

News Release

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City releases report about circumstances that lead to young Torontonians possessing firearms

Councillor Neethan Shan (Ward 42 Scarborough-Rouge River), the City of Toronto's Youth Equity Champion, was joined by City staff and community partners today to release the research report, *Look at My Life: 'Sparks' for Firearm Possession Among Young People in Toronto*.

Fiona Scott, the report's author, presented key findings from the joint research report from the City, Humber College - Applied Research and Innovation, Laidlaw Foundation and Amadeusz. The research identified the following influences that contribute to young people becoming involved in crime:

- Risk factors, including trauma, family environment, lack of non-family adults/mentors, lack of community programs, negative peers, and negative school experiences;
- Systemic barriers, including racism, poverty, lack of community safety; and
- Barriers after being incarcerated, including accessing employment due to a criminal record and a lack of education, and returning to the same environment with little support.

"This research tells us the supports that youth need to live different lives and stop carrying guns," said Councillor Shan. "Through the Toronto Youth Equity Strategy, the City is working to increase resilience and access to supportive systems for youth most vulnerable to involvement in violence and crime."

"Decades of research from around the world has told the same story – that young people who experience multiple negative life events or circumstances, and few positive ones, often end up following the same path to crime and violence" said Scott. "We need to work with vulnerable young people if we want to make our streets safer."

"We are very pleased to partner with the City on this important research. This work contributes to a better understanding of the complex factors that influence young people in our city," said Wiyanna Trevis, Program Manager at Amadeusz. "Working together and, importantly, prioritizing the voices, knowledge and experiences of young people will allow us to build better informed, relevant and useful strategies to reduce the risk of a young person becoming involved in violence and crime."

A copy of the report is available at: <http://www.amadeusz.ca/research-2/>.

The report identifies that young people need increased access to supportive systems to build their resilience. Earlier this week Mayor Tory announced investment in 16 community initiatives aimed at reducing gun violence and the appeal of crime among Toronto's youth.

These initiatives include new employment opportunities, job fairs in marginalized communities, establishing a children's mental health recovery team and the expansion of existing programs.

Toronto is Canada's largest city, the fourth largest in North America, and home to a diverse population of about 2.8 million people. It is a global centre for business, finance, arts and culture and is consistently ranked one of the world's most livable cities. For information on non-emergency City services and programs, Toronto residents, businesses and visitors can visit <http://www.toronto.ca>, call 311, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, or follow us on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/TorontoComms>, on Instagram at <http://www.instagram.com/cityofto> or on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/cityofto>.

- 30 -

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