



JPA

Juvenile Protective Association



The Whole Truth And Nothing But The Truth

News Item: “[A] 14-year-old was hit in the back and was taken to Comer Children’s Hospital in critical condition. The 13-year-old was grazed in the arm and was taken to St. Bernard Hospital in good condition. The 2-year-old was unharmed, police said.” 12/28/16

In my role here at JPA, I force myself to read through news reports of shootings in Chicago. Why? Because so many of the children we see in individual counseling talk to us about a close friend or relative who has been shot. Sadly, some of the children we treat have been victims of shootings. Keeping up with the news helps me plan for the resources we need to address their needs.

It’s never easy reading through the news but this particular sentence stood out: “The 2-year-old was unharmed.” That is not true. The toddler wasn’t shot but no one who works with children would say the child was unharmed – even lay people know that seeing your siblings shot in front of you is harmful.

While we don’t know exactly how the harm may manifest itself in the future, we can imagine. This terrifying event took place in front of a child largely unable to verbalize the experience, let alone make sense of it. Years from now how he reacts to stressful situations may be triggered by what he saw and experienced that night. If his wounds are not cared for now, one day we may find him lashing out at another innocent victim.

We cannot afford to become inured to the violence in our city or complacent about how it is reported. We must report the facts as they are: Three children were harmed in that shooting: Two suffered physical harm, and all of them suffered emotional damage. Emotional and social wounds can be as serious and long lasting as physical trauma – let’s start dealing with the whole truth.

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Presidents & CEO