

IN 2023:

182

HOMICIDES
IN KANSAS CITY

*according to kcpd

RECORDED
KANSAS CITY
MORE DEATHS BY
HOMICIDE
THAN ANY OTHER YEAR
ON RECORD*according to
KC Star17 SCHOOL
SHOOTINGS
IN KANSAS

*according to wisevoter.com

HOMICIDE RATES
INCREASED7% FROM
2022 TO
2023

*according to kcpd

MAIN CAUSES OF
2023 HOMICIDES:
ARGUMENTS
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
ROBBERY

*according to kcpd

A DEADLY YEAR

*The community is unsettled after the number of gun violence incidents in Kansas City peaked last year***K**ANSAS CITY EXPERIENCED record gun violence incidents in 2023, according to Kansas City Star data, causing apprehension in the East community.

“Nobody wants to sit idly by and watch more people die at the hands of gun violence,” co-president of East Against Gun Violence club Emma Kuhlman said.

The KCMO area has experienced the highest homicide rate since the early 90s within the last year, almost all of these killings were committed with guns.

Local police officer Kaile Newman says that guns used in these crimes can be brought into the area by drugs and criminal activity, sometimes into

places where the police force is understaffed. According to Newman, criminals know the low number of officers and take advantage.

“Everybody’s short staffed,” Newman said. “Everywhere.”

Freshman Audrey Squires is concerned by the rise of gun violence, especially since she experienced a school shooting at her old school in Colorado a few years ago.

“I had really bad nightmares for three years consistently,” Squires said. “I couldn’t sleep through the night.”

More recently at East on Nov. 30, there was a gun-scare incident with a rumored threat near the lunchroom that was later debunked. Still, rumors of the threat left more than half of students to leave school early.

“I was generally very scared because I didn’t know what I could believe,” Co-President of East Against Gun Violence and senior Kuhlman said.

According to Newman, the approach to solving gun violence is complicated, since it is affected by factors such as accessibility to weapons and citizens’ education on firearms.

“[Adults need to be] more responsible and better about locking [their] guns,” Newman said.

She says areas experiencing the most gun related crimes are mainly crimes of opportunity where the criminal does not plan a criminal act, but takes advantage of a situation to commit one.

Some students, however, are concerned

of the possibility of a pre-planned attack. Like freshman Maddie Torkelson, who was in fourth grade when a shooting occurred at her elementary school, Highlands.

A young man had fired several shots at the school from across the street, but no one in her class was harmed. According to Torkelson, the teachers did everything they could to keep the students from knowing what was happening.

“But we really knew what was actually going on,” Torkelson said.

Kuhlman plans to continue advocating against gun violence this year by organizing protests, speaking on panels and promoting anti-gun violence organizations.

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EMMA KUHLMAN
SENIOR

“We had around 200 people show up [to our last anti-gun violence walkout], which was awesome, and I think that speaks a lot about how people feel about this topic,” Kuhlman said.

She encourages other students to take action as well. According to CNN, there were 82 school shootings in the US alone in 2023 and there have already been two in 2024.

“Don’t be afraid to speak up about issues that you are passionate about”, Kuhlman said. “Because that is the only way to make change.”

167 OF THE
HOMICIDES
INVOLVED FIREARMS*according to
KC StarNEARLY HALF OF
HOMICIDE VICTIMS
WERE MALES AGES

18 TO 34

*according to KC Star