

ChildWatch

marian wright edelman

It didn't have to happen



"I'm learning that milestones are a very difficult thing to get through in this first year . . . Everything has become 'after Noah's death,'" said Jodi Sandoval through a stream of tears. Jodi lost her 14-year-old son Noah McGuire to gun violence in Clintonville, Ohio on July 5, 2012.

Jodi had made the deliberate decision to keep guns out of her own home in an effort to protect her five children: "I thought that by making a mindful choice not to have guns in my home or to allow guns in my home, to explain to my kids, explain to Noah, my feelings on the violent video games, the gun culture, the violence culture—I thought that if I said the right things and did the right things that somehow that would protect him from what happened to him." But she couldn't keep Noah safe when he went on a sleepover at his friend Levi Reed's grandparents' home. Levi was also 14 years old that day when he found and started fooling around with his grandfather's loaded and unlocked gun.

"Children are curious . . . With guns it just seems common sense is the best measure to take against accidents like Noah's death. Totally accidental: his friend pulled the trigger, the magazine wasn't in the gun, [but] he didn't know there was a bullet in the chamber. Now Jodi is wracked with grief and guilt. "I feel horrible that I had no idea that Noah was playing in a

house where . . . there were guns." Noah and his family aren't the only victims of this tragic accident. Levi Reed was charged with delinquency and reckless homicide after accidentally killing his friend, and his life will be forever altered and burdened by this tragedy.

Noah's death, like thousands of other American children's deaths, didn't have to happen. It could very easily have been prevented with common sense gun safety and safe gun storage laws and practices by gun owners. In 2010, 134 children and teenagers died from accidental shootings, and more than 3,000 others suffered accidental gun injuries. Many of the accidental gun victims and shooters are younger than Levi and Noah. They include children like three-year-old Darrien Nez, who died in Arizona on April 29 after shooting himself in the face with a gun he found while playing with his grandmother's bag. Or two-year-old Caroline Sparks, who was killed at her Kentucky home on April 30 by her five-year-old brother with a rifle he had been given as a birthday gift. Or two-year-old Sincere Tymere Smith, whose pastor and grandmother told MSNBC he was known for being inseparable from his father, but who died after shooting himself in the chest with his father's gun on Christmas night. When adults choose to own guns adults must take responsibility for keeping their guns locked up and out of the hands of children.

Many Americans are surprised when they learn how simple many guns are for even toddlers to fire and that the same two-year-old who can't open a childproof medicine bottle might be able to pull a trigger and shoot herself or someone else. In fact, a 1976 amendment to the Consumer Product Safety Act that the National Rifle Association advocated for specifically forbids the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) from regulating the sale and manufacture of guns, despite the fact that they are one of the most lethal consumer products killing more than 30,000 people a year and injuring 72,000 others. As a result, the CPSC can regulate teddy bears and toy guns but not real guns—even though common sense design changes and safety mechanisms like trigger locks can save lives.

Eleven states and the District of Columbia have acted to fill this void, passing laws requiring locking devices on some or all firearms. But that means that in 39 states, there is no such requirement.

Another common sense answer is child access prevention laws, which require gun owners to store their guns so that children and teens can't access them unsupervised. Studies have found these laws reduce accidental shootings of children by as much as 23 percent. But only 14 states currently have such laws and support of stronger child access prevention laws is often drowned out by the same loud voices of the gun lobby that fight background checks and other common sense gun safety measures.

A law requiring Levi Reed's grandfather to store his gun safely might have saved Noah McGuire's life. As Jodi reflected, "Storing your firearms responsibly with constant regard that there are children nearby—if you have children in your home and you have firearms, then that needs to be on the forefront of your mind at all times." Enough is enough. It is time for responsible parents everywhere to make sure everyone in their community stores their guns safely out of the reach of unsupervised children. And it is time for responsible citizens everywhere to stand up to the gun lobby and demand that politicians pass common sense gun safety and safe storage laws. Visit the Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence website to find out whether your state has laws about gun locking devices and safe gun storage.

Marian Wright Edelman is President of the Children's Defense Fund whose Leave No Child Behind® mission is to ensure every child a Healthy Start, a Head Start, a Fair Start, a Safe Start and a Moral Start in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities. For more information go to www.childrensdefense.org.

