

# WE ARE WILLOWBROOK 2018 SUMMIT

## We Are Willowbrook Summit Highlights

As part of ongoing community engagement efforts for the Trauma Prevention Initiative (TPI), DPH staff are working with community residents and stakeholders in Willowbrook and Westmont West Athens to support local leadership and develop action plans to reduce trauma and violence. Community Action for Peace (CAP) groups in each community have been working on planning summits to bring together community members and partners to discuss priorities and strategies for reducing trauma and violence, while taking action to increase resilience, healing and engagement in their communities.



The **We Are Willowbrook Summit** took place on **Saturday, May 19, 2018 from 8 am-3:30 pm at Charles R. Drew University Dymally School of Nursing (CDU)**. It was the first TPI convening in this community and was free and open to all community members. The focus of the Summit was to bring stakeholders together to build partnerships, develop a vision and identity for Willowbrook, and discuss issues prioritized by community.

**Today is about Willowbrook. We are Willowbrook! We are Willowbrook!**

-Dr. Perry Crouch, Summit Emcee

(Willowbrook CAP member & Watts Gang Task Force Co-Chair)

### Building Unity

The Summit is important both as a milestone, and because it is the end result of a community engaged, community driven process. DPH staff began meeting with initially 30 community members in December 2017, and over the course of six months at bi-weekly meetings held at Carver and Mona Parks, members invited more friends, neighbors, and community stakeholders to attend. To date, over 70 residents and stakeholders (representing over 30 community-based organizations) have participated in the CAP meetings. During these meetings, a common theme arose about there being many Willowbrooks – near Carver Park, near Mona Park, near Magic Johnson Park, and the need to bring them together and build a unified community identity. That sentiment led to the Summit's tagline, "**Community Building Unity,**" and its title – **We Are Willowbrook**, which became a common refrain throughout the day.



**I was happy to see a lot of community come out. I hope that this is something we can build on going forward.**

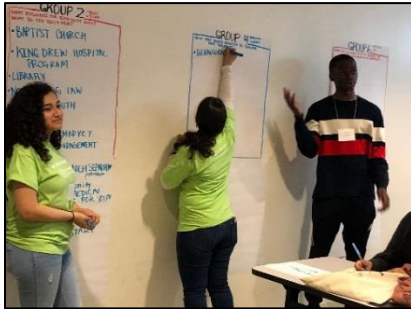
-Minister Michael Torrence, Fellowship Baptist Church & Volunteers of America Positive Alternatives

### Summit Events

Over 150 people attended the event, including Willowbrook residents, community intervention workers, faith leaders, youth including King Drew High School students (who also served as the youth empowerment breakout facilitators), local non-profit agencies serving Willowbrook, CDU staff and students, and County staff from the Departments of Parks and Recreation, Public Health, Mental Health,

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and the Sheriff's Department. The community-developed theme of the day was **Community Building Unity**. Representatives from DPH, Supervisor Ridley-Thomas' office, CDU, Fellowship Baptist Church, and the Sheriff's Department spoke.



The day started with a warm welcome by the Dean of the Dymally School of Nursing, Dr. Diane Breckenridge, followed by a spiritual invocation and tribute to the late Pastor Deloris Glass and a performance by the Fellowship Baptist Youth Choir of Willowbrook's anthem – **Proud to be a Willowbrookian**. In addition, attendees heard a "History of Willowbrook" spoken word performance by three generations of residents – Steven Fisher, Ebony Luchien, and Jacques Fields. During lunch, Dr. Barbara Ferrer, Director of the Department of Public Health, spoke about the

County's commitment to the Willowbrook community. There were morning and afternoon breakout sessions on youth empowerment, workforce development, civic engagement, and community identity and the built environment. Throughout the day, attendees participated in interactive arts and community storytelling activities provided by the Los Angeles County Arts Commission, Arts for Incarcerated Youth, and LA Commons, including a mural project called "Touchstones" to celebrate hope, healing spaces and a world without violence.

## Sponsors and Partners

A special thanks to: **Charles R. Drew University Dymally School of Nursing**, for generously donating their space for the Summit. Many community members had never been on the campus despite being longtime residents and enjoyed the opportunity to visit the campus. The **Department of Parks and Recreation**, for providing in-kind support by hosting community summit planning meetings at Mona and Carver Parks. **Urban Peace Institute (UPI)**, for providing technical and onsite support to make the Summit a success. And **LA Care Health Plan** and **Kaiser Permanente** for their generous financial support.



**It is a beautiful day. Everyone was out for one cause – children, youth and adults.  
Nothing but up from here."**

-Steven Fisher, Willowbrook CAP member and resident

## Next Steps

The Summit provided an opportunity to continue a community assessment and landscape analysis to identify gaps in services and barriers to accessing existing resources. Immediate Summit outcomes included the development of new partnerships and community priorities, and increased investment and interest in the ongoing Willowbrook Community Action for Peace coalition (CAP). Next steps will include drafting a summit report and the development of a community driven strategic plan to reduce trauma and violence.



We are committed to supporting the community of Willowbrook to change this environment and to develop locally driven solutions." – Dr. Barbara Ferrer, Director, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health