

A FAMILY HUNKERS DOWN

“We hear gunshots constantly in our neighborhood”

Near 22nd and Oak streets in West Louisville, a 12-year-old boy and his 13-year old sister decided to stay inside during the summer because they were afraid they’d get shot if they ventured outdoors.

Their parents don’t want their names revealed. “We are so close to it. We’re a stone’s throw away from it in either direction,” their father said about the gun violence.

Their mother, who remembers a safe environment when she was growing up in the neighborhood, said they hear gunshots two or three times a month at least, usually at night. She said they stay inside, and don’t go near the windows.

“You hear it so much you get used to it. You hope the gunshots don’t affect your family.” When news reports spotlight a deadly shooting in areas where she has family “you think my brother lives down there. I hope it wasn’t him. You tend to tense up when you hear things like that.”

HOMICIDES BY POLICE DISTRICT

Jan.-Sept. 2019

1st District – 12

2nd District – 25

3rd District – 11

4th District – 13

5th District – 3

6th District – 5

7th District – 2

8th District – 2

Total: 73

Their children are keenly aware, too. They know about gunshot deaths not far from their home during the summer, and a video on social media of teens with guns touting an “east vs west” rivalry with random gun violence.

“It’s messed up,” the boy said.

He said he began staying inside their house in early July after he was outside with friends in the early evening and a car pulled up on their street with a gun pointing out the window. He ran to his backyard and said after that, “I decided on my own not to go out.”

His sister said she thinks “the world’s just getting violent.” She didn’t go outside “because the west and the east was doing a shootout.” She said she learned about it through a video on Facebook.

Their parents said they don't call police because they don't think there is much the police can do, although they wish there were more routine police patrols visible on their streets. Police respond to gunfire, but without adequate information they are unable to make an arrest, their father said.

"You don't want to keep your kids locked in," their mother said. "You are scared for their safety, too. You don't know what to do."

Citizen reports of hearing gunshots over 18 months, from Jan. 1, 2018 -June 2019, totaled 4,558, from every Louisville Metro police district.

