

# Milwaukee Violence-Free Zone



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## MEDIA RELEASE

### **MPS Safety Officers To Be Honored in Special Ceremony**

**When: May 5, 4:30 p.m.**

**Where: Milwaukee French Immersion School, 2360 North 52<sup>nd</sup> Street**

Milwaukee Violence-Free Zone program leaders and staff will hold an Appreciation ceremony May 5, 2009 at Milwaukee French Immersion school (2360 North 52<sup>nd</sup> Street) to honor School Safety Officers and Milwaukee Police Department School Resource Officers at eight Milwaukee high schools for all they do to make Milwaukee schools safer.

Leaders of the Latino Community Center and Running Rebels Community Organization will award plaques to the Milwaukee Public School safety teams at each of the Milwaukee high schools that are part of the Center for Neighborhood Enterprise's Violence-Free Zone program. CNE President Robert L. Woodson, Sr., and CNE National VFZ Director Kwame Johnson also will participate in making the awards. In addition to police and safety officers from the schools, the event will be attended by MPS Superintendent William Andrekopoulos, Director of Safe Schools Kristi Cole, Director of School Safety Jay Navone, and Project Coordinator for Community Engagement Tyrone Dumas.

The Safety Officers are the first responders when disturbances and fights arise, and among other duties, they see that students do not loiter in the hallways and that they go safely to class.

"It is a privilege to work with these dedicated individuals," said Latino Community Center's Andre Robinson, Senior Director of the Milwaukee Violence-Free Zone. "We honor them for the partnership that has improved the security of students in the schools and made the students and schools more productive."

While Safety, School Resource Officers, and the Violence-Free Zone staff each have separate roles and responsibilities, they work closely together to provide a comprehensive system of support for the students and school staff. The VFZ Youth Advisors mentor youth in the schools, mediate disagreements, and provide tutoring. They offer students a place to come to talk about problems and receive encouragement. The VFZ also works with parents and offers out-of-school activities to give students round-the-clock support.

“We each have a job to do and our efforts complement each other. By us working together, the young people are getting a better chance at succeeding in school,” said Running Rebels Community Organization Executive Director Victor Barnett. “We just want to let these Safety Officers and School Resource Officers know how much we value this partnership and respect what they do.”

“Milwaukee Public Schools’ safety personnel are an extremely dedicated group of people. They have positive interaction and are great role models for our children. They not only serve as safety personnel but as mentors, tutors and advocates for the students of MPS,” said MPS Superintendent Andrekopoulos.

The Center for Neighborhood Enterprise created and oversees the Violence-Free Zone program in Milwaukee and five other urban centers across the country. The VFZ is implemented in Milwaukee by CNE community partners the Latino Community Center and Running Rebels Community Organization. The two community organizations cooperate closely and each is responsible for placing Youth Advisors in four schools for a total of eight schools.

The MPS School Safety staff members and School Resource Officers honored today are from the following schools: Bay View, Bradley Tech, Custer, Madison, Marshall, North Division, South Division, and Washington High Schools.

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