



**THE CHILD
CENTER OF NY**

Strengthening Family. Building Community.

Statement by The Child Center of NY on the Death of Aamir Griffin

Our hearts are broken for the family and loved ones of Aamir “Buddy” Griffin, the 14-year-old boy who was fatally shot in Jamaica on Monday.

We understand that Aamir was a talented basketball player who had just made the junior varsity basketball team at Benjamin N. Cardozo High School, where he was a freshman; that he was a hard-working student, had a great sense of humor, and was a good friend and loving son. The beautiful candlelight vigil in his memory is a testament to the special place he held in so many hearts, and his sweet photo, donning a cap and gown from middle school, is a stark reminder of what has been lost.

While we did not know Aamir personally, we know that all children have limitless potential, and they deserve the opportunity to make the most of it. The Child Center offers school-based mental health services at neighborhood school I.S. 8. We see all kinds of children. Some, like Aamir, already have so many gifts to give to the world. Some are just discovering what their gifts could possibly be. None of them deserves what happened to Aamir. We join the community in mourning the loss of this young life and the future, so full of promise, that he should have had.

We also join the community in our steadfast commitment to finding solutions to this violence. Our school-based mental health staff understand the challenges our young people face. They are here for you, and no matter what you are struggling with, they can help you realize a potential and strength you may not know you have.

While there are signs of hope in our communities, it wasn’t enough to protect Aamir. We must never allow this to become the norm. We can be sad, angry, outraged, and moved to action, but we must never allow ourselves to be complacent. Another child was shot last night, and we join the community in saying this is unacceptable. We need to remain vigilant in supporting our young people all the time – not just when tragedy strikes.

We do not pretend to have all the answers. We do pledge to always be a safe haven for young people, especially at our community centers throughout Queens, and we welcome the community’s ideas on how we can stop this tragic violence and engage our youth in something positive and lasting.

We send our deepest sympathy to Aamir’s family. We hope you can take some comfort in your good memories of your precious boy. May we all honor his memory by building a better future for the community he called home.