

# ROAD TO JUSTICE

NATIONAL ADVOCACY CENTER OF THE  
SISTERS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Addressing social justice issues for the  
transformation of society to the benefit of all people

## Spotlight: Good Shepherd Services New York We See What Can Be – Reducing Gun Violence

The Road to Justice runs through the streets of New York City thanks to Good Shepherd Services New York. No one is expendable; no one is forgotten; no one is given up on. GSS-NY sees what can be and proceeds to make it reality with the support, assistance and vision of community members themselves.

An inescapable and tragic part of American society for the past few decades has been gun violence. One piece to finding peace is Good Shepherd Services' Bronx Rises Against Gun Violence (B.R.A.G.) program that works with young people, local community residents, community organizations, and the public to promote safer streets and new community norms where violence is not accepted.

Good Shepherd Services New York has been serving New York City officially since 1947, and before that, the Good Shepherd Sisters themselves were present beginning in 1857 focusing on residential care for young women who could not live at home. While the sisters have passed on the mantel to Good Shepherd Services New York which is now nonsectarian, the essence of the sisters' zeal and mission continues.

Good Shepherd Services New York goes where children, youth, and families face the greatest challenges and provides resources that build on their inherent strengths to help them thrive. Operating nearly 100 programs, Good Shepherd Services New York supports over 30,000 children, youth and families across the Bronx, Brooklyn and Manhattan. All programs are

united by a common goal – to create opportunities that help its participants succeed at school, at home, and in their community.



B.R.A.G.'s program staff help reduce gun violence by identifying youth at risk for retaliatory violence, working with victims and their families and friends to help prevent future violence, and providing linkages to resources and follow-up services to patient participants. Additionally, B.R.A.G. mobilizes community residents and organizations through community events to raise awareness about violence and its larger impact, and to promote community norms that embrace non-violence.

B.R.A.G. staff includes violence interrupters who are credible messengers in the community who have themselves experienced violence. They work with young people ages 16 to 25, community organizations, and the public.

Using the Cure Violence evidence-based anti-violence model that originated in Chicago, B.R.A.G. was established in 2014 within the confines of the 46th Police Precinct which encompasses areas of the Bronx most impacted by gun violence. B.R.A.G. later expanded its reach to within the areas of the 47<sup>th</sup> and 52<sup>nd</sup> Precincts in the Bronx.



Many of New York's children, youth, and families are working hard to be successful, and Good Shepherd Services New York provides access to opportunity through high-quality programs designed to help individuals and communities thrive. Good Shepherd Services New York sees limitless potential in the communities where they partner. They go where the need is greatest – where problems are deeply entrenched, obstacles are high, and neighborhoods are often untouched by other support systems.

Good Shepherd, indeed, is different – it has confidence in New York City's youth and families, and it has a track record of success which demonstrates that with the right approach, real change is possible even in the most challenging of environments.

### Good Shepherd's Powerful Impact

- 93% of families receiving services through Good Shepherd Services New York prevention programs stayed together and were not involved in abuse or neglect cases.
- 92% of Chelsea Foyer supportive housing graduates transitioned to stable housing. These young adults, who have aged out of the child welfare system, or are homeless or at risk of homelessness, received up to 24 months of preparation for independent living.
- 96% of participants surveyed in the Marian Hall group residence program feel connected to at least one staff member.
- **B.R.A.G. mediated 2,353 conflicts from 2018 through 2021 and held 10,973 violence interruption activities plus spent 21,531 hours canvassing the community to spread the message of peace and anti-gun violence.**

A strong, connected community can offer the safety, mentorship, and pride that bolster young people along their path to success. But in many of the neighborhoods it supports, the challenges that often accompany poverty – including high unemployment, low-wage jobs, crime, and incarceration – stand in the way of this potential.

Good Shepherd Services New York works in partnership with local leaders, volunteers, and businesses to address local challenges and support young people.

<https://goodshepherds.org/>

*The National Advocacy Center (NAC) is the voice and lobbying arm of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd religious community, staff members, and clients in their ministries and agencies across the country. NAC empowers and is the voice for those on the margin of society and works to lessen their burdens through policy.*