The Effects of Youth Violence on My Life

In the back of my building in Dorchester there is a street where I play with my friends. It is called Adams Street. There is a memorial there that says, "We miss you, Daddy. You're safe in heaven. Sorry for the loss of you by a teenager. R.I.P." A teenager shot somebody's father. There used to be candles, posters and a gold chain. There is still spray paint on the street saying, "R.I.P. We miss you, Daddy." Now my mother says I can't play out there for long. It has a huge impact on my life. It makes me feel sad and concerned about playing out there. I don't know if I'm going to end up with someone trying to stab me in the back of my head.

Recently, I heard about a story from one of my friends about a guy who got killed with a fork. I don't if it's true or not, but it seems that youth violence is all around my neighborhood. You eat with a fork. You wouldn't expect someone to die by a fork. Youth crime is a problem in my neighborhood. My bike was stolen recently too.

I can't sleep because of youth violence. Every five minutes during the night there is a siren outside my window and teenagers screaming their heads off. It affects me because I need a lot of sleep. When I get to school I have a lot to do. I stay up late on my homework. I need to get the right amount of sleep, so I can stay focused on school the next day.

Youth violence affects millions of people. It has a ripple effect on people. For example, it scares adults. They don't understand it very well. An example of the ripple effect is, say one day a child gets shot by a gun. The EMTs (Emergency Medical Technicians) and people in the emergency room, they have their own kids. They say, "Would my own son ever do this? I hope he is too smart to do this." People are terrified and won't even have the guts to live in that neighborhood anymore. It affects me because I get terrified. I hope that the next time that this happens it won't be me. I hope that violence doesn't happen to any of my friends or my family members.

The Causes of Youth Violence

The main cause of youth violence is bullying. Grown-ups don't bully each other. They don't commit suicide or bring weapons into school. In my school I'm getting sick and tired of kids bullying each other. Some people don't think this is youth violence but it starts youth violence. One kid is picked on, and doesn't like it, he has only two choices: to commit suicide or bring in a gun and kill the kid who bullies him. This is because there is no one to talk to kids.
The kids think, “If I bring in a gun, he will be afraid to bring a gun.” The kid who is being bullied thinks he can frighten the bully with a gun.

Bullying is a not a big problem in my school, but it is a big problem in a lot of other schools. There isn’t youth violence in my school, but there is a lot of cyber bullying on Facebook. I heard a girl recently got expelled from the Boston Public School for cyber bullying. I heard she was framed and didn’t really do it. She had an alibi. The consequences that she suffered had no justification. It’s hard to find justice.

Kids who have confidence in grownups like counselors get pressured not to go to them or else they will suffer consequences from the bullies. Grownups are not that often helpful. Kids play games inappropriate for their ages like “19 or Up Truth or Dare.” Then, the kids are embarrassed to go to school because they’ll be teased. Counselors can’t help them. The bullies persuade them that they will beat up the kids and then tell the adults that the kids were lying about it. Even if they want to get help there’s nothing they can do about it. For example, when my iPod got stolen in school the possible suspect that I think stole it did not want to confess. I had evidence that he had it but he did not want to confess. I think he was trying to protect himself or someone he got it from. I never got my iPod back. The grownups were not helpful in that situation.

How I Can Help Stop Youth Violence

One way to stop youth violence is to spread the word to kids that are getting bullied that bullying is against the law. With my friends, they can spread the word to other friends, and that could help kids that are getting bullied.

Another way for me to help is to tell a teacher if I see a teenager with a weapon at school. For example, if a kid in my school brought a gun to school I would report him or her to my teacher (or to the school police). I would probably get in trouble with that kid, but it’s such a big deal that I would do it. You see, Youth Violence Causes Youth Violence. Youth violence has a ripple effect. If my school is safe it’s safer for me and everybody else.

After school tutors and mentors can help with youth violence. An older teenager can pressure a younger teenager by embarrassing them and blackmailing them into doing things they wouldn’t necessarily do. A grownup at school like a tutor or mentor can help with peer pressure. I don’t have a mentor or tutor and I don’t need one. But I can spread the word to other kids that these adults can help.

So there are three things that I will do, 1) spread the word that bullying is against the law, 2) tell an adult if I see a teenager with a weapon at school, and 3) tell kids about counselors and tutors who can help if they are sensitive.