Neighborhood leaders are campaigning throughout Baltimore, calling for a weekend in August without any killings.

Call for a ceasefire:

‘Nobody kill anybody’

BY TIM PRUDENTE
The Baltimore Sun

A 44-year-old mother might seem an unusual visitor on the drug corners of Baltimore, but Erricka Bridgeford has shown up for weeks to make her pitch for peace.

Forget your grudges for one weekend, she urges the young man she finds. Help bring a 72-hour truce to a city beset by gun violence.

“It’s a citywide call,” she tells them, “It’s me talking to you.”

Bridgeford and other neighborhood leaders are drumming up support for a three-day ceasefire the first weekend of August to quell Baltimore’s violence. She admits that such peace is a tall order for a city that’s seen 188 killings this year.

The organizers are raising money through their website for more flyers. Some of the money will be donated to the families of anyone killed over the ceasefire weekend. Bridgeford is urging everyone she meets to echo the call for peace.

“We’re asking everyone to do their part,” Erricka Bridgeford, professional mediator, neighborhood volunteer and one of the organizers of the three-day Baltimore Ceasefire.

Mural by Dr. Bob Hieronimus called “A Little Help From Our Friends” featured on the front page of the Baltimore Sun on July 19, 2017. Themes from “A Little Help From Our Friends” are cooperation and compassion and the power of neighborhoods. It was designed on commission for the community mediation and arbitration facility known as the Safe and Smart Center in Waverly in 1996 (restored in 2008). Gigantic portraits of some of the “Friends” and inspirations for peace seen in this photo include, left to right, environmental pioneer Rachel Carson, reggae prophet Bob Marley, Nobel poet Bob Dylan, and peaceful resistance pioneer Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.

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not only being exhausted by homicides, but believing that Baltimore can have a murder-free weekend if everyone takes responsibility.

More than 600 people have pledged to keep the peace, they wrote. Among them are some of the young men Bridgeford has met on the corner. “You just talk to them like they’re your little brother,” she said.

A professional mediator, neighborhood volunteer and part-time Uber driver, “Everyone who gets in my car leaves with a flyer and a speech,” Bridgeford says her younger brother was gunned down a decade ago in Southwest Baltimore. His killer was never caught.

Next month’s ceasefire would prove successful if it deters a single shooting, she said. And she figures the movement has already saved a life somewhere.

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