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Reviewing neighborhood-based practices to address gun violence in Chicago made me aware of the array of organizations across the Westside and Southside. Many of these organizations are run by community members and have partnerships with the city and are part of other initiatives. As a resident of the Austin community, I was even more proud to be a part of the Chicago Gun Violence Research Collaborative and take action to reduce gun violence.

As I researched organizations in the neighborhoods of Austin, Englewood, Garfield Park and North Lawndale, I realized the similarities across the organizations. The organizations offer safe spaces for community members and offer services for economic and educational development. It was frustrating to read how communities have had to fend for themselves due to the systemic inequities that exist. Still, reading about the amazing work people are doing in the community demonstrates their resilience and strength.

One of the most impressive organizations I read about was GoodKids MadCity which is being led by youth. It is inspiring and also alarming that as a society we have put this burden on young people to solve because the city has failed to address gun violence. This experience has taught me that addressing gun violence should not just be the responsibility of a neighborhood who experiences high rates of gun violence. Instead, the entire city should be invested in reducing gun violence as several stakeholders are involved.

Overall, my experience as a Fellow in the Chicago Gun Violence Research Collaborative taught me that we still have a lot of work to do in addressing gun violence. There are many approaches we can take. One of the best approaches is to incorporate community members and listen to their needs. Some approaches may be better than others but the only poor approach is not doing anything at all to address gun violence.