



NEWARK COMMUNITY STREET TEAM

# IMPACT REPORT

August 2022 to July 2023





# Table of Contents

<b>About Us</b> .....	03
Our Mission .....	03
Our Vision .....	03
Our Strategies .....	03
<b>Spotlight</b> .....	04
<b>Spotlight: Brother Daamin Durden, NCST Executive Director</b> ...	05
HRI Director Rey Chavis .....	06
<b>Departmental Overviews and Statistics</b> .....	07
The High Risk Intervention .....	07
School Safe Passage .....	08
Victim Services .....	08
Hospital Violence Intervention Program .....	09
Trauma Recovery Center .....	10
Community Sentinels .....	12
<b>Let's Meet the Directors</b> .....	13
Staff Voice .....	15
<b>Community Connection</b> .....	16
Community and Partners Voice .....	17
<b>Administrative Insight</b> .....	18
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	19

# Introduction

This Impact Report offers a snapshot of our work in Newark, New Jersey, from August 2022 to July 2023. Over the past year, Newark Community Street Team (NCST) has continued to make significant strides in its mission to foster safer, more resilient communities. This report encapsulates the tireless efforts, achievements, and stories of impact across our departments.

The past 12 months have been transformative for both NCST and the Newark community. Our data-driven approach, combined with heartfelt stories from the community, underscores our commitment and the profound impact we are making. As we look to the future, we are committed to continue our mission, expand our reach, and deepen our impact.

It is with immense pride and gratitude that we present this 2022-23 Impact Report. This document is more than just a compilation of numbers, charts, and testimonials; it is a testament to the unwavering spirit of our community, the dedication of our team, and the collective vision we hold for a safer, more connected Newark.



“ This year’s Impact Report is really a testament to the power of building residents’ infrastructure. This report reveals how a single opportunity can transform adversity into providing safer communities in Newark. ”

**Solomon Middleton-Williams,  
Deputy Director**

# About Us

The Newark Community Street Team (NCST) was initially founded in 2015 at the request of Mayor Ras J. Baraka to serve as Newark's community-based violence intervention strategy, and we received our independent nonprofit designation in 2017. NCST draws upon an evidence-based, trauma-informed approach to violence intervention. NCST hires, trains, and deploys Outreach Workers and High Risk Interventionists in the South and West Wards of Newark and we also:

- Provide support to victims and perpetrators of violence
- Engage in high-risk intervention, mediation, and conflict resolutions to prevent and deter violence
- Designate Outreach Workers to ensure students arrive to and from school in a safe and timely manner
- Host a safe space to help survivors of violent crime overcome barriers to assessing mental health treatment
- Enhance the utilization of harm reduction services
- Establish a critical mass of well-informed and leaders who are educated in self-efficacy rooted in self-understanding

As public safety professionals, our team holds certifications from the globally recognized Professional Community Intervention Training Institute-International. Our training encompasses case management, grief counseling, CPR, mindfulness, trauma symptoms, risk assessment, and a host of other critical areas. Additionally, our affiliation with the Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice and Alliance for Safety and Justice network keeps us in constant pursuit of ongoing professional development.

## Our Mission

NCST supports safe neighborhoods by healing trauma, intervening in violence, and empowering residents to end violence in Newark. We put the public in public safety.©

## Our Vision

A thriving, safe Newark made up of neighborhoods with residents actively engaged in the safety and well-being of their communities.

## Our Strategies

- Identify, recruit, train and deploy community-based, non-traditional leaders to serve as Interventionists and Outreach Workers;
- Offer case management to high-risk, high-promise youth;
- Drawing upon varied methods and approaches, including High-Risk Intervention and Safe Passage, intervene in and mediate conflicts between individual and rival gang-involved youth in the South and West Ward
- Increase awareness of and access to healing and recovery services for victims/survivors of violence by providing direct services, advocacy, and public education;
- We collaborate with citywide and regional public safety initiatives to enhance our collective efforts.

# Spotlight



“When NCST launched in 2015, I heard folks say they gave us 6 months at most before we folded. Here we are all these years later, not only still standing but growing. It isn't always easy, but we can never quit until people in Newark are not being killed or harmed by gun violence. ”

**Elizabeth Ruebman,**  
**Policy Director and Co-Founder**

Newark Community Street Team (NCST) utilizes a transformative model placing the community at the center of its mission. NCST's unique approach recognizes the vital importance of hiring from within the very communities we serve in the participation of public safety. Our organization is committed to creating employment avenues within and for marginalized communities.

