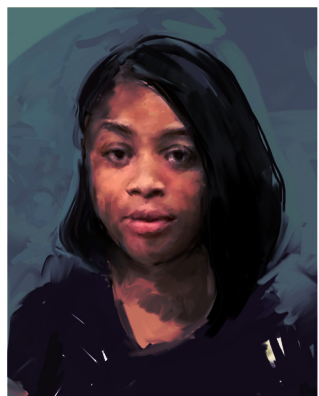




LIMESTONE OF LOST LEGACIES





In the most violent parts of Washington, D.C., some of our youth take all the right steps to get ahead in life. Yet for too many of them, hope and enthusiasm still end in tragedy. They become victims of being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

There were 166 homicides in D.C. in 2019, 12 of them were children attending school. These tragedies are too often viewed as separate incidents, but the poverty and violence that plague this city band them all together.

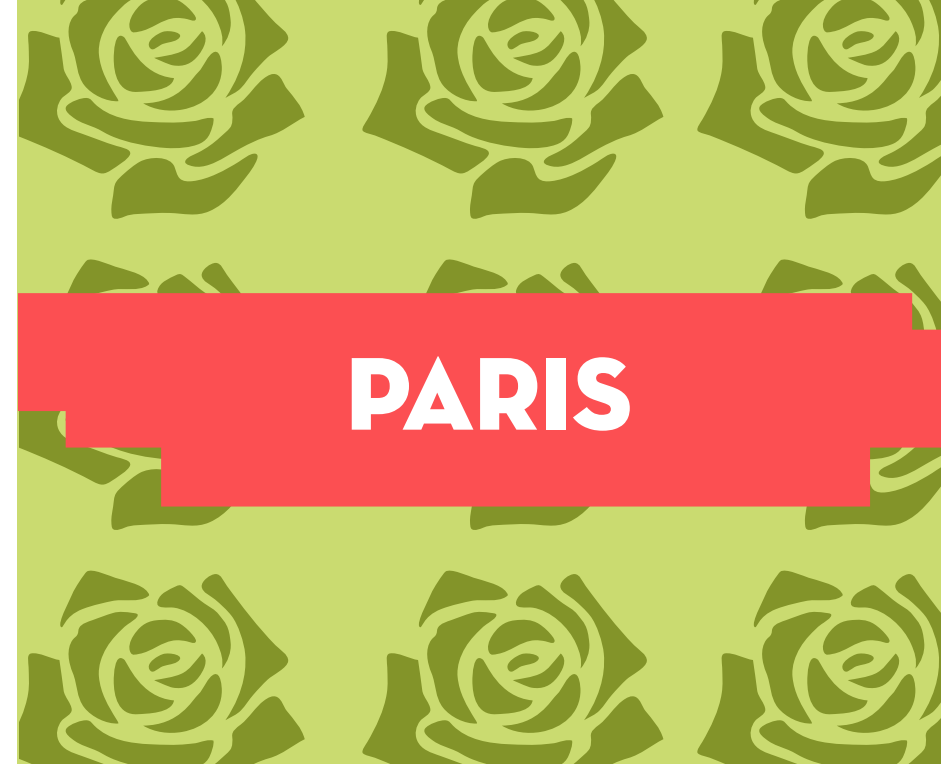
The Limestone of Lost Legacies mural project unites these victims by memorializing five of our slain teenagers — a snapshot of this city’s widespread epidemic of gun violence. With this mural, we want to ensure these beautiful souls are remembered for who they were, not as a stereotype, police report, or forgotten news story. We want people who walk by to feel motivated to take action to make our city safer.

For many of these victims’ family members, they felt like they lost part of themselves when their loved ones were killed. With so much senseless violence, this city is losing part of itself, too.

-Lauryn Renford, Creator, Limestone of Lost Legacies

Follow along the journey that made this mural a reality.

MURAL TIMELINE



In January 2018, just four months after Thurgood Marshall Academy classmate Zaire Kelly was killed, Paris Brown was shot multiple times with a handgun and declared dead on the sidewalk on Skyland Place in Southeast Washington, D.C. Police didn't give a motive for the killing.

At school, Paris was known as a reflective, deep-thinking person. He was a poet and rapper who wanted to make change with his words, and he would perform his poems at school. Just before his death, he had been working on a poem with one of his teachers that reflected on his life — the poem was later read at a memorial service honoring his life.

