THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

BEST PRACTICES

ON AT-RISK YOUTH AND HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUT PREVENTION.

AT-RISK YOUTH, HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUT PREVENTION

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January 25, 2008

Dear Mayor:

As President of The United States Conference of Mayors, I am pleased to provide you with the latest volume in our Best Practices series - ***Best Practices on At-Risk Youth and High School Dropout Prevention.***

This publication examines successful approaches mayors, school superintendents, police chiefs, workforce development professionals and human services officials are implementing across the country to promote high school retention, increase graduation rates, and improve job readiness; as well as successful efforts to proactively prevent gang development and combat gang violence in our cities.

On behalf of The United States Conference of Mayors I would like express my gratitude to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) of the U.S. Department of Justice, for making possible the compilation and dissemination of this valuable resource, as well as all mayors who contributed to the contents within. This publication is a valuable addition to our organization's well-established efforts to assist mayors on issues that directly affect their cities.

Your contributions to our Best Practices Center and its publications are crucial in order to gather up-to-date community information that is vital to the sharing of exemplary programs you have developed to improve the quality of life across urban America. We thank you for your continued support of this important work.

Sincerely,

Douglas H. Palmer
Mayor of Trenton
President
The United States Conference of Mayors

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Albany Truancy Abatement Program

Mayor Gerald Jennings

Albany, NY

The Albany Truancy Abatement Program is a collaborative effort designed to combat truancy and reduce the juvenile crime rate. The program is a collaborative effort involving the Albany City School District, the Albany County Department of Probation, the Albany Police Department and local community agencies. The operation of the program consists of police officers patrolling the streets and identifying students who are not in school during regular school hours. In addition to the daily morning sweeps and home visits, a Probation Officer and Juvenile Detective follow up with evening home visits. Truancy staff also provides appropriate support services and aftercare to students and their families.

Established

The program was created in 2004 as an initiative of Mayor Gerald Jennings. As a former high school Vice Principal, he was concerned about at-risk school age youth who were not attending school. He created a commission to look at the problem and brought all the stakeholders to the table. As a result of their efforts, the Truancy Abatement Program was designed.

Effectiveness

Albany Truancy Abatement Program data is analyzed and disaggregated by University at Albany's Hindelang Criminal Justice Research Center. Dr. Rob Worden works with Truancy staff and the Albany Police Department to maintain accurate data regarding day and time juvenile crime rates as well as student attendance rates.

Funding

The Albany Truancy Abatement Program is currently funded by a yearly grant from the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services. Albany's program began its' fourth year in June 2007.

Other Involvement

The City School District of Albany and Albany Police Department are actively involved in the truancy initiative. In addition, Albany County Probation is also an important aspect to this collaboration. Other county agencies include Family Court, Child Protective Services, the Department of Social Services as well as Code Enforcement, and several non-profit organizations. Many families experience a myriad of complexities which involve numerous community agencies working together to provide children with the best opportunities to achieve school success.

The Albany Truancy Abatement Program maintains an extensive outreach component and has used radio, television and print media to deliver the message; the city cares about reducing juvenile crime and getting children in school. The program also presents at Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings and faculty meetings, various Neighborhood Association forums and Library Programs.

Lessons Learned

The Truancy Abatement Program believes collaboration is the absolute key to the success of this program. Persistence is also another key factor when children's educational welfare is at stake.

Advice for Mayors

Bringing all stakeholders to the table and honestly looking at the issue is the first step to a successful process.

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Alexandria Day Reporting Program

Mayor William D. Euille

Alexandria, VA

The Day Reporting Program operates in two separate locations, one for boys and the other for girls. The program operates full-time throughout the summer months and after-school throughout the school year, providing services to court-involved youth requiring high levels of supervision. Day Reporting uses evidence-based curricula proven to help youth participants identify "errors in thinking" that cause them to get in trouble. This intervention helps these youth recognize behaviors that will keep them out of trouble.

Group counseling, life skills, reading, and writing instruction and academic support are provided daily. At Day Reporting, there is a heavy emphasis on team building through work on projects, recreation and multi-day wilderness experiences. Participants complete over 2,000 hours of community service annually, including work with the elderly, Adopt-A-Park, river restoration projects, reading to elementary students and Habitat for Humanity. Participants transition back into the community with program support in acquiring jobs, internships and recreational activities. The Day Reporting Program "Alumni" Group is voluntary and meets weekly for those graduates seeking ongoing support. The Day Reporting Program serves up to sixty youth per year and has an 80 percent success rate. Success is defined as no new criminal offences within six months of completing the program. Counselors work closely with the schools and parents to provide a continuum of services to participants.

