

THE PLAIN DEALER

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METRO

Cleveland students say 'no more'

Rally gives voice
to anti-violence goal

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Plain Dealer Reporter

Elementary students in their soccer uniforms lined up along St. Clair Avenue on Thursday holding colorful signs and chanting "No more guns."

They came from schools and neighborhoods across Cleveland to speak against gun violence in the city.

The rally, which drew more than 250 students and teachers to Mall B, was sponsored by America SCORES Cleveland, an after-school program for third-through fifth-graders that provides soccer and poetry lessons.

"We wanted everyday Clevelanders to see that there are children of all races coming together and standing up against guns and the persona that Cleveland kids are up to no good," said Matthew Williams, soccer director for America SCORES Cleveland.

Students presented more than 1,000 signed pledges vowing to never bring guns to school or to use them to settle an argument. Councilwoman Sabra Pierce



THOMAS ONDREY | THE PLAIN DEALER

Kids from Stephen Buhner Elementary School in Ohio City stand on the curb at Mall B and shout their opposition to gun violence Thursday. They joined about 300 students and teachers for the SHOUT Community Service Day rally sponsored by America SCORES Cleveland, a youth development program.

Scott and city schools athletic commissioner Leonard Jackson accepted the pledges that will be sent to Superintendent Montrell Greene.

Dunbar seventh-grader Jasmine Russell said she hopes the message reaches her peers.

GUNS

FROM B1

'No more guns' is rallying cry

"Every day we are losing thousands of people to shootings," she said. "My two cousins got locked up this year for shooting guns. I want them to realize that

guns aren't cool."

Nine-year-old Emilio Rivera wrote a poem for the rally and addressed the crowd with the question: "How many students will have to die because some kids decide to bring guns to school?" Event organizers said that the school shooting at SuccessTech Academy last year and the shooting death of Cleveland police officer Derek Owens in March convinced them that the

city's youth needed a rally.

Dana McGregor, midfielder for the Cleveland City Stars professional soccer team, mesmerized students with his fast footwork and told them to live above the influence of violence and drugs.

"Find something you love to do and do it with all your heart," he said.

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