



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wadesboro leadership draws hundreds to Coalition for Peace kickoff

Next meeting is scheduled for July 2

WADESBORO, NC (June 20, 2025) – Nearly 200 community members packed Smith’s Funeral Home on June 18 for the launch of the Wadesboro Coalition for Peace, a united effort to confront the impact of gun violence in Wadesboro and across the county.

Wadesboro Mayor Fred Davis opened the meeting with a message of welcome and urgency. Leon Gatewood, CEO of HOLLA! Community Development Corporation (CDC) moderated the gathering, which focused on healing, accountability and hope.

Speakers shared powerful reflections, voicing both grief and frustration over the recent spike in gun-related tragedies, while also pledging to take bold, united action.

At the meeting, Wanda Smith, the mother of 22-year-old Desmond Tra’Jon Pegues, bravely shared her heart-wrenching journey of loss as she spoke about the pain of losing her son to violence and the ongoing process of navigating life through unimaginable grief.

“We cannot afford to be silent or divided when it comes to the safety of our children and our community,” Davis said. “We are standing together to let people know Wadesboro refuses to accept violence as the norm.”

The coalition is grounded in the belief that real change begins with unity as demonstrated by the following strong network of grassroots organizations partnering with the Town of Wadesboro: HOLLA! CDC; the New Rural Project; Black Voters Matter; D.E.N. (Developing, Educating, Nurturing); Brothers 4 Life; the Caraway Foundation; Behind These Prison Walls; and local pastors and community members.

The energy in the room made one thing clear: This is just the beginning. The next community meeting will be held Wednesday, July 2 at 6 p.m. at Smith's Funeral Home, 603 Salisbury Street, Wadesboro. All are encouraged to attend, get involved and be part of the solution.