

The Building Block

Published by the Ceasefire Oregon Education Foundation September 2011

Millions of parents are ASKing. Are you?

Is there a gun where your child plays? Crime prevention coordinators in Portland's Office of Neighborhood Involvement have been asking that question of community members at crime prevention and public safety training sessions throughout Multnomah County. At these meetings, crime prevention coordinators hand out ASK brochures. They have also posted brochures in shopping areas such as the Lloyd Center so that families will have access to tips on ASKing. "ASK" stands for "Asking Saves Kids."

The Ceasefire Oregon Education Foundation started promoting the ASK program several years ago, in an attempt to encourage parents to ASK other parents, "Are there guns in the home where my child will play?"

Every year in the United States, thousands of children are killed or seriously injured because guns in homes were not locked up. The ASK program encourages gun owners to

make sure that their guns are stored unloaded and locked, ideally in a gun safe, with ammunition locked up separately.

Hiding guns is not enough, and just warning kids about guns is not enough either. Children are curious; if they find a gun, the temptation to play with it is strong.

Asking other parents about guns in the home is just like asking them if they have animals, or a swimming pool, or other items that may be hazardous for children.

Ceasefire offers ASK brochures in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, and Russian. Our volunteers distribute them at various community events and at the annual safety event at the Oregon Zoo, where we also teach kids that if they see a gun, they should not touch it and they should tell an adult.

If you'd like some ASK brochures or more information, or if you'd like to help distribute brochures, please contact us at 503/220-1669 or info@ceasefireoregon.org. ♦



Oregon legislators refuse to be intimidated by the gun lobby

Unlike many legislative bodies elsewhere, the Oregon Senate and a substantial portion of the Oregon House have refused to be intimidated by the gun lobby. Ceasefire Oregon applauds the many legislators who stood up to the gun lobby this year and refused to succumb to

its strong-arm tactics. We thank, in particular, Senators Ginny Burdick, Suzanne Bonamici, Jackie Dingfelder, and Floyd Prozanski and Representatives Mary Nolan, Carolyn Tomei, and Tina Kotek. We sincerely thank all the legislators who refused to make

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Building safe and healthy communities free from gun violence





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Oregon legislators refuse to be intimidated

it easier to obtain guns or to carry loaded, hidden handguns in our state.

At the behest of various elements of the gun lobby, other legislators introduced 25 bills that would have weakened Oregon's gun laws, many substantially.

Ceasefire Oregon volunteers carefully tracked these bills throughout the session, conducted extensive research, submitted detailed written testimony against several bills, and attended hearings to testify in person against those bills. We sent email alerts to our supporters urging them to contact legislators about specific bills, and many did. We worked with other community groups on mutual concerns, and we were in regular contact with key legislators.

We are pleased to report great success this session. Once again, the time and energy needed to defeat the dangerous bills meant that we could not advance bills we wanted to enact. But all the time spent working to defeat those dangerous bills paid off.

Among the bills the gun lobby worked hardest to enact were bills that would have (1) permitted anyone with a concealed handgun license (CHL) from any state to carry loaded, concealed handguns in our state even if the person did not meet Oregon's CHL requirements, (2) removed the Oregon State Police from conducting background checks for gun dealers, sending them directly to the FBI instead, and thus enabling Oregonians with serious mental health problems to nonetheless purchase guns (because their records aren't in the FBI's databases); and (3) required sheriffs to keep the names of CHL holders secret, thus ensuring that sheriffs could not be held accountable for their decisions regarding the granting of CHLs, precluding people with legitimate concerns about specific individuals

from learning whether those people had CHLs, and preventing the media and other researchers from ascertaining exactly how many CHL holders commit crimes.

All those bills were defeated. The gun lobby, in fact, saw only one of its proposals enacted, provisions regarding the carrying of firearms on ATVs, motorcycles, and snowmobiles. Ceasefire Oregon opposed the original bill in principle, but decided early on that due to its limited impact, we would not spend our limited resources working against it. After the language was combined with provisions curtailing the ability of felons to lawfully possess guns under state law, even parts of the gun lobby opposed the bill, which was enacted. All of the gun lobby's other bills were defeated.

In May the Senate Judiciary Committee held a hearing on whether Oregon should prohibit handguns carried by CHL holders in public schools. A group of Ceasefire Oregon members attended the hearing to demonstrate that sensible gun restrictions have broad public support.

Legislators hear frequently from the gun lobby. They need to hear from you, too. Please send your email address to info@ceasefireoregon.org, so we can send you email alerts.

We at Ceasefire Oregon are all volunteers. With your help and support, we will continue to stand up to the gun lobby and work to defeat its many attempts to make guns easily accessible and pervasive.

