**For Immediate Release**

## 8th Annual Hope Walk Against Violence to Address Domestic Violence, and Gun Violence on Ravenel Bridge

**Charleston, SC** - **September, 21, 2023**: The [8th Annual Hope Walk Against Violence](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/8th-annual-hope-walk-tickets-590414213807) is back and stronger than ever, poised to make a profound impact on the community. Taking place on Saturday, October 14, from 8:00 AM to 11:00 AM on the iconic Ravenel Bridge, this year's event will broaden its focus to address not only domestic violence but also gun violence, uniting the community against the scourge of violence in all its forms.

**About the Walk**

The walk will begin on the Charleston side of the Ravenel Bridge at Saint Julian’s Divine Center at 1 Cooper Street and end on the Mt. Pleasant side of the bridge. Participants will gather at Saint Julian’s to hear speakers present before the walk. We're asking the community to come out and link hands from the Charleston to the Mount Pleasant side in hopes to send a message loud and clear that it's time to STOP THE VIOLENCE!!!

For more information about the event, ticket sales, and how to get involved, please visit: [https://www.eventbrite.com/e/8th-annual-hope-walk-tickets-590414213807](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/8th-annual-hope-walk-tickets-590414213807%5D)

**Raising Awareness About Domestic Violence in South Carolina**

South Carolina ranks sixth-worst in the nation for women killed by men, according to the annual “When Men Murder Women” report published September 2021. The Violence Policy Center's latest data reveals that in South Carolina, approximately two women are killed for every 100,000 people, resulting in a death rate more than twice the national average. Many of these domestic violence incidents involve firearms.

The walk serves as a beacon of hope and solidarity for victims, and emphasizes the importance of a united community effort. Event founder, Marlvis ‘Butch’ Kennedy said, *“I'm not sure that people understand just how much your presence at this event means to all the victims that have been affected by Domestic Violence. For them to know that, at least one day out of the year, someone cares about them, someone truly listens to them.*”

Kennedy explained that victims are invited to walk at the front of the crowd, so that, “*When they turn around, they can see all the people walking behind them, supporting them, and they feel like they’re not alone.*” By participating in the walk, Kennedy says, individuals are actively helping to break the cycle of violence and providing vital resources to those in need.

**Against Violence, In All Its Forms**

With increasing rates of gun violence across the state, this year’s event also recognizes the need to address broader issues affecting our society to foster a collective understanding that violence, in all its manifestations, affects our entire community, not just those directly involved. “The ripple-effect of violence creates trauma and ruptures that can persist for generations. It’s like a virus.” This event aims to bring awareness to the root causes of violence and seeks active participation from the broader community in finding sustainable solutions.

Over the years, the Hope Walk has garnered significant support from various stakeholders, including Mayor John Tecklenburg, and late police chief, Luther Reynolds. Local and city officials, law enforcement, doctors, hospital workers, educators, school board members, mentorship groups, victim's advocates, and community organizers will be present for the walk this year. Live 5 anchor, Raphael James will emcee the event for the third year. Local media personalities and news stations will also be on-site to provide comprehensive coverage of the event.

**How Your Donations Will Be Used**

Proceeds from ticket sales and t-shirt purchases will go towards supporting two vital organizations: the [Palmetto Hope Network](https://www.palmettohopenetwork.org/) and the [Tri-County Gun Violence Coordinating Council (GVCC)](https://www.palmettohopenetwork.org/gun-violence). These organizations work tirelessly on violence intervention initiatives and collaborate with various wrap-around service organizations assisting both direct and collateral victims of violence.

Your participation will aid Palmetto Hope Network in being able to provide the necessary services to victims displaced by domestic violence through crisis intervention, emergency hotel placement, food, safety planning and a wide range of other critically important supports to keep them safe and moving forward. Your ticket purchases guarantee that victims in our community continue to have access to free and confidential services 24 hours a day.

**All Are Welcome**

The 8th Annual Hope Walk Against Violence is a family-friendly event, welcoming participants of all ages. Organizers encourage participants to invite friends, family, colleagues, and students to join in, as the event seeks to emphasize that violence affects the entire community, not just those directly involved.

Throughout the event, attendees will have the opportunity to engage with representatives from various organizations and sign up for more active roles in violence prevention efforts. These opportunities include becoming mentors, participating in community clean-up initiatives, joining community garden programs, providing support for grant writing initiatives, and exploring how to implement the national [BeSMART program](https://besmartforkids.org/) for secure gun storage in your child’s school as well as the Tri-County GVCC’s ‘Lock It Up’ Campaign to encourage gun owners to lock their vehicles to prevent firearm theft.

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**Event Details:**

**Date**: Saturday, October 14, 2023

**Time**: 8:00 AM - 11:00 AM

**Location**: Ravenel Bridge, Charleston, SC – Beginning on the Charleston side of the Ravenel Bridge and ending on the Mt. Pleasant side of the bridge.

**Day-of Details:** Participants will gather at Saint Julian’s Divine Center at 1 Cooper Street to hear speakers present before the walk.

**Event Host/Emcee**: Raphael James

**Tickets:** [https://www.eventbrite.com/e/8th-annual-hope-walk-tickets-590414213807](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/8th-annual-hope-walk-tickets-590414213807%5D)

**About the Hope Walk Against Violence**

The Hope Walk Against Violence is an annual event dedicated to raising awareness and addressing the issues of domestic violence and gun violence in the Charleston community. It brings together community leaders, officials, and residents to collectively combat the devastating impact of violence on society. \*Photos from walks past can be found [here.](https://www.hope-walk-against-do.palmettohopenetwork.org/sets)

**About Palmetto Hope Network**

Palmetto Hope Network is a non-profit organization committed to supporting victims of domestic violence and advocating for violence prevention initiatives in the Charleston area. For more information about programs and services visit [www.palmettohopenetwork.org](http://www.palmettohopenetwork.org)

IG: [@palmettohopenetwork](http://instagram.com/palmettohopenetwork)

FB: [@palmettohopenetwork](http://facebook.com/palmettohopenetwork)

LinkedIn: [@palmettohopenetwork](https://www.linkedin.com/company/palmetto-hope-network)

**About the Tri-County Gun Violence Coordinating Council (GVCC)**

The Tri-County Gun Violence Coordinating Council (GVCC) is a collaborative effort aimed at reducing gun violence through coordinated efforts in the Tri-County region of Charleston, Berkeley, and Dorchester counties. Read more about the GVCC’s efforts [here](https://www.palmettohopenetwork.org/post/gvcc-final-forum-summary).

**About the Lock It Up Campaign**

To address the issue of illegal and stolen firearms in the Tri-County area the Gun Violence Coordinating Council initiated the Lock it Up Campaign, a PSA aimed to remind gun owners to lock their vehicles to prevent firearm theft. Responsible gun ownership means securing your firearms in the home AND in the car. For more information visit: <https://www.palmettohopenetwork.org/lock-it-up>