Our staff are afforded invaluable opportunities to nurture their talents and diversify their skill sets, setting NCST apart as a beacon of inclusion and growth within a landscape where such opportunities are often limited. Our approach fosters an environment of professional and personal development that is unique, responsive, and inclusive. We approach the workforce model through an intersectional lens, considering the diverse backgrounds and circumstances of its employees. Our workforce is composed of individuals from our community, some of whom have limited formal education and lack previous professional experience. Others include returning citizens and individuals under community supervision.

Through multiple targeted initiatives, NCST is bridging social inclusion gaps in Newark, fostering community support, creating employment opportunities, and instilling a sense of purpose while decreasing hardship experienced by returning citizens. Our staff have reintegrated themselves not only into their respective communities but also into the NCST family and represent compelling examples of individuals who have contributed to their individual - and our organizational- success.

# Spotlight: Brother Daamin Durden, NCST Executive Director



As the Newark Community Street Team (NCST) Executive Director, I would like to share a bit about my journey and my vision for our beloved community.

My trauma has guided me toward the work we do at NCST. Growing up in a single-parent household, I grappled with understanding manhood, which unfortunately led me to make some regrettable decisions early in life. These decisions resulted in a life prison term for me.

While prison is a terrible place, I did engage in deep introspection and self-study during my nearly 22 years in the prison system. This period of reflection allowed me to understand and commit to improving myself.

I realized that the change I wished to see needed to start within me before extending to the broader community.

At NCST, I ensure we have the necessary resources and a coordinated operational effort to conduct all components of our work effectively. Our approach and work serve as a model nationwide.

Our dedicated departments, including High Risk Intervention, Case Management, Trauma Recovery, Safe Passage and Victim Services, work tirelessly to mediate conflicts on the streets, provide essential wraparound services, and support survivors and those causing harm in our community. Each department plays a crucial role in fostering a safe and supportive environment.

I envision a future where our community, the beautiful City of Newark, naturally turns to dialogue and understanding in times of conflict. Instead of resorting to aggression or distraction, the norm will be to engage with mediators and conflict resolution specialists.

I have witnessed firsthand the effectiveness of our approach and training in Newark and other cities for creating environments where understanding, support, and resolution are the default responses to conflict. Together, let's continue working towards a community where peace and well-being are not just aspirations but the reality we live in every day.

# Spotlight: Rey Chavis, High Risk Intervention Director

Rey Chavis is a Community Based Public Safety Professional who serves as NCST's Director of High Risk Intervention. He utilizes his lived experiences of growing up in the inner city and in carceral spaces to identify others with similar backgrounds and trains them to use their lived experiences and the lessons learned from them to intervene in the lives of others headed towards a self-destructive path. While incarcerated, Rey set out on the path of intellectual transformation, obtaining an Associates Degree in Liberal Arts from Mercer County Community College and a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science from Rutgers University-Newark. Rey has served his community as a Public Safety Professional since his release from incarceration in 2019.



Rey's bright and successful career as a Public Safety Profession began at Rutgers, where he secured a research assistant role with Newark Public Safety Collaborative, collecting qualitative data. After a COVID-19 layoff, he joined us at NCST as an Administrative Coordinator/Data Manager and was soon offered the role of Safety Coordinator. Recognized for his high levels of professionalism and community engagement, Rey was advanced to the role of Director of High Risk Intervention in November 2022).

Having served as Director of HRI for a year, Rey has expanded the department from 7 to 24 members with a team emphasis on structure and professional development while overseeing intervention and mediation. Rey's personal and professional experience exemplifies the transformation we seek to support in our work. . Rey garners team respect inside of and beyond his department. He values providing hope and exemplifying success to his team, and we are pleased to highlight his effective social facilitation leadership style and positive community impact.

# Departmental Overviews and Statistics

## High Risk Intervention

The High Risk Intervention (HRI) team’s primary responsibility is to respond to community-based violence incidents based on a referral from the community or law enforcement. HRI connects those engaged in violence to supportive counseling, provides crisis intervention assessment and mediation, and coordinates referrals and resource information to restore peace and avoid arrest and incarceration. The HRI Department works on an on-call basis outside of standard office hours; the team has regular training and team meetings.

