

Basic Talking Points for Baltimore Ceasefire Outreach

WHAT IS IT?:

- Baltimoreans are making a decision to have no violence from May 11th through May 13th.
- Celebrate life that weekend. Have coat drives, neighborhood clean-ups, big events, small community or family events... whatever you want to do... big or small.
- We know this is a BIG challenge. That's why this is also the #BaltimorePeaceChallenge.
- If you plan an event, email bmorceasefire@gmail.com, & we will tell everyone that you accepted the #BaltimorePeaceChallenge by doing something in your community. Your event will be put on the public Ceasefire 365 calendar on our website.
- This is NOT connected to the city government's Ceasefire Program.
- **We are also asking each other**, "What do you need in your life that will help make things better for you & your loved ones?" Why? Because we know that when we have the resources we need, we treat each other better, in general. Peace starts in our own lives... then we can easily be peaceful to other people.
- We are listening to the answers to "What do you need...?", and we're telling each other about resources that can help.

WHO IS DOING IT?

- YOU are doing it!
- This is NOT city government. Not the mayor. Not the police department.
- This is not one particular organization or person.
- This IS everyone in Baltimore telling everyone they know that we are all asking each other to celebrate life and to have no violence May 11th through May 13th.

WHY?

- The Baltimore Ceasefire is an effort that Baltimoreans are making to help us not have so many murders this year. This is not the answer to stopping all murder. But it is ONE way we can make things better.
- It is planned quarterly to give everybody in Baltimore enough time to tell everybody else. The goal is to make sure EVERYBODY hears about it.

SOCIAL MEDIA

- Point out the social media on the flyer & ask them to follow & share

TIPS FOR COMMON RESISTANCE

Below are common things people say to try to avoid accepting the Baltimore Peace Challenge. Please use the types of suggestions that are given to help you get through to people.

- **AVOID** getting into an argument or heated debate with people.
- Keep in mind that you **DO NOT** know people's struggles. Each person has the right to refuse to commit to peace, for reasons you may never know, or for reasons that may not make sense to you.
- **AVOID** shaming people's journeys.
- Avoid shaming people for where they are on their journey.
- This is a peace movement... people experience being shamed as an attack. So, in this context, remember that shaming people is an act of violence.
- Remember that a person cannot unhear this message... so as long as you have given the message with authenticity & love, **YOU HAVE DONE MORE THAN ENOUGH.**

Resistance: "I am not a shooter."

Example Response: "Good! It's not just about shooters, though. We are saying that all of us need to check ourselves & deal with conflicts better. Period. So we agreeing to practice being more peaceful for this one weekend... and see how it goes."

Whatever You Say: Make sure your reply explains that this effort is about everyone agreeing to be more peaceful in our thoughts, words, & actions. It's not just about shooting.

Resistance: "In Baltimore?! Yea, right."

Example Response: "Right! It seems crazy when people were getting killed every 19 hours in Baltimore, last year. But the last time we tried this, Baltimore went 11 and a half days without anyone getting killed. Every ceasefire weekend, there's always less violence than normal. Imagine what could happen if EVERYONE in Baltimore really talked to everybody they know about this? At least a few lives would be saved."

Whatever You Say: Keep in mind that people feel hopeless because of their experiences. Do not invalidate their experiences. Simply present the idea that another experience is possible... and that we've done it before.

Resistance: "It's not going to work because somebody in this city is going to kill somebody."

Example Response: "Ok. And this is about what each of us can do. So I'm asking if you can commit to keeping it safe around here. Don't even worry about what other people are going to do. I'm asking what you can do."

Whatever You Say: WATCH YOUR TONE when you are saying this. Remind people that this effort is about each person committing to control whatever they can control. If everyone keeps their own neighborhood or block safe, the whole city could be safe for 3 whole days... as a start.

Resistance: “Why only 3 days?”

Example Response: “We want zero murder every day. But A LOT needs to be fixed in our city, before we can have zero murders. Asking for 3 days is just a start, so we can show ourselves that we CAN do it.

Resistance: “Why wait every 3 months?”

Example Response: Baltimore has ceasefires in February, May, August, and November to give everyone time to hear about it. People also need time to plan and advertise any life-affirming events they want to have.

Resistance: “Doesn’t it fail when people get killed, though?”

Example Response: “3 people... Trey, Donte, and Tony... have been killed during ceasefire weekends. Murders don’t end a ceasefire, they just remind us that we have a lot more work to do. And they make us actually notice and care that people got killed... that’s a new way for Baltimore to react to murder. The movement also reaches out to the family with love, support, and money that Baltimore has raised, just for them. It’s also not a failure, because..... (fill in the blank with so many awesome things you know that happened in the previous ceasefire).”

Whatever You Say: Be transparent about the fact that Lamontrey Tynes, Donte Johnson, and Tony Mason died during previous ceasefires. Point out how Baltimore residents will continue to come through for families if people die during this ceasefire. Feel free to point out how we learned to stop being numb (and to work harder) when people die. **Say their names** when you talk about them... don’t just say “people died...”.