Established

The Day Reporting Program was created in 1997 as a less-restrictive and less-costly alternative to detention, with the philosophy that youth are more likely to permanently change their negative patterns when they are able to connect to positive and healthy behaviors in their community environments.

Effectiveness

Program effectiveness is measured by tracking future criminal behaviors and by utilizing pre and post-tests that measure corrective thinking. Our evaluations show that 80 percent of program graduates do not re-offend within the first six months of attendance in the program. All youth have shown improved corrective thinking during post-testing.

Funding

The Day Reporting Program is primarily funded by the City of Alexandria and includes State funding from a grant from the Virginia Community Crime Control Act. Special activities and follow-up services related to the program are paid for by a local foundation grant.

Other Involvement

The Day Reporting Program collaborates with the City's Department of Parks and Recreation for use of space and to acquire free meals during the summer months. Alexandria's Shelter Care program provides space for the boys' program. Other City agencies and local non-profits offer life-skills instruction, referral services (medical, mental health, CPS, etc.) and transitional support as needed. Businesses offer discounted rates for food and activities for the youth. Community members volunteer on a limited basis.

Lessons Learned

Male and female youth are best served separately. Follow-up services for youth that have completed the program are essential; youth seek out support from trusted staff members when they need counsel and assistance and when they are ready to make positive changes in their lives.

Advice for Mayors

Day Reporting Programs have to meet the needs of the particular community and the youth it serves. Stakeholders should observe this program and interview youth and staff members and then customize it to meet their community needs.

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Educational Support Program

Mayor William D. Euille

Alexandria, VA

The Education Support Program provides accountability, juvenile justice education, academic support, life skills, gang prevention and anger management instruction to those court-involved students that have been suspended from school and have been offered no other educational alternatives. Participants also complete service projects and receive support in obtaining employment and returning to school.

Established
The Educational Support Program was created in 2002 because a number of court-involved youth were suspended from school and left unsupervised in the community while parent(s) were at work.

Effectiveness
The program tracks number of youth referred compared to the number that attend. Ninety percent of those referred by probation officers attend the program.

Funding
Program staff time is paid for by the City. Materials and supplies come from state funds of the Court Service Unit.

Other Involvement
The community provides service opportunities for youth, offering structured and productive use of time.

Lessons Learned
It is imperative that the school system be supportive of this project and assist with the youth's transition back into their home school.

Advice for Mayors
It is important to find a way to give school credit hours when the youth attends the class on a regular basis while on suspension. The school work in the program should be related to the work he/she will miss while not attending class.

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Gang Prevention PSA

Mayor William D. Euille

Alexandria, VA

The City of Alexandria, in collaboration with the Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force, is organizing the facilitation of Public Service Announcements (PSA) to prevent gang involvement.

Established
As a part of the initiatives of the Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force, the City of Alexandria has led the organization of the Gang Prevention Public Service Announcement Campaign. The program is currently in the developmental stage.

The PSA Campaign was developed after feedback received from the community indicating that, although many programs exist, some people, particularly those most in need, may not be aware of services to which they are eligible. The PSA Campaign was designed as a gang prevention tool to inform those who are in need of help that there is support available and to inform those who want to help (i.e. mentoring, tutoring) that there are opportunities to volunteer.

Effectiveness
Effectiveness will be measured by calculating the number of inquiries on the Task Force website, the number of volunteer inquiries as a result of the PSAs and the number of inquiries for assistance due to the PSAs.

Funding
Federal funding is being provided through the Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force.

Other Involvement
The Office of Citizen Assistance and the City Manager's Office Director of Communications have been instrumental in their support and expertise in the development of the program. This program is being developed in collaboration with the Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force.

Lessons Learned
It has been exceptionally helpful to have the insight and support of those who work with public information. Feedbacks from youth and community members have been critical in developing appropriate and helpful messages which may be made available.

Advice for Mayors
It has been very helpful to hire a professional communications agency in the development of messages and to plan for creation, production and dissemination of PSAs.

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Parent Involvement

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Alexandria, VA

Parent Involvement is critical to influencing behavior of adolescents in the court system. Utilizing "Parenting with Love and Limits," a nationally recognized best-practice curriculum, Parent Involvement provides intensive, practical skill-building sessions to parents and their court-involved youth over the course of six weeks. The purpose of the program is to encourage parental involvement in the probation process and to improve communication and behavior management in the home. The curriculum covers topics such as: elements of teenager misbehavior, communication skills, limit setting, behavior contract development, parent rights, gangs and community resources. Upon request from parents, a gang prevention and intervention class has been added to the curriculum. This course is provided in both English and Spanish.