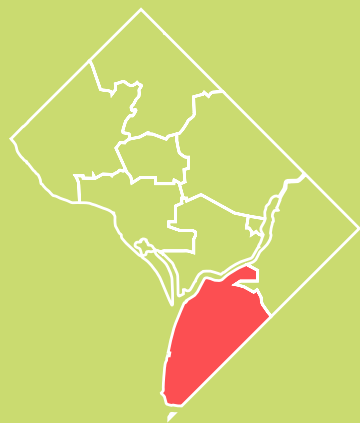
But he wasn't always honored appropriately after he died. News articles included photos of Paris holding liquor bottles with his middle fingers blurred out, failing to portray him as a respectable citizen even though his actions in school proved different. One of the articles referred to Paris as a "man," passing over the fact that he was just a high school student.

Paris' story represents the generational cycles of violence

that plague this city, as his brother was shot just months after him. And his murder fits another troubling pattern — many of Washington, D.C.'s gun violence victims are young Black men who have had contact with the criminal justice system.

But Paris is not a stereotype and his life cannot be remembered as a police report or a short news story. His friends remember him as a person who stood out, cared about society and politics, and had an interest in African-American studies. "Paris had a presence, a very special presence that I think is so hard for young Black men to tap into," said Lena Barker, a librarian at Thurgood Marshall.

Indeed, Paris will be remembered for his personality and his character. "Paris was the most amazing person to me. I loved him from the first day I saw him," said his mother Seditra Brown. "Paris had so much determination and spark and a powerful drive to succeed in life. I love you, son."



"PARIS WAS THE MOST AMAZING PERSON TO ME. I LOVED HIM FROM THE FIRST DAY I SAW HIM. I KNEW YOU WERE GOING TO BE A LEGEND. PARIS HAD SO MUCH DETERMINATION AND SPARK AND A POWERFUL DRIVE TO SUCCEED IN LIFE. I LOVE YOU SON, YOU WILL ALWAYS BE A YOUNG LEGEND." - SEDITRA BROWN



Petition is created to gauge community interest for the mural.

NOVEMBER 2017



"She Loved Hard"

JAMAHRI

As a senior in high school, Jamahri Sydnor was so enthusiastic about getting into Florida A&M University that she posted her acceptance letter on social media. The summer after graduation, she was already packing her suitcases 10 days before she was to move to college.

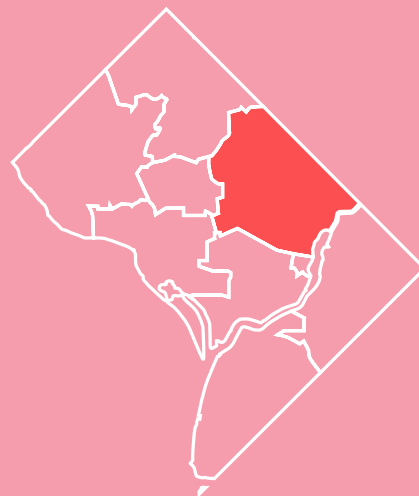
But she never made it. A stray bullet struck Jamahri in the head as she was driving her nephew home one day in Northeast Washington, D.C. She was put on life support and died two days later.

Always a smile on her face, Jamahri could not have been more excited about life. The captain of her high school cheerleading squad, she loved to dance and sang in a choir that had just won an award at a choral jazz competition. She cared about her fellow classmates, too. As a peer counselor, Jamahri inspired one student to stay in school and the pair soon graduated together. "The first thing that comes to mind when I think of Jammi is how much she loved everyone," said her aunt, E. Theresa Marshall. "She loved hard."

"JAMAHRI ALWAYS LIT UP THE ROOM! SHE WAS FULL OF LIFE & LAUGHTER. SHE CARED ABOUT EVERYONE. SHE WAS THE GRANDCHILD WHO I NEVER HAD TO ASK TO DO ANYTHING. SHE WOULD SEE A NEED & JUST VOLUNTEER! SHE WAS SO COMPASSIONATE." - RENA ROSS

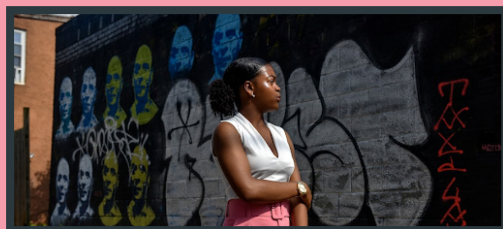
But shootings in Washington, D.C. can find anyone, even motivated and successful people who lead loving, wholesome lives. And even though that violence overwhelmingly affects African-American boys, it can kill girls as well. As she innocently drove by, Jamahri knew nothing of the gunmen who popped out of the bushes to fire at a group across the street. But that's how pervasive violence is here.

