

## Michael Johnson meets with Scott Walker on Tony Robinson tragedy



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Michael Johnson, CEO of the Boys & Girls Club of Dane County, on Wednesday asked Gov. Scott Walker to reach out to the family of Tony Robinson, the 19-year-old shot by a Madison police officer Friday after an altercation on the Near East Side.

Johnson, who sought a meeting and spoke with Walker at the Governor's Mansion Wednesday morning, said the governor quickly agreed to contact the Robinson family but didn't want to politicize it. Johnson said he contacted Robinson's mother, Andrea Irwin, and she assured him she would welcome the governor's call.

The governor spoke with Irwin Wednesday afternoon to share his condolences for her loss, Walker spokeswoman Laurel Patrick said.

Johnson, who has been a major presence in promoting a peaceful response to the shooting, said he appreciated the governor quickly scheduling a meeting and listening to concerns and ideas. He said he spoke for the first 15 minutes and sought no immediate commitments.

"Today, Gov. Walker had a positive and productive meeting with Michael Johnson and Nichelle Nichols of the Dane County Boys & Girls Club," Patrick said in a statement. "Gov. Walker feels great empathy for the Robinson family at losing their son and shared his and Mrs. Walker's condolences for them and for all involved."

Johnson and Nichols, Boys & Girls Club's chief academic officer, also spoke to the governor about a desire to break through polarized politics and a need statewide for youth internships and job initiatives for black men. They shared information on the organization's AVID/TOPS program, a partnership with the Madison School District that works with high school students to prepare them for college.

"I've been trying to be a bridge builder," Johnson said Wednesday. "I think we all care about our city and our state."

Patrick's statement said, "Their discussion also focused on ways we can work together to build something positive by partnering with employers to provide internships and opportunities to highlight the abilities of our young people and help get them into the workforce."

Johnson, who called for students to stay in class and advocate for change peacefully after school and on weekends, said he has been receiving a lot of comments on his Facebook page — some optimistic, some not — and gave Walker a copy of them.

## **CHURCH COMMUNITY FORUM**

A group of community and religious leaders are planning a meeting to discuss the Tony Robinson shooting and broader local racial disparities Friday night.

The African-American Council of Churches, as well as a dozen local organizations that have worked to address the gaps between Dane County's black and white residents, will meet at 6 p.m. Friday at The Faith Place church, 211 E. Linnerud Drive, Sun Prairie.