

Community unites to combat violence after tragic death

By Vidya Rao | September 7, 2006

What happened to Herman Taylor III just two months ago should have shocked the community.

Only 18 years old, the Belmont High School senior was shot twice while near his home in Dorchester. He died shortly after at the hospital.

“He was doing all of the things you would want your kid to do,” says Lynn DuVal Luse, a spokesperson for the Taylor and Coleman family. “He was a role model, an excellent athlete and really loved in the community. All of that was taken away, and none of it makes sense.”

With 35 murders and 238 nonfatal shootings so far this year, many Boston families are suffering through similar tragedies. Taylor’s family received an outpouring of support.

“We saw an incredible response. It became clear that a lot of people wanted to send the message that enough is enough,” says Luse.

Consequently, family and friends came together to form the HT3 Peace Network, a memorial fund to remember Taylor. Though only in its infancy, the network has over 20 community partners, including SCI Dorchester, Save the Youth Ministries, the Nation of Islam and the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute.

With all of this support, the network decided to organize the “Take Back Our Neighborhoods Peace March and Rally,” which will be held on Monday, Sept. 11.

“We wanted to send a message by holding the event on 9/11,” says Marisa Coleman, Taylor’s sister and one of the network’s founders.

The march will begin at 5 p.m. at the Freedom House in Dorchester, continuing along Warren, Townsend, Humboldt and Seaver streets — the so-called “hot-spots” for violence in the area — and ending back at the

Freedom House.

The rally will include several community leaders who will speak at the event. Thus far, state Sen. Dianne Wilkerson and City Councilor Chuck Turner are slated to make statements. Support for the event has also been issued by Rep. Gloria Fox and city councilors Sam Yoon, Felix Arroyo and Michael Flaherty.

“It’s time to come back to the village model, to start supporting our young people,” says Coleman. “This will be the first of many such rallies to get people to pay attention.”

The ultimate goal of this rally and others is to allow the lives of Taylor and other victims to have been ended in vain. “This young man made a difference in the lives of everyone he met,” says Luse. “It is up to us to continue to make a difference after his death.”