Jamahri's mother, Que Wallace had been a homicide detective at the D.C. Metropolitan Police Department for years, but she retired after her daughter's death. She said she arrived at crime scenes too late, unable to prevent deaths like Jamahri's. Many in Washington, D.C. feel that way. "There are no words to describe the emptiness and tremendous loss in our lives and the world," Wallace said.



The search for a wall begins.

DECEMBER 2017-APRIL 2018



"He Made An Impact"

STEVE

Like Paris, Steve Slaughter lived in Ward 8, a neighborhood in Southeast D.C. that consistently has the highest unemployment rate in the city. His story shows how poverty can drive people to take kids' lives — even for nothing in return.

Steve was only 14 years old, 5 feet 4 inches tall and a freshman at Friendship Collegiate Academy. He was a kind boy with a wide smile, extroverted personality and unique sense of humor. Steve had dreams of making the high school varsity football team, getting a college scholarship and playing in the NFL. And he didn't just wait for it: he had already played youth football since the first grade and he would pump weights in front of the mirror at home. "It was a pleasure knowing and coaching you," his coach Hubbie Griffin said. "Made my job so easy because you play so hard for me."

Steve had a lot of friends at school and had recently taken a girl in his class to the eighth grade prom. Steve loved to

"MY SON STEVEN JAMES SLAUGHTER JR., BETTER KNOWN AS "POOH," WAS THE BEST SON ANYONE COULD ASK FOR. HIS BEAUTIFUL SMILE, OUTGOING PERSONALITY, AND HIS AMAZING SENSE OF HUMOR MADE HIM ONE PERSON THAT WOULD NEVER BE FORGOTTEN. HE MADE AN IMPACT ON EVERYONE HE KNEW OR CROSSED PATHS WITH. HE WAS TRULY AN ANGEL IN DISGUISE. I JUST WANNA SAY THAT I LOVE YOU FOREVER AND YOU WILL FOREVER BE MISSED." - TIFFANIE JONES

play Madden NFL, the football video game, and had been playing a tournament with two friends for hours one Sunday in January 2018 when they decided to go out for some snacks. On their way back from 7-Eleven, they were approached by a trio of muggers with a semiautomatic weapon that were looking for someone to rob. All Steve and his friends had on them were chips, soda and some change, but when they tried to run, Steve was shot three times.

Steve's life ended tragically early, through no fault of his own, simply for going to get snacks in his neighborhood. His mother Tiffanie, who called him "Pooh," said he was "the best son anyone could ask for."

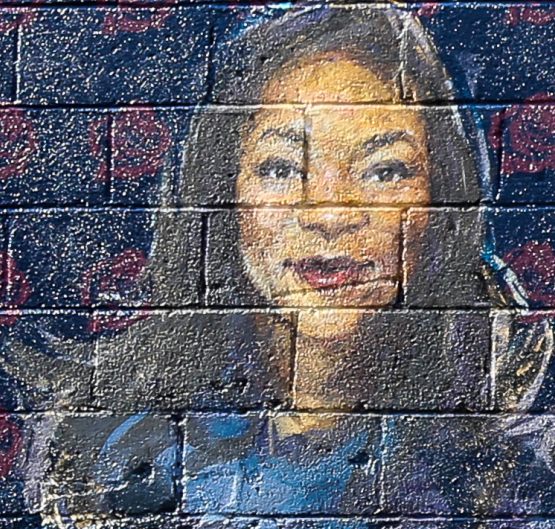
"He made an impact on everyone he knew or crossed paths with," she continued. "He was truly an angel in disguise." Tiffanie calls him S.T.E.V.E.N., which stands for "Stepping Towards Ending Violence Everyday Now!"



The mural, in its earliest planning stages, is awarded a Washington Post article written by Marissa J. Lang.