With additional volunteer help, we could also work to enact positive, common-sense gun laws, such as laws requiring that **all** gun purchasers first pass a background check, that all guns include chamber load indicators, and that no guns be allowed in certain public places, including schools. Please let us know if you can help. ♦

Turn-ins offer gift certificates for guns

The Ceasefire Oregon Education Foundation (also known as COEF or Ceasefire) was founded in 1994 as a grassroots organization committed to building safe and healthy communities free from gun violence. COEF works toward this goal by providing for the voluntary surrender of firearms and by initiating and promoting education programs concerning gun violence, injury prevention, and general gun safety.

An important part of our work has been the annual gun turn-in. In recent years, this event has taken place in a large parking lot in Portland. The Portland Police Bureau supports COEF by assigning officers to accept the guns at the turn-in, ensuring that the event proceeds in a safe and orderly manner. People peaceably handing over their guns at Ceasefire gun turn-ins will not be prosecuted for possessing the weapons. The collected guns are destroyed by the Portland Police.

At the last two gun turn-ins, in December 2010 and April 2011,

Ceasefire collected a total of 363 guns, as well as BB guns, pellet guns, and ammunition. This brings the total number of guns collected at Ceasefire turn-ins and destroyed over the last 16 years to 7,524.

In return for each operable firearm, COEF gives the

owner a \$50 gift certificate to Fred Meyer. (There is a limit of three gift certificates per person.) A contribution of \$25,000 from Portland Mayor Sam Adams's office last year enabled Ceasefire to organize the last two gun turn-ins and will also make possible two more turn-ins, this fall and next spring. Mayor Adams has also demonstrated his support by attending the last two turn-ins.

We hope that people will continue to take these opportunities to rid their homes of unwanted guns and thereby prevent tragedies that could claim the lives of loved ones. ♦



Ceasefire Oregon Education Foundation President Mary Tompkins and COEF volunteer Dennis LoGiudice at the December turn-in

The Ceasefire Oregon Education Foundation (COEF) works to reduce gun violence by educating the public and providing opportunities to dispose of firearms. Since 1994, we have provided for the safe surrender and disposal of over 7,500 guns. Our affiliate, Ceasefire Oregon, works to reduce gun violence by advocating reasonable gun legislation and opposing irresponsible bills.

Contributions to COEF are tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law. Contributions to Ceasefire Oregon are not tax deductible because its primary function is to work on behalf of, or against, proposed gun laws. If you'd like to get involved or make a donation, please contact us. Please also send us your email address. We greatly appreciate your support. ♦



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Andrew Perez available to talk to youth groups

In April 2009 Andrew Perez, an eighteen-year-old Portlander, unintentionally shot his best friend, Chance Caron, killing him instantly. The two young men had been sitting in the living room of their home. Andrew thought that his shotgun was not loaded.

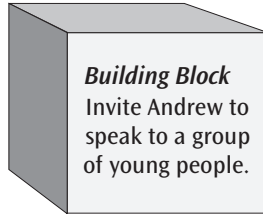
Andrew had been friends with the Caron family for years. Chance's mother, Helen Caron, personally intervened on Andrew's behalf and asked the judge not to send Andrew to prison. Andrew pleaded guilty to criminally negligent homicide with a gun and was sentenced to five years' probation and 500 hours of community service.

One of the judge's requirements was that Andrew work with Ceasefire Oregon to pass a law requiring a safety feature on guns that would indicate whether any ammunition was in the gun. Such a device, called a chamber load indicator, probably would have prevented Chance's death.

This bill has been dubbed "Chance's Bill" in honor of Chance Caron.

Since October 2010 Andrew has been volunteering with the Multnomah County Health Department as a speaker to groups of young people about the day that changed his life forever. He has crafted a moving and powerful presentation to educate young people about the dangers posed by guns, the responsibilities that come with owning a gun, and gun violence. The Ceasefire Oregon Education Foundation has been assisting Andrew in setting up speaking engagements.

If you would like to request Andrew Perez as a guest speaker for a group of young people, please call Pam Hiller at 503/988-6250 ext. 25043 or send her email at pamela.j.hiller@multco.us. We urge you to invite Andrew to speak to your group. Please also contact your state legislators and ask them to support "Chance's Bill." ♦



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Invite Andrew to speak to a group of young people.

Ceasefire is active in Eugene/Springfield

The Ceasefire Oregon Education Foundation has been busy ramping up its activities in the Eugene/Springfield area, where shootings have been increasing each year.

On Mother's Day 2011, COEF was part of the annual Million Mom March awareness walk in downtown Eugene. Participants included Mayor Kitty Piercy (a member of Mayors Against Illegal Guns), Colin Goddard from the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, and organizations such as Veterans for Peace.