Each High Risk Interventionist responds to active street disputes, helps de-escalate personal disputes, and collects community and interpersonal intelligence at crime scenes without crossing the yellow line. They draw upon trust and leverage relationships with all those associated with the perpetrator as well as the victim(s) to de-escalate rumors further and prevent retaliation.



August 2022-July 2023  
 Total number of High-Risk Interventionists on staff: 20  
 Total number of HRI Dispatches:

**1,845**

June 2021-July 2022 -  
 Total number of High-Risk Interventionists on staff: 6  
 Total number of HRI Dispatches:

**549**



## Safe Passage

NCST provides Safe Passage at select contracted Newark schools where hot spots of violence have been identified. Specially trained Outreach Workers are deployed in teams at key exit and entry points of the school, bus stops, stores, and intersections where youth congregate in and around the school. Safe Passage allows Outreach Workers to develop relationships with the youth and their parents, intervene in and mediate potential conflicts, and ensure that students arrive to and from school in a safe and timely manner.

### August 2022-July 2023

Total number of schools serviced 20

Total number of students served: 18,740

### June 2021-July 2022

Total number of schools serviced 12

## Community Walks

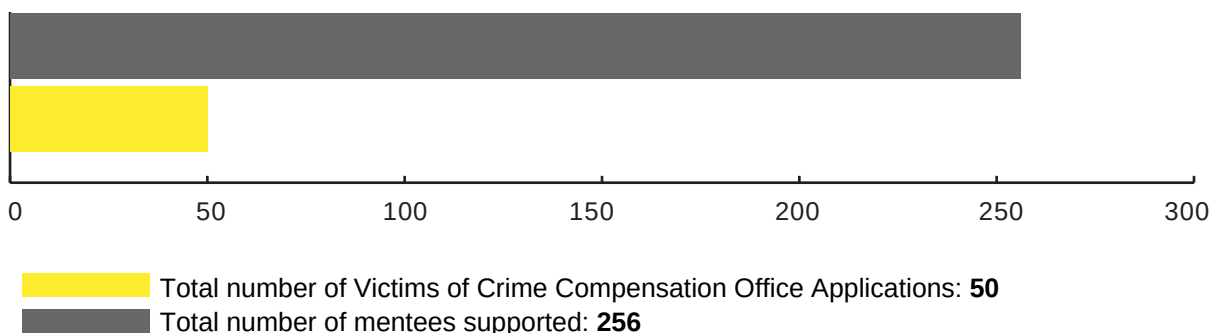
Every Thursday at 5 p.m., NCST Outreach Workers lead team walks in areas recently affected by violence. They walk in these areas to engage with the community and residents to take the neighborhood's temperature, provide information on NCST's trauma recovery and case management services, and recruit mentees. Community Walks are one way of introducing NCST's services to the community.



## Victim Services

The Victim Services Department (VSD) comprises advocates who are trained through the National Advocate Credentialing Program. They provide support to victims of crime, including domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, homicide, aggravated assault, and burglary. Advocates assist victims with completing and applying for victim of crime compensation benefits, including relocation, funeral costs, loss of earnings, and medical bill payment. In addition, the department hosts healing events in the community, such as Heal The Block Campaign in which VSD targets violence stricken neighborhoods over a 12-week period. VSD also collaborates with Crime Survivors Safety and Justice for a National Day of Healing, providing a host of healing modalities that victims can adapt and utilize on their healing journey. Lastly, VSD utilizes wrap-around services by referring clients to TRC for mental health services, HRI for intervention and mediation measures, and the case management department to assist in reaching short-term goals.

## August 2022 - July 2023



Total amount of Victims of Crime Compensation Payouts: **\$65,739.45**

## June 2021 - July 2022

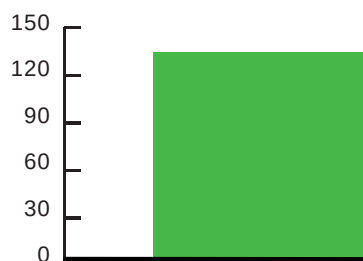
Total number of mentees supported: **59**

## Hospital Violence Intervention Program

NCST's Hospital Violence Intervention Program (HVIP) serves victims of gun violence and intervene and prevent violence and to set a victim of violence on a different path from retaliation and/or revictimization. NCST has five (5) **Community Health Workers (CHW)** and twenty (20) **High-Risk Interventionists (HRI)** that engage individuals who have been hospitalized, offering wraparound services, which include trauma recovery, relocation, case management, and victim assistance.

