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**Illinois Peace Project Debuts the 2025 'Peace Portraits' Honorees,
Recognizes Their Dedication to Community Safety**

CHICAGO, IL (June 13, 2025) – Last night, the Illinois Peace Project (IPP) recognized five honorees for “[Peace Portraits](#),” a visual project highlighting Illinois men and women working to end gun violence in their community. The event took place at the Metropolitan Peace Academy in Pilsen.

The five honorees were spotlighted in editorial features, video packages, and portraits.

“Peace Portraits’ is such a special project because it allows those who are making a real difference in their community to tell their stories. Every day, these men and women are using their God-given gifts to uplift, inspire, and empower others,” said IPP. “We give thanks to our honorees for sharing their stories, and for the work they’re doing to bring peace to their communities.”

Supported by a coalition of nonprofits in the Community Violence Intervention (CVI) ecosystem, “Peace Portraits” received over 30 applications, with five honorees selected after a rigorous panel review.

The inaugural “Peace Portraits” class includes:

- **Pablo Galvez, SC2 Manager at BUILD Chicago**
- **Nekenya Hardy, Associate Director of Outreach at Institute for Nonviolence Chicago (INVC)**
- **Dr. Vanessa Perry DeReef, Chief Training Officer at Metropolitan Peace Initiatives (MPI)**
- **Rafi Peterson, Director of Communities Partnering 4 Peace at Southwest Organizing Project (SWOP)**
- **Jeannine Wise, Program Director of Good Food is Good Medicine**

Documented by 5 by 12 Films and photographed by Kelcey McKinney, the series explores how individuals can leverage their unique talents and lived experiences to promote community safety and peace.

“The reason why I care so much about the people around me is because I almost died several times when I lived in active addiction,” said Peace Portrait finalist Jeannine Wise, a Caucasian chef who teaches food equity on Chicago’s South and West sides. “Other people are in my situation; they don’t look like me and they get incarcerated.”

“I want to amplify the voices of those whose voices have not been heard,” said Dr. Vanessa Perry DeReef, who leads Chicago’s premier training center for street outreach workers, case managers, and victim service workers. “That’s what makes me get out of bed in the morning.”

To learn more about each of the honorees and their contributions to stopping gun violence in Illinois, please visit the link below to view the series in full.

[Peace Portraits – Illinois Peace Project](#)

About the Illinois Peace Project

The Illinois Peace Project is an initiative supported by partner organizations with a shared vision for reducing gun violence in Illinois.