JUNE 2018

ARTIST
MARTIN SWIFT



Paris



Jamahri



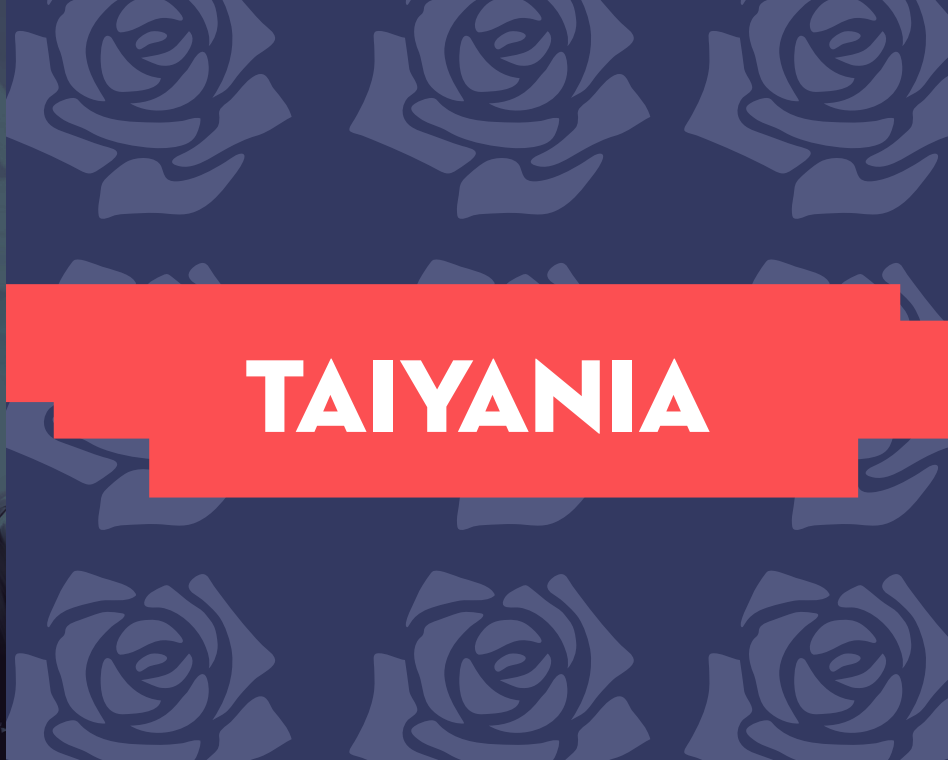
Steve



Taiyania

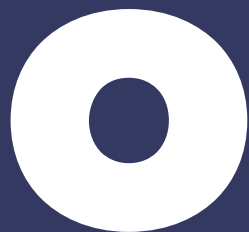


Zaire



TAIYANIA

"That beautiful smile"



One mile away from where Jamahri Sydnor was struck by a stray bullet, another young girl was shot to death. Taiyania Thompson, a 16-year-old sophomore, was found dead in an apartment in the Ivy City neighborhood in January 2018. At first, her family had no idea why she was at that apartment. They later learned she had been with her boyfriend, who was the one that pulled the trigger and killed her. He said he loved Taiyania and didn't mean to shoot her.

Not only is Taiyania's story one of domestic violence, but it's also evidence that gun violence is sadly passed down within families — from generation to generation. When Taiyania was just five months old, her father was shot to death at the age of 17. Her family made sure to tell her stories about her dad and took her to his grave at the cemetery. But then

"THERE'S SOOOOOO MUCH I CAN TELL YOU ABOUT MY DAUGHTER. TAIYANIA HAD A SMILE THAT WAS OUTTA THIS WORLD. HER BIGGEST GOAL WAS HELPING OTHERS, WITH AN UNSELFISH HEART. WE DON'T CELEBRATE HOLIDAYS. WE COOK AND WE GO OUT AND FEED THE HOMELESS ON THANKSGIVING, CHRISTMAS, AND NEW YEAR'S. SHE ENJOYED GOING OUT AND BEING AMONGST THE PEOPLE. SHE REALLY LOOKED FORWARD TO JUST BEING AROUND AND HELPING THEM." - LAJOYINA THOMPSON

Taiyania was killed at a younger age than her dad.

Family members fought through their tears to express their love and support for Taiyania. They remembered her as a student that was a kind and unselfish girl who would feed the homeless on Thanksgiving and Christmas. She was soft-spoken but everyone felt her warm heart and knew her big smile.

The sadness was indescribable for her grandmother. Tammy Carter, who has now lost both her son and granddaughter to shootings. Still, she was able to find beautiful words. "Your home is in heaven now," Carter said, "but I know you're protecting the ones who protected you so keep traveling the world with that beautiful smile."



Pathways 2 Power is established.

