



Union backs mayor's anti-violence plan

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Area youth will lead an anti-violence campaign tied to Mayor Thomas Menino's Violence Intervention Prevention (VIP) initiative, thanks in large part to a landmark donation from area health care workers.

The \$200,000 pledge from 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East members

First of its kind

Yesterday's donation marks "the first time in city history that a labor union has made such an aggressive investment in combating urban violence," according to union officials.

at Boston Medical Center will help the kids build a media campaign designed to promote nonviolence. The campaign will incorporate art, poetry and music to build safe problem-solving methods.

Kids will be recruited to take part and work on the

campaign, due to hit the airwaves, newspapers and the Internet in early 2009. Menino received the check yesterday at Franklin Park, near the four neighborhoods the VIP program serves by connecting residents to anti-violence services.

The VIP plan was un-

veiled last fall, around the time several Boston Police and city efforts began to pay off in reducing city crime. Thus far in 2008, the numbers are impressive.

Through Aug. 10, crime in the city is down nearly 15 percent this year compared to 2007 with drops in every category, including a 17.4 percent decline in homicides and a 35.7 percent fall in car thefts, according to the BPD. Each of the department's 12 districts have cut crime by at least 8.2 percent.