

UAAMAC Gun Exchange Program

Over 240 weapons and ammunition collected during the exchange

After the senseless murders of two young people by gun violence, UAAMAC's President and CEO, the Rev. Ikenna Kokayi, challenged community leaders and residents to pledge \$100 each to get the guns off the streets of Southeastern San Diego at a community forum held to denounce senseless gang-related shootings. "I ask all of you in attendance tonight to pledge \$100 each to purchase gift cards that will be exchanged for guns", implored the Rev. Kokayi. "We want the guns off the streets" he said. More than 50 residents who attended the forum responded to the call, committing \$5,000 toward the gun exchange effort. "No questions asked, no ID required, just get those guns in."

The gun exchange which took place three days before Christmas, garnered over 240 weapons and ammunition collected during the three-hour event. "We are very pleased by the enthusiastic response by both those in attendance at last week's forum as well as private citizens to our call to action as it relates to getting firearms off the streets," he said. "It's not so much that we expected a lot of gang members to turn in guns, but we were trying to get some of the guns out of homes," Kokayi said. "A lot of homes are being burglarized, those guns are being discovered, and those guns are being used to commit crimes."

County District Attorney Bonnie Dumanis moved by the community's response donated \$5,000 to the effort. Jennifer Vanica, President/CEO of the Jacobs Family Foundation and a local businessman, who both saw the media coverage, contributed \$2,500 each. Chief of Police William Lansdowne wrote in a [letter of commendation](#) to the Rev. Kokayi, "I want to thank you and the members of UAAMAC for recognizing that the task of making our streets safe can only be achieved through the collaborative efforts of the police and community. The success of the gun exchange program is truly a demonstration of a partnership for change".

According to Kokayi, the guns for gift cards exchange will become an annual project of UAAMAC occurring in the month of December.