AUGUST 2018



ZAIRE

"An Exceptional Role Model"

Like Jamahri, Zaire Kelly was getting ready for college. That was precisely the goal the 16-year-old was working towards when he attended his college prep class one night in 2017. Yet he had something else in common with Jamahri: he was unjustly killed in the same Northeast Washington neighborhood — just a half a mile away. On his way home, just 300 feet from his front door, a young man tried to rob him and brutally shot him in the head.

Too many young lives have been taken like this in Washington, D.C, a city ravaged by the gun violence epidemic. Too many teenagers have suffered this fate not because they were involved in any violence themselves, but merely because they were in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Zaire had his whole life in front of him. He was a motivated scholar and a successful athlete at Thurgood Marshall Academy. He earned trophies at track meets around the country and ran an astonishing 4.2-minute mile. He took on only the most challenging assignments in school, was considering running for class president, and had a goal to pursue a career in forensic science.

In 2017, D.C.'s attorney general honored him with the "Right Direction Award" for being an "exceptional role model for

his peers." Zaire also helped a local nonprofit's "silence the violence" movement by distributing clothes and food and setting up for marches and rallies. He attended Jamahri's candlelight vigil just one month before he met a similar fate.

"He was a fighter from the time he took his first and last breath," Zaire's grandmother, Yvonne Brock-Newman, said.

Just minutes before Zaire was killed, his twin, Zion, ran home and texted Zaire to warn him about the dangers of the park. Zaire responded that he would be fine, pointing out he had been carrying a knife ever since he and his brother were robbed a few years earlier. So, he walked home using that exact route and used the weapon to protect himself when the thief attacked. But it wasn't enough, and Zaire was murdered.

Zaire's cousin, Naya Preston, said three words came to mind when she thinks of Zaire: respectful, loving and compassionate. "And I pray that the younger generation will be able to grasp a portion of his character so they can make a difference in someone's life as Zaire did," she added.



"ZAIRE KELLY IS MY GRANDSON. HE WAS A FIGHTER FROM THE TIME HE TOOK HIS FIRST AND LAST BREATH.... AS ALL GREAT KINGS ARE....I WILL ALWAYS LOVE AND MISS YOU BABY. I KNOW YOU ARE AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD." - YVONNE BROCK-NEWMAN

Fundraiser for the mural is hosted on Zaire Kelly's birthday.

OCTOBER 2018

MARCH - APRIL 2019

Artist Martin Swift finalizes mural sketches. In addition, Founder Lauryn Renford explains the story of her own grief while highlighting the purpose of the mural at a TEDx Talk.



MAY 2019

Community members gather to clean the wall for the artist to begin work.

JUNE 2019

Artist Martin Swift outlines the mural on the wall and begins the painting process.



JULY 2019

Founder Lauryn Renford joins Martin Swift as the mural continues to progress and event planning for the unveiling begins..

AUGUST 2019

Nearly 150 family, friends, community members, and media joined to see the mural unveiled. Artist Martin Swift makes final touch-ups just before the start of the unveiling.



In 2020, the world stands in the middle of two crises: the gun violence epidemic in the Black community, and the COVID-19 pandemic. These crises have made it undeniably apparent how detrimental the effects of violence and a lack of resources in our community are to people's lives.

Pathways 2 Power (P2P) is a student-led activist group that formed after the death of two students from Thurgood Marshall Academy, both of whom are memorialized on this mural. The murders of Zaire Kelly and Paris Brown lit a spark in their classmates to fight to shed light on the injustices that led to their deaths, and the same injustices that are happening today.

Since P2P was founded, students have spoken to city and community leaders about the impacts of violence on their daily lives. Through countless panels, local candidate forums, and national and local media attention, P2P leaders have fought to address four root causes of violence: community health, unification of the youth voice, mental health, and education. As violence has increased, we have repeatedly addressed Mayor Bowser and Chief Newsham, calling on them to fully fund proven violence interruption programs, like Cure the Streets and the Office of Neighborhood & Safety. Taylor Martin, a P2P graduate, speaks candidly when she says, "our community lacks power, safe spaces, and economic successes." In order to address those inequities, we must elevate more community members to be proactive in addressing community violence.

It is important to see just how these five stories on the mural are young lives cut too short. We must begin to see how that impacts us all. Pathways 2 Power's work will continue until we see the vision of a murder-free D.C. Join us, the fight has just begun.

-Alexis Jones, Pathways 2 Power graduate





#CHANGETHENARRATIVE

 @P2PDC

 @Pathways2Power

 Pathways 2 Power

Learn more about our impact at

www.pathways2power.org