

GUEST COLUMN  
For the Thursday, May 25, 2017 Edition  
From: Mayor James E. "Jamie" Mayo

## **It will take Community Solutions to Save Our Youth**

Recently in Monroe, two incidents of domestic violence and one incident believed to be drug related led to six people being shot, with four shooting victims losing their life. That same weekend, in Ouachita Parish, someone broke into an occupied home and an elderly resident used lethal force to protect their household from an intruder who may have a mental condition.

Situations like these are very hard to prevent – because we are not inside the home or inside the head of those involved. Young people have too much free time, and drug & domestic violence are causing too many people to lose their lives. It doesn't matter what age, race, or what side of town they live on...the senseless killings, the violence, and the drug abuse needs to stop.

Chief Holmes and his staff will analyze our crime stats, and we will engage an outside expert to help craft new approaches to dealing with violent crimes within our city. However, that is not enough. As the Mayor of the City of Monroe, I want to partner with elected officials, our local education systems, business leaders, community leaders, faith-based, non-profit organizations and others to increase awareness and participation in programs and initiatives that give our youth better options, more opportunities, and a stronger chance at success!

The time for finger pointing and blaming is over. We all need to be willing to step up and do more. We need to all work together to come up with solutions. We need to form more and stronger collaborative efforts. We need your help with solutions and ideas to help with in-school and afterschool efforts, neighborhood and community policing initiatives, faith-based and non-profit programs, job skills training, recreational programs, and other efforts?

We must come together to help create, support, or further enhance various ideas, programs, and initiatives that will help SAVE OUR YOUTH from the streets, keep them from dropping out of school, help them gain valuable job skills, and put them on that path toward a bright and successful future. By working together, we can make a difference!