



Community United Church of Christ is requesting your support, participation and partnership.

Guns to Gardening Tools Gun Buyback Event

Hosted by Community United Church of Christ in partnership with RAWTools

When: Sunday June 13, 2021 - 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm
Where: 2650 Table Mesa Drive, Boulder, Colorado 80305
Contact: Reverend Nicole Lamarche 303.499.9119
Mike Martin, 719-203-8069, RAWTools

What: [CUCC](#) and [RAWTools](#) is conducting an anonymous gun buyback event to:

- Remove firearms from the community;
- Allow for safe disposal of unwanted firearms;
- Reduce the number of gun deaths and injuries in a community;
- Turn swords into plowshares.

Help us reach our goal of removing 500 firearms from circulation

The CUCC Community has contributed \$20,000 toward a match and we are inviting community members, faith communities and businesses to help us in our goal of reducing gun violence by removing 500 guns from our community. When we are dealing with something this complex, we have to start somewhere.

We **can** take 500 guns out of circulation. That is just one piece of the puzzle. June is gun violence awareness month and now is our moment. Let's join together and transform trauma and start tackling the complexity of gun violence here and now.

Following the gun buyback, RAWTools will be offering an opportunity to watch and participate in the transformative process of turning a gun into a gardening tool. Please see details below.

Send your gun buyback donations to: CUCC, P.O. Box 3646 Boulder, CO 80307

Contact Reverend Nicole Lamarche 303.499.9119



“They will beat their [swords into plowshares](#) and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation; they will train for [war no more](#). Everyone will sit under their own [vine and fig](#) tree. No one shall make them afraid.” Isaiah 2:2-4

Why Now? Transforming Trauma.

Community United Church of Christ (CUCC) of Boulder, Colorado is a progressive, Christian fellowship of spiritual seekers who believe there are many paths to God. As a Peace With Justice congregation we have been challenged to develop and live practices that help sustain one’s faith in a spiritual grounding of hope and offer witness to the possibility of peace.

Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God Matthew 5:9

“A Just Peace is grounded in hope. Shalom is the vision that pulls all creation toward a time when weapons are swept off the earth and all creatures lie down together without fear; where all have their own fig tree and dwell secure from want. As Christians, we offer this conviction to the world: Peace is possible.” [UCC Just Peace Handbook](#)

CUCC is not new to this work, however, after the March 22nd massacre, our community, being hit so close to home, demanded action. We are not going to be satisfied with being “just another stat”. Although it would have been easy to be overwhelmed with the complexity and scope of gun violence prevention, we knew we MUST do something - anything - and we have to start now. Peace-making action is required **now**.

Turning guns into garden tools is at the center of the work of [RAWtools](#). It connects programming and enables storytelling—stories of magnificent transformation as well as the deep trauma of grief and loss. The RAWtools team is partnering with CUCC and will be transforming the surrendered guns into gardening tools and jewelry. The plowshares and pruning hooks are then sold to support the work of RAWtools - from forging tools out of weapons to sitting quietly with grieving families, RAWtools advocates for change in a variety of ways. RAWtools is working to disarm hearts and forge peace throughout the United States.

Support our goal of getting 500 guns out of circulation

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Here's How You Can Help

- We are asking faith communities to consider a \$1,000 donation toward our match. \$1,000 will remove at least 5 guns from the community.
- Contribute to the gun buyback fund: CUCC, P.O. Box 3646 Boulder, CO 80307.
- Many partnership opportunities are available - please contact Reverend Nicole Lamarche to get involved.
- Attend the Blacksmithing Event on June 13th at 5:00 and transform a gun to a gardening tool.
- Distribute the information attached.
- Contact socialaction@cuccboulder.org to volunteer or partner with us.



PROFILE OF GUN VIOLENCE ON COLORADO

According to the CDC’s most recent data, almost 40,000 lives were taken in 2019 by gun violence in our country (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. Underlying Cause of Death 1999-2019 on CDC WONDER Online Database). From shopping centers, movie theaters, parks, houses of worship, medical clinics, beauty shops, offices, college campuses, a night club, music festival, high schools, factory, and even an elementary school, there isn’t a community space that hasn’t been desecrated by gun violence. And this figure doesn’t include non-fatal firearm injuries, which are far greater than the number of deaths.

Firearm Deaths in Colorado in 2019*

A total of 837 people died by firearms. It was the second highest number since at least 2000, with 2018 having the highest number.

- That number included 636 firearm suicides, accounting for 76% of all gun deaths in 2019. Ninety-one of those deaths were among children and young adults aged 5 to 24. Guns were used in half of all suicide deaths in both Colorado and the nation and were the single most common method. Colorado, like all Rocky Mountain states, has among the highest suicide rates in the U.S., 5th highest in 2019.
- 2019 also saw 164 homicides by firearms. Two-thirds of all homicides were with firearms. Fifty-eight firearm homicides were among children and young adults aged 5 to 24.
- Legal intervention, unintentional firearm deaths, and deaths due to undetermined intent accounted for the remaining 37 gun deaths in 2019.
- Deaths from opioid overdoses and motor-vehicle accidents have deservedly received considerable public attention in Colorado and nationwide. However, at 612 and 608, respectively, they were substantially lower than firearm deaths.

