



JPA

Juvenile Protective Association



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Most Chicagoans are eager for summer. But not all, as I learned one sunny afternoon in North Lawndale, a neighborhood ranked one of the five most dangerous in Chicago.

Not long ago after a spate of particularly cold, and generally miserable weather, I got out of my car in North Lawndale on a warm morning topped by crystal-clear sapphire skies. As my friend's mother used to say, "The sun kissed my face." I was heading into the North Lawndale Christian Community Center. The Center hosts a restaurant, a gym, spacious meeting spaces and one of the best outdoor terraces in the city. It serves as a retreat for many in—and out—of the community.

As I walked on to the elevator, a gentleman entered with me. I remarked, "Beautiful weather we're having!" The man bowed his head and said, "Hmmm, sunny days means warmer weather. Warmer weather means more shootings."

It was a clarifying moment for me. Two adults living in the same city, experiencing the same day with two completely different interpretations of what the coming summer weather would mean for our respective communities. It was humbling.

Since the beginning of the year, Chicago has suffered more than 1,400 shootings, with 55 people shot just this month. Kids are supposed to be outside in the summer, enjoying life. Many will be, but not all. Especially for kids on the South and West sides of Chicago, summer can mean more danger, not more opportunity to play and enjoy their vacation.

I still plan to enjoy the beautiful weather, but as I look skyward, I will also send a prayer that one day everyone will be able to enjoy it without fear.

Karen G. Foley
Presidents & CEO