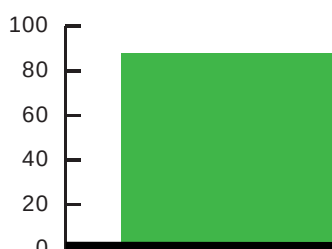


## August 2022-July 2023



Total number of Consents: **137**

## June 2021 - July 2022



Total number of Consents: **89**

# Trauma Recovery Center

NCST launched the Trauma Recovery Center (TRC) in 2020 to expand the delivery of clinical services to recent survivors of violent crime, including physical assault, sexual assault, gunshot wounds, stabbings, domestic violence, and human trafficking. TRC has created a safe space to help survivors of violent crime overcome barriers to accessing mental health treatment, health care, and legal resources in the acute aftermath of trauma. NCST is uniquely positioned to navigate the nuances of service delivery to historically marginalized communities who are underserved by traditional institutions. Services offered by TRC include:



## Individual Mental Health Therapeutic Services

Survivors of trauma are given up to 32 weeks of free, intensive trauma-informed therapeutic services.

## Group Therapy Services

The group curriculum comprises trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy and dialectical behavioral therapy.

## Community Outreach

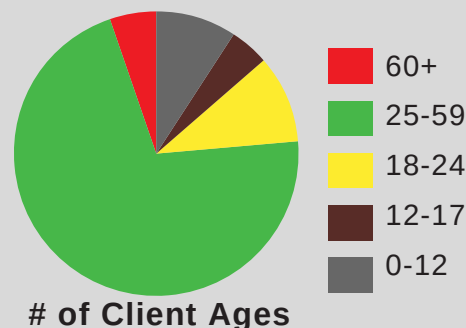
Our outreach workers help to accompany clients to appointments in the community, provide wellness checks, and encourage community members to take advantage of the services offered by the TRC.

## Case Management

Our clinicians help clients to receive their vital documents (social security cards, birth certificates, state ID etc.), connect them to educational resources and employment opportunities, and refer them to additional support services in the form of substance use services and housing assistance.

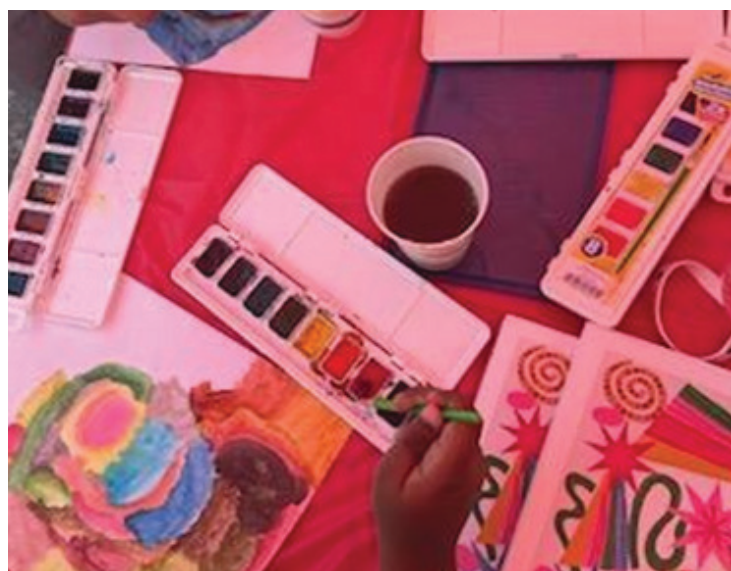
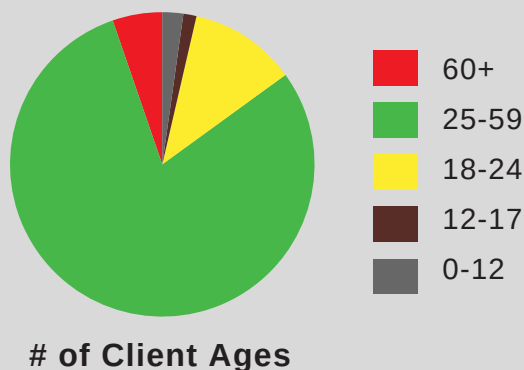
### August 2022- July 2023

Total number of TRC Clients Served: **219**



### June 2021 - July 2022

Total number of TRC Clients Served: **212**



# Overdose Response Team

The City of Newark has some of the highest overdose rates in New Jersey, and continues to see rising numbers of overdose deaths within the Black community. Black men between the ages of 45 and 64 years old are particularly vulnerable to overdose deaths. These deaths have happened while the state invested in treatment and law enforcement initiatives rather than community-based harm reduction programs.