Trends in Colorado’s Firearm Deaths**

DEATHS FROM FIREARMS, 2014-2018: COLORADO OCCURRENCES (Residents and Non-Residents)

YEAR	TOTAL FIREARM DEATHS	HOMICIDE BY FIREARM	SUICIDE BY FIREARM	LEGAL INTERVENTION	UNINTENTIONAL DEATHS BY FIREARM	UNDETERMINED INTENT BY FIREARM
2014	669	98	538	19	5	9
2015	710	125	543	27	10	5
2016	810	149	607	33	14	7
2017	797	152	600	32	9	4
2018	898	167	662	46	18	5

Source: Colorado Violent Death Reporting System, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.

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- Between 2014 and 2018, total firearm deaths in Colorado increased by 34% - with firearm homicides increasing by 70% and firearm suicide deaths by 23%. By comparison, Colorado's population increased by 6.4% during that period.
- Firearm deaths by legal intervention more than doubled, from 19 to 46. According to a recent report by CPR News, Colorado has the nation's 5th highest rate of fatal law-enforcement shootings (<https://www.cpr.org/2020/02/04/dig-into-6-years-of-records-that-detail-colorados-police-shootings/>).

Gun Sales in Colorado***

One of the major impacts of the COVID pandemic is the dramatic surge in gun sales. Between January 2020 and the end of September 2020, Americans bought nearly 17 million guns, more than in any full year on record. In 2020, the Colorado Bureau of Investigation (CBI) conducted more than 500,000 background checks for gun sales. It was the most in state history and a 46% increase over 2019. It is important to note that the number of background checks performed by CBI is an undercount of the number of guns purchased, as there can be multiple guns purchased under one background check.

Data Sources

In order to provide data that are from the most comprehensive set of public-health information sources and are the most current, we used two data sources from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) — Colorado Health Information Dataset (CoHID), which provides the most recent data (2019) as of this writing (March 2021), and Colorado Violent Death Reporting System (CoVDRS), which uses a wider range of data sources to reflect trends from 2014 -2018, 2018 being the most recent year available from that data set. Each is described below. Special thanks to the Mortality Surveillance Unit at CDPHE for its assistance in explaining and providing data for this report.

* Data for 2019 were obtained from CoHID. CoHID death data are based on death certificates and include deaths of all Colorado residents, whether those deaths occurred within or outside of Colorado. To access COHID data:

https://cohealthviz.dphe.state.co.us/t/HealthInformaticsPublic/views/COHIDFullDeathQuery_StateDemographyPopEstimates/MortalityStatistics?iframeSizedToWindow=true&:embed=y&:showAppBanner=false&:display_count=no&:showVizHome=no

** Trend data were obtained from CoVDRS. Those data are based on death certificates, law-enforcement reports, and coroner/medical examiner reports. They include deaths that occurred within Colorado for both Colorado residents and non-residents. To make a data request, please email: cdphe.healthstatistics@state.co.us

*** Small Arms Analytics, "U.S. firearms sales: 2020 year-to-date sales set new high"; Colorado Bureau of Investigations, Firearms InstaCheck Unit.



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- Turn swords into plowshares.

How: Individuals may surrender guns anonymously at Community United Church of Christ on June 13, 2021 between 1:00pm - 4:00 pm. The public is asked that when bringing a firearm to the church, please leave the unloaded gun(s) in a locked container or stored in a vehicle trunk. The Guns to Gardening Tools Team will provide direction to individuals upon arrival.

We are inviting people to stagger arrivals based on the first letter of your first name, to minimize wait times: A-J 1:00 - 2:00, K-P 2:00 - 3:00 and, Q - Z 3:00 - 4:00. IDs will not be checked - this is a suggestion to help the flow of cars. This is a drive-through event only and you will not leave your car, our team will accompany you and your vehicle through the process. Masks and other COVID safety is recommended.

Individuals will receive gift cards: \$100 card/pistols and long guns, \$200 /semi-automatic handguns and rifles and \$300 for assault weapons after the gun has been disabled. If you are not sure of the kind of gun you have, we will have experts from RAWTools and the faith community on site who will assist with the identification.

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Guns to Gardening Tools Blacksmith Demo Event

Hosted by Community United Church of Christ in partnership with RAWTools

When: Sunday June 13, 2021 - 5:00 pm - 6:00 pm

Where: 2650 Table Mesa Drive, Boulder, Colorado 80305

Contact: Reverend Nicole Lamarche 303.499.9119

This event offers an opportunity to watch and participate in the transformative process of turning a gun into a gardening tool. COVID safety practices, masks and social distancing will be required for all attending.

Other activities in June related to gun violence prevention month.

Guns to Garden Tools is the kick-off event in the faith community that culminates with a national Gun Violence Roundtable Conference June 25-27 hosted by the [Boulder Mennonite Church](#), with a documentary screening on Friday night, workshops on Saturday, and Shane Claiborne preaching on Sunday morning.

Gun violence is more than mass shootings

- Homicide - in 2019 there were 164 homicides by firearms in Colorado. Two-thirds of all homicides were with firearms. 58 firearm homicides were among children and young adults aged 5 to 24.
- Suicide - in 2019 there were 636 firearm suicides in Colorado, accounting for 76% of all gun deaths in 2019. Ninety-one of those deaths were among children and young adults aged 5 to 24. Guns were used in half of all suicide deaths in both Colorado and the nation and were the single most common method. Colorado, has among the highest suicide rates in the U.S., 5th highest in 2019.
- Legal intervention
- Unintentional deaths
- Undetermined intent

Legal intervention, unintentional firearm deaths, and deaths due to undetermined intent accounted for 37 gun deaths in 2019 in Colorado.*

* Recent research from the [Colorado Faith Communities United Against Gun Violence](#)

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