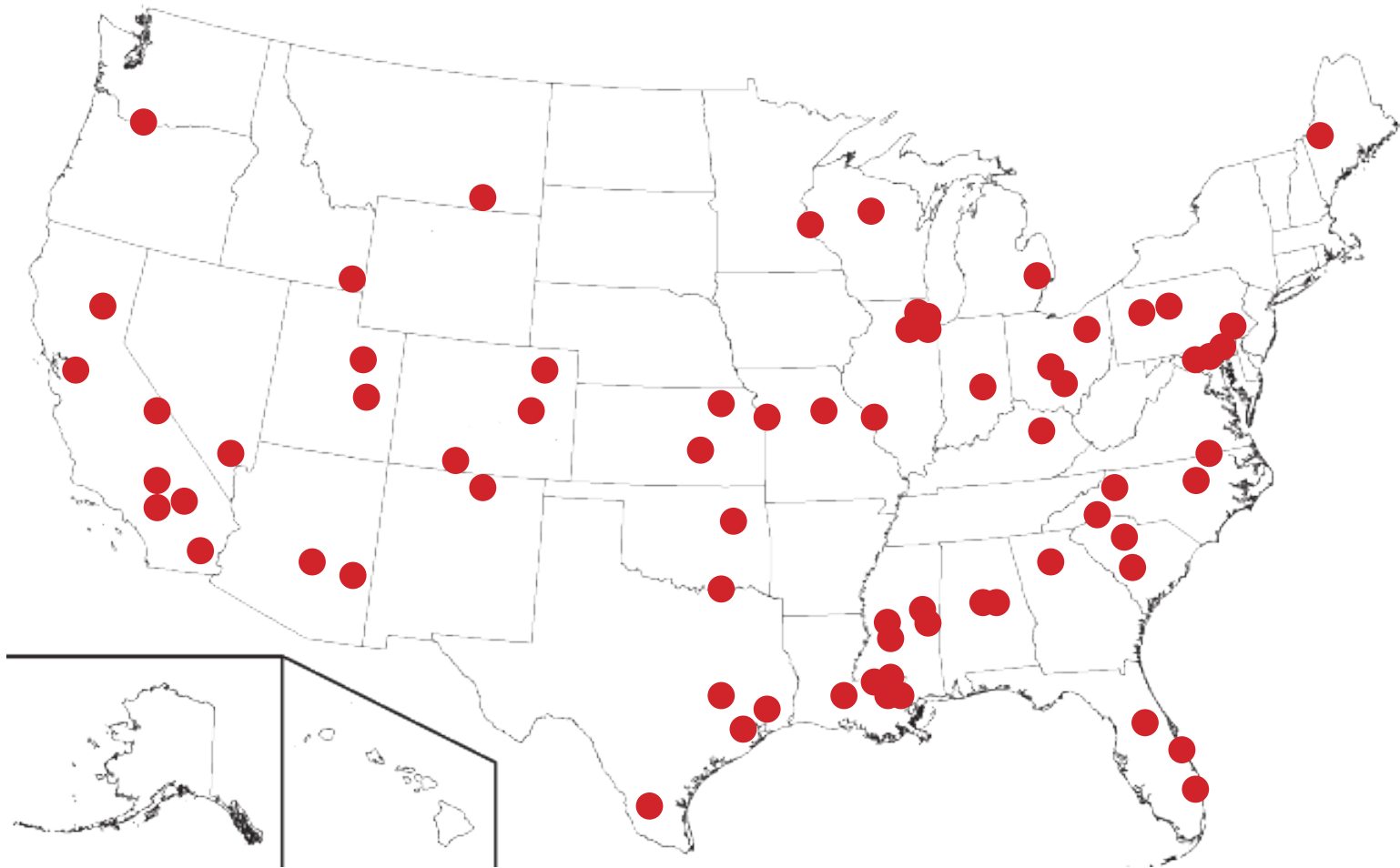


There is a mass shooting in the U.S. every 5 days.



Every dot on this map represents the location of a mass shooting in 2017 in which over 3 people were killed. According to CityLab, a total of 729 people have died from mass shootings since 1982, and 359 have been killed since 2010. Data from The National Gun Violence Archive.

Pivotal U.S. Mass Shootings

All photos from AP Images, Wikipedia



Rebels unite South Side



White (left), founder of the Rebels

by Arjun Thakkar

Upon hearing the words ‘South Side of Chicago,’ most individuals think of the ongoing cycle of gang violence.

There’s some truth to these thoughts, as this section of the city does have dangerous neighborhoods and many deaths due to gun violence.

According to the Tribune, 52 Chicagoans were shot this year over Memorial Day weekend. Yet the association we make between violence and the south side undercuts the noteworthy attempts that Chicagoans make towards ending the violence.

A proponent of this cause is 17-year-old Dajohn White, a student at Perspectives Charter School on the South Side. He described his previous view on violence: “I wasn’t really a peaceful person back then. I got into several altercations and fights, even outside of school.”

He explained how in the past, if someone would harm his friend, he would retaliate in response and make the perpetrator feel the same pain he felt.

White’s view changed after he went to a Peace Summit in April. Mara Gleason, co-founder of the organization One Solution Global, spoke about reacting to violence without perpetuating the cycle by changing how individuals don’t let outside factors, like violence, control them.

She described the idea that individuals don’t always need to respond because the mind can stay independent of other events.

White came back with a changed perspective, and wanted to share that perspective with those he

knew involved in gangs. He talked with friends at school, and formed an organization called Rebels for Peace, “because we’re rebelling against the statistic saying that all black teens have to be on the streets, working dead-end jobs, being gang-bangers. We can be more than what the system has planned for us,” White said.

The Rebels partnered with One Solution Global to support their cause. He spoke with police officers and shared what he learned at conferences in Charlottesville and Hawaii.

More recently, the Rebels for Peace held a Peace Jam at Refuge LIVE in the Loop on Dec. 9, the first of many gatherings to connect young teens from all around Chicago.

The event began with an opening dialogue by White and other Rebels members regarding their goal of gathering fifty Rebels dedicated to their cause. They shared stories of remaining peaceful after being provoked, and the group also took in new members.

Gleason later spoke about how the group was empowering their own minds to not act on impulse in response to terrible, violent shootings.

“The Rebels are committed to seeing the freedom of their own minds, harnessing their brains, and sharing that message within their community,” said Gleason.

Throughout the performance, a DJ provided music, and there was also slam poetry, a rap, a raffle drawing, and dance-offs.

Going forward, the Rebels hope to host a basketball tournament to bring together different neighborhoods and spread the message.

White explained his main goal for the Peace Jam: “I want everyone to see that everyone’s equal... that’s why I invited kids from different areas around Chicago, and even from New Trier, because everyone’s got their own situations, their own circumstances they’ve got to deal with...we can bring our communities together and bring Chicago together.”