**Reach One, Teach One
Let's Save Our Children
SCOOP U.S.A.**

Family Day resource and awareness expo

The Philadelphia PA Section of the National Council of Negro Women, Inc. (NCNW) will host a Resource and Awareness Expo in Malcolm X Park located at 52nd and Pine Sts., Philadelphia, PA on **Saturday, June 8, 2013** from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm. This is a free event open to the public.

NCNW sponsors social, educational, cultural, health, and self-help projects both nationally and internationally. In keeping with our commitment to helping families in Philadelphia communities, we host Family Day, a community outreach project. This event is to inform the communities about the resources that are available to them which will assist in improving the quality of life as it pertains to health/nutrition, education/ careers, family services, civil liberties, safety, economics and other areas of interest.

Invited guests include: recreation department, job corps, school district, CATCH, OIC, Urban League, Young entrepreneur, YES, Freedom Theater, Evelyn Graves, College Access Program, Metro Career Center, Ex-Offender Programs, Automotive Training Center, AAA School of Trucking, Career Link, J and A Caterers, Montgomery County Community College, CCP City Behavioral Health and Mental Retardation, Telecommunica-

tions Device Distribution Program, Spectrum Health Care Center, DHS, PHA, Nursing Center, Planned Parenthood, LIFE/Penn, AHA, Red Cross, Bible Society, AchieveAbility, Area Life Learning, New Choices Career Dev., NAN, PECO, Fire Administration, Project Home, OVR, CDC, WOAR, NAACP, Salvation Army, PCA, PGW, Fair Housing Rights, Temple Disabilities, Citizens Bank, Wells Fargo Bank, Boaz Partnership, West Philadelphia YMCA, Phila. Health Department, U of P School of Nursing, Alzheimer Assoc., BE-BASHI, Choice, Health Promotion Council, Nursing Consortium, Office of Senator Anthony H. Williams,.....

Families will also enjoy entertainment for all ages that including Mr. Fantasy — DJ and magician, zumba dancing, clown (face painting and balloon art), free mildly used clothing, saxophonist, hula contests, games, free prizes.....

The mission of NCNW is to advance opportunities and improve the quality of life for families and their communities. Among the ways that NCNW fulfills this mission is through community-based services.

If you would like more information about this event, please contact VERNIA WINN at 610-622-4240 or e-mail craigverna@comcast.net

**Don't Worry, Be Happy
Stay in the Loop with
SCOOP USA**

Your invite to be part of history

SCOOP USA Keeping The Dream Alive

Coalition to erect a Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. life-size Bronze Statue on Martin Luther King Drive

You too can be part of history by having your name engraved on the granite base of the Martin Luther King Statue to be erected on Martin Luther King Drive in Fairmount Park Philadelphia.

The "Freedom Dream" monument by artist Sculptor Rebecca-Rose (RMFAC Studio) will be a gift to the City of Philadelphia as a Legacy and Symbol of International Human Rights and Dignity for all people.

Philadelphia's leaders, community organizations, cultural families and sponsors are being asked to support us with a letter of interest if you are able and willing to make this tax-exempt donation. For your contribution of one thousand dollars (\$1,000.) dollars, your name or your organization will be engraved on the granite base of the monument as a living legacy of your support.

Please fill out and forward the enclosed **PLEDGE FORM**, to **SCOOP USA, PO Box 14013, Philadelphia, PA 19121** or **Rebecca Rose, Sculptor, 3118 Spring Garden Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104**

We welcome an opportunity to talk or meet with you regarding the details. Contact Rebecca Rose: (215) 833-9082 (cell), e-mail: rebeccarosemfac@yahoo.com or Sonny Driver 215-232-5974 call SCOOP office for e-mail directory.

PLEDGE FORM

I pledge to contribute to the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Monument fund. I understand no money is required at this time. We will include you in the Sponsors and Supporters Reception. Our Fiscal agent will follow up for a 501c3 tax exemption for your contribution.

Check box:
> Donor of \$1,000. / Name to be engraved on monument base as testament of support,

Name/Title: _____ or Organization: _____

Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