The Newark Community Street Team has partnered with University Hospital to provide a community-led response to overdose emergency calls in Newark, NJ called the Overdose Response Team.



## The Overdose Response Team:

- Reduces fatal and non-fatal overdoses
- Reduces health and social harms to people who use drugs and their communities
- Improves the use of harm reduction services
- Reduces arrests associated with overdose events

## August 2022 - July 2023



## Education

The education department began in September 2019 and has grown to 120 workers/students with a concurrent need to provide personal and professional development opportunities for all.

Simultaneously, we launched a workforce development oriented project that became known as New U for all the entry-level outreach workers and case management workers to help focus and professionalize our training of Interventionists and human service professionals.

New U is a product of iterative design wherein we brought together the professional, ethical, technical, and cultural wisdom of the thought leaders in public health and public safety and social justice work at the heart of the movement for transformational change led by the gifted but vulnerable members of communities suffering from years of structural violence.

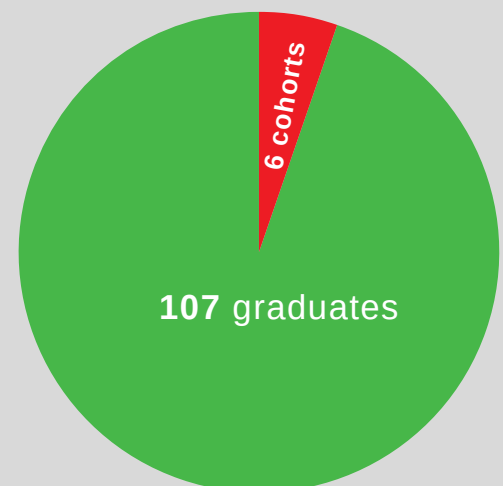
This year, New U has received support to offer MasterClass™ training and has launched a partnership with a Newark Based Arts Collective to expand and enhance its top-rated and impacting Trauma and Memoir course. We have also expanded our capacity for mentoring and advising of staff members seeking help as they return to post-secondary education and graduate school. We strategically pursue credentialing and accreditation opportunities with national and local state-level partners.

## Community Sentinels

The Community Sentinels Leadership Academy works to heal the trauma created by violence driven by ignorance, fear, and desperation. The Academy's aims to establish a critical mass of well-informed and courageous citizen leaders who have started to yield fruit and results. The six cohorts have produced graduates who are deeply committed to transformational uplift. The Academy has helped both those who were organic leaders by encouraging them along a trajectory of development and impact that they had already established and those who needed to develop a higher sense of self-efficacy rooted in self-understanding and awareness of social resources and a sense of connection to the history of their community.



August 2022-July 2023



# Let's Meet the Directors



## **Director of Victim Services, Chainah Williams**

“As a leader in the field of Victim Services, my own violent experiences prepared me for this moment. Being an overcomer has allowed me to be a light to others, showing them that they can overcome too. We have overcome our experiences not for ourselves, but to be a witness to someone else”



## **Director of HVIP, Najlaa Shareef**

“In 2018, I learned about NCST by living in Georgia King Village due to NCST offering services to the residents of GKV. Sometime later on, I joined NCST, starting off doing Safe Passage and then becoming an HVIP CHW. Now, I serve as the Director of HVIP. I joined this line of work because I lost people who were very close to me to gun violence in Newark, and I knew at that time that if NCST had been around prior to them no longer being here, NCST would have been a life-changing experience for them and more than likely they would have still been alive till this day. By me saying this, this is why I’m dedicated and honored to work for NCST to help others in the community that are in need. Our goal is to prevent retaliatory and repeated victimizations.”



