

Solutions to Ratify Violence in Mount Vernon

By Nadia R. Marriott

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To My Beloved Community,

My name is Nadia Marriott. I am a Mount Vernon resident and I live in Chester Hill Park. I attend Montfort Academy and will be attending Spelman College in the fall. I, in no way shape or form, believe that I am better or above any of my fellow teenagers or High School students in this city. I look, feel, experience, and hurt the same as all of you. And it is because of this hurt that I grieve for our city as a result of the killing of Kayla Green.

As a young black woman, I long for nothing more than unity in this country and even more unity in this city. OUR CITY. We have the potential and the will to change the way we view this city into the place we know it can be in our hearts. I am just a child, I have no political, socio, or economic experience. All I have is a heart to fight and stand up for what is right. As Dr. King popularized "The Beloved Community," Mount Vernon is OUR Beloved Community. And we MUST save it. The killing of Kayla Green is a frightful and abhorrent tragedy. And as a community we grieve this loss. I cannot imagine what her family is going through right now. I personally did not know her, but as a member of this community, I feel a strong need to do Kayla, her family, all families suffering, and all that have suffered from violence, justice. I would like to see a plan for city reform. People may or may not hear me, but I am shouting nonetheless. I will forever strive to do my part because I care for my beloved community.

- First, we MUST end desensitization among the youth. With violence prevalent and perennial, everyone will see it as the "norm". In order to do this, we must institute programs that condemn violence in schools and workplaces... (not run by the police force because that can be interpreted as controversial).
- Second, because this was an act by young people, mental health and mental stability needs to be at the forefront. Because people know people, this is heavily traumatic. We need to have professional child therapists and psychiatrists in place for kids continuously in schools to de-escalate and minimize triggers. These things must be put into place and we must advocate to ensure that they are. Action is primary because talk is frivolous. Talk was frivolous with Shamoya McKenzie, and it SHALL not be frivolous for Kayla Green.
- Third, we are the future. If we do not feel safe and are not safe, then we will not be the future. The 4 sq miles of MV cannot be divided anymore. If the resources in the northside and Fleetwood can be used to strengthen or aid the southside, then that should be done. No more vague empty promises. No politicking. No ambiguity. No disconnect.

I believe a major takeaway from this horrendous tragedy would be just how serious, dangerous, paramount, and detrimental mental-wellness is... ESPECIALLY among young people of color. Most of whom may not have access to therapy and rehabilitation. If these opportunities are made more accessible to families, I believe it can push our **beloved community one step closer to unity and prosperity.**

Fix the schools. Fix the broken down homes. Fix the roads. Fix Mount Vernon. If we can live well, we can act well. If you do not live well, you will not act well. Let's bring the **LOVE** back into our Be**LOVED** Community!

Nadia Marriott

17 years old

Proud Resident, voting soon.