

Robert P. Astorino
County Executive

March 13, 2013

Please join me on April 9th to be part of the next phase of Westchester's "Safer Communities," a series of collaborative initiatives designed to prevent senseless acts of violence like the tragedy in Newtown, Conn.

Safer Communities kicked off last month with a "School Safety Symposium" at SUNY Purchase that brought together 300 leaders from law enforcement and our county's public, private and parochial schools. We are now expanding the effort to encompass our broader communities and are inviting leaders like you from our cities, towns, villages, neighborhood associations, health and mental health agencies, and faith-based organizations, as well as schools, to attend.

Our "Community Violence Prevention Forum" on April 9th has been organized by Dr. Sherlita Amler, commissioner of the county Department of Health, and Dr. Grant Mitchell, commissioner of the county Department of Community Mental Health, in partnership with New York Medical College. A key focus will be to address violence as a public health issue. **The program runs from 9:00-1:30 p.m. with registration beginning at 8:30 a.m.**

Dr. Howard Spivak, director of the Division of Violence Prevention at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, will be the keynote speaker and share best practices and research highlights on preventing and addressing behaviors that put our communities and children at risk.

Most important, we invite you to participate in a series of breakout discussions where we seek your insights and expertise to help shape our future strategies for:

- Improving Community Partnerships
- Treating Violence as a Public Health Issue
- Building Safer Learning Environments in Schools
- Strengthening Family Safety Nets

One of the key takeaways from the School Safety Symposium was that our overall effectiveness in combating violence is greatly improved when we remove geographical and bureaucratic silos. More effective communication and collaboration is what is needed and that's why your participation is so important.

The event is open to you and members of your team. **Simply click the RSVP link below** by Wednesday, March 27. The program and parking are free and refreshments will be served.

Thank you for everything you already do in your communities and our county and I look forward to seeing you.

Sincerely,



Westchester County Executive