



## **Finding Hope Amid Violence**

Superintendent of Police Eddie T. Johnson addressed the City Club of Chicago last week regarding the city's violent environment. It was a sobering view of our city's condition, especially when we think about the children we work with at JPA. Take a look at these figures, as reported by Spt. Johnson:

Since January 1, 2016, 626 people have been killed in Chicago, mostly on the South and West sides. And the year isn't over.

92% of them were male  
78% were African American  
76% were between 15 and 34 years old  
92% were killed by guns

Supt. Johnson noted that gun turn-in programs have gotten over 7,200 guns off the streets, which amounts to one gun per hour, since January 1, 2016. Yet that's clearly not nearly enough to stem the violence many of our children experience or witness every day. As you'll read in "Superpowers," this month's narrative, it takes a lot of work to help children cope with these events.

Many offenders are not strangers to the police. In fact, 85% of shooting victims (fatal and non-fatal) are known to the police because they've been arrested before. In fact, 40% of those arrested for murder have had at least one previous gun conviction. To combat this situation, the CPD connects offenders to programs offering education, housing, job skills training, and more in order to prevent more violence. About a third have taken advantage of the offer.

Supt. Johnson told the audience that 970 new police officers are being hired over the next two years. He also advocated for longer sentences for gang members, who usually see prison as a joke, since they are often released after serving short sentences. He believes that social media drives some of the violence by enabling individuals to insult others online, leading to revenge killings.

At JPA, helping children caught in the middle of this violence can mean helping to end it. Giving children a chance to see how they can rise above it can give them hope for the future, not just for themselves, but for their communities. Our therapists help them see where they have strengths and whom they can rely on for positive role modeling. Although they must navigate the streets every day, children can still see a brighter future ahead.