled to children.

With a larger list of sponsors, Cannon hopes for an even better turn out for this year’s block party on September 3. The event aims to promote peace and to do so especially by keeping youth involved through education and after school activities. She hopes the gathering will help reunite a neighborhood on edge from Monday’s violence.

“It’s not frequent, that I know of, in this complex, but maybe in the area just outside,” she said of violence in her community. But, “this summer has been the most frequent since I’ve been here.”

“Personally, I’ve lost a lot of friends to the violence in this area. Every time you turn on the news, it’s a murder, or a shooting or stabbing or robbery,” she added. “I’m hoping to bring the community together and to do something for the children, so at least they have some books and supplies to start the [school] year with, because some kids don’t even have that.”

“I know we can do better,” she repeated.

*Police had no information on a possible suspect or suspects Monday night. Officials have asked anyone with information about the shooting to come forward. Tips can be left anonymously by calling the CrimeStoppers Tip Line at 800-494-TIPS or texting the word TIP to CRIME (27463).*

*E-mail Matt Rocheleau at [mjrochele@gmail.com](mailto:mjrochele@gmail.com).*

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A flyer for the upcoming block party resident Monica Cannon is planning.



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