Established

The six-week program was implemented in 2002, expanding upon a four hour course that introduces parents to the court process. It was created to involve parents in their youth successful behavior in the community, at school and at home.

Effectiveness

Recidivism rates are tracked and parents complete satisfaction surveys. Eighty two percent of program participants have no new arrests within one year of program completion. Parents give this program an average approval rating of 91 percent.

Funding

Initial staff certification training was paid for by a grant from the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services. The course is taught by Court Service Unit staff volunteers. Curriculum materials are paid for by a local foundation grant.

Other Involvement

Other City agencies provide guest speakers based on the needs of each program sessions' participants (i.e. immigration information and gang awareness training).

Lessons Learned

Programs need to be adapted to meet the needs of each group, based on age and gender of youth served. Parents and youth with significant mental health needs should be referred to community mental health services if they are discovered while in the program.

Advice for Mayors

While the Alexandria Court Service Unit operates this program with staff volunteers, a full-time instructor would enable the program to better serve parents and youth by offering follow-up services and enlisting help from graduated parents and youth in teaching subsequent classes.

Curriculum information can be found at www.difficult.net.

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iMENTOR

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Alexandria, VA

Adult male mentors are learning along with minority and immigrant at-risk boys to produce short films on topics of interest. Weekly group workshops foster relationship-building and mentor-matching and include lessons in the digital video, story boarding and film editing. Participants in the program learn the use of Apple technology, including iPhoto, iMovie, iDVD, iTunes and Garage Band. The movies will then debut at a community film festival. Homework support, life skills, sex education/refusal skills and communication and anger management classes are infused throughout every program day. iMentor utilizes an evidence based mentoring program model, as outlined by the National Mentoring Partnership. Each volunteer makes a one-year commitment to mentoring.

Established
iMentor was created in 2007 to address the gender-specific needs of pre-teen boys that have court-involved siblings and/or parents, in an effort to prevent criminal involvement and promote healthy lifestyles. Youth were targeted from two neighborhoods that have a history of youth turf disputes, in hopes of promoting long-term friendships and eliminating violence. Program components resulted from a city-wide developmental assets survey and youth interest inventories and interviews. The template for this program is based on the City's highly successful SOHO program.

Effectiveness
Criminal involvement, longevity of mentor relationships and pre/post tests measure effectiveness.

Funding
iMentor is paid for by a $24,000 grant from the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services and a twenty-five percent cash match from a local foundation. Staff salary is paid for by the City of Alexandria, at approximately ten hours per week.

Other Involvement
Alexandria City Public Schools has offered space, an upgraded computer lab, youth referrals and follow-up services. Twelve men are currently serving as volunteers. Apple gave special permission for one of their staff members to teach the filmmaking portion of the program. The Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice's Camp New Hope provided a weekend camping trip to kick-off the program.

Lessons Learned
The program is still in the preliminary stages.

Advice for Mayors
For best practice mentoring program development assistance, visit www.mentoring.org.

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Shoplifter's Alternative

Mayor William D. Euille

Alexandria, VA

The Youth Educational Shoplifting Program (YES) works with first-time juveniles arrested on shoplifting charges. The program utilizes nationally recognized best practice curriculum and seeks to instill intuitive understanding to the youth on the consequences of their behavior. Participants learn to identify feelings, thoughts and actions behind shoplifting and ways to improve their decision-making skills. Participants complete a six hour home study kit, which includes compact discs and a workbook. They attend a seven to eight hour classroom session, sponsored by Target Store at Potomac Yard. The class is taught in cooperation with Target's Asset Protection Team members and includes speakers, a tour of Target's security system and a life-like Target video, "Got Caught: Now What?"

Participants also write apology letters to victims. Research indicates that this type of offense-specific program reduces recidivism rates and helps juveniles learn the consequences that shoplifting can have on family, friends, the community and their future.

Established

Thirty-three percent of juveniles say it is hard for them to stop shoplifting even after getting caught. This program was created in 1997 to divert first-time petty larcenists from the criminal justice system and to provide skills needed to resist future shoplifting behaviors.

Effectiveness

Recidivism rates are tracked and satisfaction surveys are completed by youth. Ninety-five percent of class participants have had no additional larceny charges. The course regularly receives an "A" grade from participants, who report that the class is "fun". In 2004, the Alexandria Court Service Unit received a 'Commitment to Service Award' from Target Stores for offering this crime prevention program.

Funding

This program is taught on an as-needed basis, typically four times per year. Staff time is paid for by the City and curriculum materials are paid for by a local foundation grant.

Other Involvement

This program is taught in cooperation with the local Target Store, which provides space and assistance with program instruction.