## **TRC Program Director, Angelica Maury LSW**

“All trauma survivors deserve access to healing services. Historically, this has not always happened. The NCST Trauma Recovery Center provides a safe place for all survivors to navigate their healing journeys. We have successfully created a community of survivors who support and uplift one another as they process their experiences. The TRC staff are adept at helping community members heal because we have all experienced trauma across our lives - I myself am a survivor of childhood trauma. We are survivors, healing survivors. Individuals seeking healing find a community here, and that is because we all believe that trauma may happen individually, but healing happens collectively. Survivors are never alone.”

# Let's Meet the Directors

## Director of Safe Passage, D'Renna Johnson



"In 2018, my journey with the Newark Community Street Team began as a client, seeking and benefiting from their wellness services. By 2019, I had the privilege of transitioning into a part-time Safe Passage Outreach Worker role. In this role, I was able to serve the community in a capacity I never thought was possible. Building relationships with the community, especially the scholars of our community has been healing for me. When COVID-19 impacted our community, I was able to go door to door delivering groceries to our families in need. Today, I am proud to serve as a Director within the organization. This journey underscores the principle that the timeline does not bind success; rather, it is the result of determination and hard work. The "win" is inevitable when we remain committed to our goals, regardless of the "when."

## Director of Education, Toby Sanders:



"The comments and expressions of appreciation we receive from participants are some of the most important qualitative measures of our success. In the same way, the level of trust exhibited in a significant increase in our referrals to other departments within NCST and partner agencies are measures of trust and evidence of our growing efficacy as an agency contributing to uplift in our vulnerable communities and families."

## Director of HRI, Rey Chavis



How do we help our people? By hiring our people. If we have a hundred people working at NCST, you have a hundred people who are not committing crimes. If people don't have jobs, they are more than likely going to identify another way to eat based on the resources around them. So we help by hiring, we help by healing, we help by developing. NCST has helped our community by hiring our community.

## Staff Voices

"Three years ago, God blessed me with the opportunity to serve at the TRC. Since then, I've seen the impact this support has had on the lives of our community members. People suffering from decades of trauma have begun to heal, feel worthy of love, and believe in themselves and their abilities. They've begun to forgive, ask for forgiveness, think, be seen, AND be heard. There's a saying, 'Hurt people hurt people,' and that's true, but serving at the TRC has allowed me to see that healing people heal people." - Niama Morrison, MSW (TRC Clinician)

"NCST's ORT began its journey less than two years ago, and it's inspiring to witness the growth and impactful work we've accomplished within our community. The partnerships we've forged stand as a testament to our strong dedication and love for our city, speaking volumes about our commitment" - Khalil Willis

"NCST, with a focus on ORT, is out here every day, saving lives, changing lives, and protecting lives." -Donald Jackson

"As a Case Manager at NCST and a proud graduate of the Sentinels Program, NCST has profoundly shaped my personal and professional journey. Through my role, I've actively addressed challenges like homelessness, substance dependence, and gang affiliations in our community, witnessing firsthand the transformative impact of support and resources. The Sentinels Program has been pivotal in my growth, enlightening and empowering me. It taught me to recognize my potential, prioritize my well-being, and further my education. The mentorship, camaraderie, and relationships I've built at NCST have become an invaluable support system, guiding me towards success." -Shikyra Scott

"I feel great about impacting my community instead of playing the blame game, I can just make the change by starting with myself. NCST work is integral for public safety because it teaches us how to connect with people on completely different levels and able to understand their hardships and also just understanding the area that you are in and being able to identify situations and diffuse them early on." Markevion McGee

"Throughout my incarceration of almost 18 years, I missed all my kids graduate high school. I missed being there for them and their struggles throughout school. I was released from prison in 2015, and started working for NCST in 2016. As a Safe Passage Outreach Worker, I could attend games, talk to the youth, and watch them grow up. 2022, I was promoted to Safe Passage Supervisor, the healing the kids brought me is why I continue this journey." -Shayne Love, Safe Passage Supervisor

"Thanks to training from the Overdose Response Team, I was able to intervene and save a young man's life from an overdose on Clinton Ave and S. 19th St. I administered Narcan, stressed the importance of medical attention, and provided him with resources. I hope this experience emphasizes the value of our training, and I encourage all NCST members to apply their skills to create safer communities." -Felix Duprey

"As a Safe Passage Outreach Worker it's important to keep the community feeling safe without having to reach out to law enforcement." Javon Archie



# Community Connection

## Public Safety Roundtable

The Public Safety Round Table (PSRT) is our community forum which was created to meaningfully engage our community in the public safety process on a long-term basis. A facilitated community dialogue, the PSRT seeks to both hold space for important conversations among Newark neighbors and stakeholders while holding elected officials, service providers, and faith-based organizations accountable for mandated services funded through public and private entities for the benefit of the community. At each PSRT, law enforcement provides reports on where violence and crime is happening in the neighborhood and engages residents in discussion around solutions while NCST staffers provide updates on their work and encourage engagement

Join us every other Tuesday at 10 a.m. You can join us on [Facebook](#) or via Zoom (email to get the Zoom invite).

