Homicide Vigil 2010

Families Advocating Safe Streets remembers last year’s victims

By Rebecca S. Rivas
Of The St. Louis American

On Christmas night, former State Rep. Betty Thompson and her 17-year-old grandson arrived at a St. Louis nightclub five minutes after two men were shot and killed and several others wounded. Her own son Tyrone Thompson, a former police officer and nonviolence advocate, was shot and killed by two young men on June 5, 2010.

At a candlelight vigil for homicide survivors on New Year’s Eve, Betty Thompson gave a passionate speech to about 200 community members and leaders at El-Bethel Church of God in Christ, 4020 Page Blvd.

“The young man who killed my son and others – his parents said they couldn’t handle this young man,” Thompson said. “At a very early age, the father said they

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Shirley Douglas participated in a candlelight vigil for those lost to violence in 2010. The 19th Annual New Year’s Eve Candlelight Vigil, sponsored by Families Advocating Safe Streets, was held at the El-Bethel Church of God in Christ at 4020 Page Blvd.

Community asks youth for guidance

Kids cry out for mentors and productive role models

By De’Marja Patrick
Of The St. Louis American

Five days after two teenagers were killed outside the Pulse nightclub on Christmas night, community members gathered to talk with young people about violence at St. John’s United Church of Christ at 4020 Page Blvd.

“The sterilization issues really reveal the tip of an iceberg for other problems.”


During a town hall meeting on youth violence called “Pass The Mic” Donley Carter, 19, a student at the Met Center, talks about how young men are not getting guidance from their elders.

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Preserving Dr. King’s legacy

MLK celebration kicks off at Harris-Stowe Jan. 8

By Rebecca S. Rivas
Of The St. Louis American

On Dec. 2, 1985, Gov. John Ashcroft signed an executive order to create the Martin Luther King, Jr. State Celebration Commission. And for 25 years, Dr. Henry Givens Jr., president of Harris-Stowe State University, has led the commission as its chairman in preserving Dr. King’s legacy. Givens has since turned Missouri’s state celebration into the second largest celebration in the nation with the help of 18 governor-appointed commissioners. Despite the commission’s many achievements, Givens said his most profound accomplishment was leading the fight in 1986 for legislative approval in making Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s birthday a state holiday.

On Jan. 8, Givens will receive the commission’s Lifetime Achievement Award at the its kick-off program, which has been held at Harris-Stowe for 25 years. The program takes place at 6:30 p.m., in the Main Auditorium of Harris-Stowe’s Dr. Henry Givens, Jr. Administration Building, 526 Locust Ave. It is free and open to the public.

Themed “Celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the Martin Luther King, Jr. State Celebration Commission of Missouri under the Leadership of Dr. Henry Givens, Jr., Chairman,” the program will recognize the legacy and commitment of the commissioners by honoring them at the program. Highlighting the evening will be keynote

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Scrutinizing Cochran VA

Patient care at veterans hospital remains under congressional examination

By Sandra Jordan
Of The St. Louis American

On January 4, his final day as chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, U.S. Rep. Bob Filner (D-Calif.) kept his promise to area veterans and citizens by returning to St. Louis and the John Cochran VA Medical Center to speak to patients and staff about ongoing patient care issues at the facility. Filner and U.S. Rep. Russ Carnahan of Missouri spoke to reporters at

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