In June, corresponding with National ASK Day, COEF had a table

at the Eugene Saturday Market to engage shoppers, and in August, we had a "car" in a "Peace Train." Several local peace groups formed a train of moving plywood "cars," each decorated with the group's name, as part of the Eugene Celebration parade.

These events have helped increase the number of volunteers and the support in the Eugene area, but more people are needed to make a difference. Additional events and projects are in the works. If you wish to help in any way, please contact Ceasefire's Eugene-area coordinator, Baldr Odinson, at nogundeaths@gmail.com. ♦



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Send your email address to info@ceasefireoregon.org

Fix Gun Checks Truck in Portland

On a misty March day this spring, Omar Samaha came to Portland with a large red truck that beamed in bright red lights the escalating number of the people murdered in the United States with guns: 2,449. And that was just since January 8, 2011, the date of the Tucson massacre.

Omar came to Oregon to call for a national law to fix the background check system used for gun purchases. On March 21, Portland Mayor Sam Adams; Rev. Lynne Smouse Lopez, pastor of Ainsworth United Church of Christ; Rev. Mark Knutson, pastor of Augustana Lutheran Church; Shelley Campbell, of Trauma Nurses Talk Tough; and Teresa Raiford, whose nephew was shot to death last year in Portland, stood with members of Ceasefire Oregon to ask Oregonians to urge their senators and representatives to fix the background check system. Mayor Adams is a member of Mayors Against Illegal Guns, the sponsor of the National Drive to Fix Gun Checks.

Omar's sister, Reema Samaha, was murdered on April 16, 2007, when Seung-Hui Cho shot 49 people at Virginia Tech University, killing 32. Under the Gun Control Act of 1968, Cho was not legally allowed to buy a gun because he had been adjudicated mentally ill in 2005.¹ But a gaping hole in the background check system allowed Cho to commit one of the deadliest shootings by a single gunman in U.S. history.

Omar, Ceasefire Oregon, and others delivered on March 21 a petition to the Portland offices of Senators Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley, urging them to support S. 436, the Fix Gun Checks Act of 2011, which would help fix the deadly holes in the national background check system. The fix would take two steps: (1) ensure that all relevant records regarding felons, drug abusers, and the mentally ill

are included in the background check system; and (2) require an instant background check for every gun sale.

Cho's purchase was not a rare fluke. Ten states have not contributed a single mental health record to the national background check system (NICS), and 18 state have contributed records on fewer than 100 people.² In the wake of the Virginia Tech shootings, Congress passed the NICS Improvement Act to help states submit records to NICS, but it did not allocate the necessary funding or create penalties for noncompliance.

Moreover, millions of guns are sold without **any** background check because prohibited purchasers can avoid checks by buying from unlicensed, private sellers. Federal law requires only federally licensed firearms dealers to run background checks before selling guns. Although some states require background checks by other sellers,³ an estimated 40% of all U.S. gun sales are made by unlicensed, private sellers.⁴ It's been four years since Omar lost his lovely sister, and gun sellers throughout the country are still arming criminals and the mentally ill.

That death toll in red lights on the Fix Gun Checks truck? It's at 7,667 as of this writing.

Please join Ceasefire Oregon in urging Senators Wyden and Merkley to support S. 436 and fix the national background check system for gun purchases today. ♦

1. Michael Lou, "U.S. Rules Made Killer Ineligible to Purchase Gun," *New York Times*, April 21, 2007.

2. www.fixgunchecks.org.

3. Oregon requires background checks by all sellers at gun shows. Note also that anyone selling a gun in Oregon can ask the Oregon State Police for a background check on the prospective buyer. ORS 166.436.

4. Garen J. Wintemute, "Private-Party Gun Sales, Regulation, and Public Safety," *New England Journal of Medicine*, 363 (2010):508–511, at www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp1006326.

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Colin Goddard and *Living for 32*

In April 2007 a mentally disturbed student at Virginia Tech University shot 49 students and faculty. Thirty-two died. One of the survivors was Colin Goddard, a student. He was shot four times and required a long period of physical rehabilitation.

Surviving the massacre was not quite enough to make Colin an advocate for stricter gun laws. Only when he watched another rampage on television two years later (in Binghamton, New York) did Colin realize that he had to speak out. He joined the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence.

Some filmmakers became interested in his story, and the result is *Living for 32*, a documentary about the shootings at Virginia Tech and Colin's life since that day.

In May 2011, as part of a national speaking tour, Colin visited Oregon, where he showed the film and talked to about 875 people, primarily high school and college students, in Eugene, Corvallis, and Portland. The Ceasefire Oregon Education Foundation underwrote the cost of his trip.

To learn more about *Living for 32*, visit www.livingfor32.com. ♦

Find out more and join the discussion!

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