## Who Attends?

- Elected officials to share policy and public safety legislation in the works to support our efforts.
- Business owners to talk about investment and employment opportunities.
- Social service providers to share resources for residents to access services.
- Residents, who are encouraged and supported to ask questions, make comments, and report concerns about public safety in Newark.

Public Safety  
<sup>IN</sup> Public Hands



## Community and Partners Voices

“Partnering with the NCST has made our two KIPP NJ high schools safer. By combining in-school mentoring with neighborhood-based interventions, we can ensure that our students at risk of community-based violence can receive more intensive and comprehensive support than we can provide ourselves.”

- Joe Hejlek, Director, Wraparound Services - KIPP New Jersey

“I am a single mother of 4 kids. My son was not attending school because the school would not give him bus tickets. The rule is you have to live 2.5 miles away from the school to receive bus tickets. I live 2.3 miles away and could not afford to send my kid to school daily. [Safe Passage Director] D’Renna found a resource that could give me bus tickets, and my son has been to school since.”

-Participant

“At the beginning of 2023, I experienced a traumatic experience with my son’s father. My life was being threatened, and I was afraid to go to my safe space, my home. Thanks to the help of victim services and the support from my NCST Family, I was relocated, and now my son and my peace are protected. The process was very much one of the easiest processes I’ve had to complete. Everyone involved was very passionate about my safety and future. I Am Appreciative and grateful for all the hard work and dedication that was invested into helping me.”

-Participant

“In 2020, I was assaulted and stabbed on Frelinghuysen Ave in Newark. I drove myself to the hospital. I was approached by a CHW from NCST HVIP at my bedside the next day. They offered me services through their program, which benefited me greatly. At that time, I did not know so many resources were available for my needs. By learning about the program, I was able to refer other community members to the HVIP program that was victimized. I knew who would be eligible for the program and who was in need of services immediately. HVIP was a huge help to me, and I couldn’t thank them enough.”

-Participant



# A Message from our Board Chair

I'd like to share with you why 2023 has been monumental in changing the public safety narrative in our city.

NCST works at the intersection of public safety and public health. The residents we train in conflict resolution, peer mediation, and de-escalation strategies, all through a trauma-informed lens, have developed a new professional class in Newark, making Newark one of the safest midsize cities in the country. Since we launched our work in 2014, we've had seven consecutive years of decreased homicides and violence (from 104 to 51, a 50 year low), but we're not just stopping there; our goal is to get to zero and to where homicides amongst Black and Brown youth and young adults become an anomaly. Our community should be and will be the safest neighborhood in the country because we have the power to make it that way!

I want to thank the mighty, mighty team of Safe Passage Outreach Workers, the High-Risk Intervention Team, the Community Health Workers embedded in the hospitals, the Overdose Response Team, the Victim Advocates, the Trauma Recovery Center staff, the Education Department and our Eviction Prevention Team, and of course, our fiscal, executive, evaluation and administrative teams keeping it all together. I am so humbled to be in service with you.

**In solidarity,  
Aqeela**

# Conclusion

NCST was founded on a belief that the solution to violence lies in community self-determination, healing, and investment in the people who live in the community. This report highlights that belief, showcasing the tangible results of our combined efforts and the stories of lives touched and changed.

Over the past year, we have faced challenges, celebrated victories, and learned invaluable lessons. Each department has played a pivotal role in weaving the fabric of our community tighter and brighter. Their updates feature the breadth and depth of our initiatives.

However, beyond the data and achievements, the stories truly define our impact. The narratives throughout this report serve as a reminder of why we do what we do.

We invite you to not only celebrate the milestones we have achieved but also envision the potential of what lies ahead. With continued support, collaboration, and shared purpose, there's no limit to what we can achieve together.

**Thank you for being an integral part of our journey.**

**NCST**

**Stay in touch with the organization for more information or collaboration:**

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