

NJ Recycler To Turn 900 Illegal Guns Into Art

Samantha Henry, Associated Press

JERSEY CITY, N.J. (AP) — Workers at a recycling plant in northern New Jersey figuratively turned guns into plowshares Tuesday, accepting more than 900 illegal weapons that will be shredded and melted for use in the creation of a "Peace Angel" statue.

The statue will be donated to the New York City Police Department's lower Manhattan headquarters. NYPD Commissioner Ray Kelly was on hand at Sims Metal Management in Jersey City on Tuesday as the confiscated weapons were delivered to the metal recycling plant.

"New York is the safest big city in America, but there are still far too many guns on our streets," Kelly said, adding that he hoped the statue would remind people to stay away from guns or inspire them to give up their weapons at local buyback programs.

"It's a big problem," Kelly said, referring to illicit weapons on city streets. "We need to battle it, and we have a long way to go."

The statue of a winged angel will be nearly 5 feet tall and consist of the confiscated and repurposed street weapons and non-radioactive nuclear missile casings. It is being created by the Art of Peace Charitable Trust, a nonprofit focusing on peace building and nonviolence. The group previously made a California Peace Angel in Los Angeles from confiscated weapons and plans to place larger versions of the New York peace angel at different sites.

Several New Jersey mayors, including Mayor Jerramiah Healy of Jersey City, have joined forces with New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg in the Mayors Against Illegal Guns Coalition, an effort to get weapons off the streets.

Jersey City Police Chief Tom Comey, who attended Tuesday's event, said the statute would be an effective way to make people reflect on the senseless gun violence he sees claiming many young lives.

"It's an opportunity to have something positive come out of something that's so devastating to lives in this region," Comey said.

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