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Parkland student coming to Excelsior for rally against gun violence

By Tim Engstrom tengstrom@swpub.com Sep 26, 2018



Aalayah Eastmond

EXCELSIOR — A survivor of gun violence from Parkland, Florida, will speak at the West Side Rally Against Gun Violence on Saturday, Oct. 6, at The Commons along the shore of Excelsior Bay.

Aalayah Eastmond, a senior at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, will speak at the rally. She made headlines in early September with her testimony at U.S. Senate hearings on Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh.

Eastmond described hiding behind the lifeless body of a classmate. She prayed her own death would be quick. She told senators about calling her mother to say goodbye, and she described the police picking human tissue from her hair.

"As you make your final decision, think about it as if you had to justify and defend your choice to those who we lost to gun violence," she told the Senate, according to a Sept. 7 story by USA Today.

She will be visiting schools in the Twin Cities metro, too, according to a Protect Minnesota news release.

The West Side Rally, meant to honor high school students who have led efforts to prevent gun violence, runs from 1 to 4 p.m. in Excelsior. It is sponsored by Protect Minnesota's student caucus, Students Protect Minnesota. Students who register at protectmn.org by Oct. 3 will get a free "Minnesotan Against Getting Shot" T-shirt.

Erin Murphy, a DFL Party gubernatorial candidate who is a former majority leader in the Minnesota House of Representatives, is scheduled to be at the rally. She presently represents House District 64A in St. Paul, including the Summit Hill neighborhood.

Because Protect Minnesota is a nonprofit organization, Murphy cannot campaign at the event from the stage but she can rent space and share information at a booth. The same applies to other candidates.

The news release said she served on the board for the predecessor to Protect Minnesota, called Citizens for a Safer Minnesota. Stronger gun laws, it notes, is a theme of her campaign this year.

State Sen. Steve Cwodzinski, DFL-Eden Prairie, will be there. The news release calls him "a firebrand for gun violence prevention." He taught American government and history at Eden Prairie High School for more than 30 years.

Several Minnesota students are headlining the event, too.

One is Braden Johnson, co-chair for Students Protect Minnesota and a senior at Chanhassen High School. He is chair of the West Metro Walkout, a youth-led organization aiming to prevent gun violence.

Another is Sydney Lewis, a junior at Eden Prairie High School and founder of West Metro Walkout. She is co-chair for Students Protect Minnesota.

Austen Berger, co-chair of Students Demand Action, is set to be there. From New Hope, he is a sophomore at the University of Minnesota. He helped organize March For Our Lives last March in St. Paul at the State Capitol and the Road to Change Town Hall last June with Parkland students coming to Osseo High School.

Nancy Nord Bence, the executive director of Protect Minnesota, is among community leaders set to attend, and with Don Samuels, CEO of MicroGrants and an activist on preventing gun violence in North Minneapolis. He is a former member of the Minneapolis Board of Education.

Live music:

- The Carnegies
- The Daisy Dillman Band
- Paul Metsa Acoustic Quartet with Wee Willie Walker
- Southwest High School phenom Daisy Forester
- High School of Recording Arts hip-hop artist Royals Smith

Food trucks:

- The Dawghouse
- US Grill (Mediterranean rice bowls)
- Samurai Teppanyaki

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Yes I sure can! I just wanted to let you know though I am pregnant. Inca you haven't taken a look at my p and seen, I have been struggling find somewhere to hire me pregn not many places want to but I will in the work and be there when needed!

Sorry

Is that c

No ,thank you!

So don't c