Nearly sixteen years ago on Oct. 16, 1995, Minister Louis Farrakhan called upon one million Black men for a meeting in the nation's capital.

This meeting was a call to action. During this meeting Black men were instructed to apologize to Black women for the unfair burden placed on their shoulders of keeping the Black family, church and community afloat. We as Black men were instructed to get involved in our children's lives, participate in the political process, join a civic group, take a stance in our community and rid it of guns, drugs and senseless violence.

Many of the social ills that affect the Black community were identified at this meeting. They included high unemployment rates, damaged school systems, crime, drugs and etcetera. After leaving the meeting I felt good, recharged and ready to do my part to make the community, thus my country I live in a better place for children that came after me to enjoy as I did as a child.

I'm a 1970s child. I lived in the Englewood neighborhood on the South Side of Chicago, the Rondo neighborhood of St. Paul, Jordan neighborhood in North Minneapolis and the West Side of Des Moines, Ia. Some people would view those communities as a tough place to live but I can honestly say the communities I grew up in were a safe place for children. Sure crime existed, always has and always will, however children were off limits.

Fast Forward to July, 2012, North Minneapolis, and two Black children under the age of seven were murdered in cold blood less than eight months apart. In South Side Chicago, gun violence is spiraling out of control averaging more than 25 shootings a weekend. Many of the city's mortuaries are concerned because they are burying more children than elderly adults. Black man, Black woman, this is downright awful. So often I hear people say, "Children are the future" or how much they love children. I say really?

After the call to action in 1995 things did get better in our communities, but lately there seems to be some serious regressing with the emergence of a new enemy. This new enemy does not

care about anyone or anything that isn't a part of whatever they're a part of. It has been identified that Blacks do not have the means to flood our communities with illegal guns and drugs, yet this new enemy gladly partakes in the drug trade which is largely responsible for much of the crime in urban areas inhibited by Blacks. This new enemy does not realize how they are being played by the power players that allow them to turn the Black community into Beirut, thus causing many to leave the community and driving down property values leaving the door wide open for gentrification. My question to Black men and women is how much longer will we continue to suffer in silence? How much more running are we going to do? How many more innocent children do we have to lose before we say enough? There has been much talk in Black communities throughout America lately regarding how to address this wave of crime that is literally robbing our children of their childhoods. One tactic that has been brought up is to bring in the National Guard. Some oppose this idea for various valid reasons; one being the guard does not know when to leave. Some people within the Black community do not believe things are that bad but I say, don not be fooled. It is that bad and maybe help from outside the Black community is not such a bad idea. I firmly believe we as Blacks have had ample opportunity to work out any differences and clean-up our communities ourselves however that has not happened.

We have not learned and or practiced conflict resolution which is resulting in generational beefs. Personally, I would gladly take some harassment from the National Guard about a curfew rather than to catch a stray bullet from someone that does not know how to correctly use his or her weapon. It is admirable how other communities are able to set aside differences when it comes to the welfare of their children. Had one child been murdered in any other community over some nonsense heads would have rolled. Are not Black children worthy of that same affection, love and protection? Or does saying, "I love children" just sound good coming out of people's mouths?

The problems that exist within the Black community are extremely complex and no one person or idea is going to fix them. I will not pretend to have the answer because I do not. But just like in 1995 I would like to be a part of a call to action to make the community I live in a better place for children. How far are you willing to go for peace? How much do you love Black children? Do you want Black parents to allow their children to play outside in front of their own homes or at a park without the fear of gunfire erupting?

The time for action is now. We have already identified that guns and drugs are not manufactured "in the 'hood." Now is the time to stop selling drugs and using guns versus intervention as a means to settle differences. My question is a simple one. What are we as Black people going to do?