



Media Release:
January 20, 2022

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Marion County Prosecutor's Office and Reagan Outdoor Advertising announce youth-led violence prevention billboard campaign in Indianapolis

Billboards feature art concepts and messages from local youth

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. – Marion County Prosecutor Ryan Mears has announced that the Prosecutor's Office, in collaboration with Reagan Outdoor Advertising and VOICES Corporation, has installed multiple billboards throughout Indianapolis to promote violence prevention. This project was initiated by County Council Vice President Zach Adamson who connected Prosecutor Mears to Bill Platko, General Manager of Reagan Outdoor.

The billboard messages came from four young adults involved with VOICES Corp, an Indianapolis youth-serving nonprofit. Shaneice Brown, Ronnelle Collins, Destiny Hatcher, and Bodler St. Louis contributed to the design concepts. Brandon Randall, Director of Engagement with VOICES Corp, invited the young adults to become involved and helped them hone their messages for this initiative.

"The young visionaries involved in this project created two remarkable messages. One billboard reminds us that often trauma and unmet basic needs feed violence, while the other encourages us to see our human connections in order to stop the violence," said Prosecutor Mears. "I believe when we empower and engage the community, especially our young people, we can create a safer and healthier community."

Reagan Outdoor Advertising supported the young people's vision by providing their creative director's talent to design the billboards and by providing the spaces to install 25 billboards throughout the city. The billboards feature two designs.

One billboard reads: "We Are Powerful. Beautiful. Family. Human." and displays an image of hands working together. This affirmative design is meant to encourage positivity, leadership, and unity within the Indianapolis community.

The second billboard reads: "What Is Actually Behind the Violence?" and highlights the root causes that lead to violence including, trauma, poverty, and lack of support. This powerful message is meant to create awareness and attention to the societal ills that contribute to this issue.

"I think that if even just one person sees these billboards and has a conversation about the messages conveyed, then we would have a difference is being made in our community," said Shaneice Brown. "I believe that through genuine conversations, we as community members can look out for each other. Through these conversations – we can save each other. And that's the impact that we really wanted to accomplish here. We wanted to start a conversation with rippling effects."

The Prosecutor's Office hopes that the art from this project can serve as a positive reminder to the community to support one another.