Lessons Learned

The partnership with Target has worked to significantly enhance the program and consumer satisfaction.

Advice for Mayors

Curriculum information can be found at www.shopliftingprevention.org. It is also important to involve the business community in this type of program.

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SOHO - Space Of Her Own

Mayor William D. Euille

Alexandria, VA

Girls that live in low-income housing and are identified as "at-risk" are matched with adult female mentors who work with them in weekly classes; to learn artistic concepts, techniques and processes. During the rigorous nine-month course, they create expressive and attractive art work for the girls' rooms, including "dream" chests, personalized thrones, lamp shades, floor cloths, face masks, etc. The program is loosely based on the popular television show, "Trading Spaces". Upon completion of the art course work, girls and mentors work on teams to remodel each other's personal space in the home, being sure to include ample lighting and study space. The promise of gorgeous new bedrooms is what hooks girls in, promoting near-perfect program attendance. Homework support, life skills, sex education/refusal skills and communication and anger management classes are infused throughout every program day. SOHO utilizes an evidence based mentoring program model, as outlined by the National Mentoring Partnership. Each volunteer makes a one-year commitment to mentoring.

Established

SOHO was created in 2002 to address the gender-specific needs of pre-teen girls that have court-involved siblings and/or parents, in an effort to prevent criminal involvement and promote healthy lifestyles. Program components resulted from a city-wide developmental assets survey and youth interest inventories and interviews.

Effectiveness

Criminal involvement, longevity of mentor relationships and pre/post tests measure effectiveness. Ninety-five percent of participants have had no criminal involvement eighty percent of mentor relationships last for at least one year. One hundred percent of participants have shown a marked improvement on developmental assets post-tests.

Funding

SOHO is paid for by a $10,000 grant from the Alexandria Youth Fund, a $10,000 private foundation grant and cash/in-kind donations from individuals. Program administrator is paid for by the City, approximately eight hours per week.

Other Involvement

SOHO is a partnership between the Alexandria Court Service Unit and The Art League, a local non-profit organization. Twenty-five volunteers participate in the program annually. Non-profits offer assistance with acquiring used furniture for bedroom renovations; restaurants give discounts on meals; and businesses provide discounted materials. In addition, area schools provide referrals, transportation and follow-up services.

Lessons Learned

Mentoring is a best practice in crime prevention. The younger the child, the more successful a mentoring relationship can be. Fun and creative programming leads to endless community support and positive media attention. By providing programming that takes responsible adults into low-income homes, SOHO is able to offer needed referrals and services to families.

Advice for Mayors

Visit www.alexandriava.gov/soho and read about SOHO in the book, Healing the Inner City Child: Creative Art Therapies with At-risk Youth, edited by Vanessa A. Camilleri.

For best practice mentoring program development assistance, visit www.mentoring.org.

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Alexandria Mentoring Partnership

Mayor William D. Euille

Alexandria, VA

The Alexandria Mentoring Partnership is a collaborative of fifteen separate mentor programs. Staff and volunteers work together to recruit, train, and support mentors so that every child in need or want of a mentor within the City can be afforded one. The Mentoring Partnership is staffed by the City's Gang Prevention Coordinator, whose job description was tailored to reflect the responsibility of coordinating this initiative. The Mentoring Partnership pools resources and expertise and subscribes to national mentoring best-practices. The Partnership manages a centralized website (www.alexandriava.gov/mentoring) and acts as a clearinghouse for mentor inquiries and referrals. The Partnership also hosts major training, support and recruiting events throughout the City; year round.

Established

Mentoring is a research based best-practice in the fight against crime, teen pregnancy, poor school performance, drug abuse and gang involvement. Community members provided feedback indicating that they wanted to see more mentors for children. These community members included the youth themselves. It was determined that, although mentoring occurred in the City; expertise, support, and experience could be pooled together under one overarching collaborative. This follows the national best practices of the National Mentoring Partnership (mentoring.org). The partnership was created in September 2006.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness is measured by determining the number of inquiries received regarding mentoring, the number of potential volunteers who attend recruitment events, the number of mentors who attend on-going training and support programs, and the number of volunteers who become and remain mentors.

Funding

The Partnership has received some financial support through a local philanthropic organization which has paid for some recruiting and support outreach. Otherwise, financial assistance comes through public agency (Court Service Unit, mostly) budgeting. The Alexandria Mentoring Partnership has no budget in and of itself.

Other Involvement

Together the Local School Department, Department of Human Services, Mental Health, Recreation Parks, and Cultural Activities serve as an advisory and participatory capacity.

The program is made up of fifteen existing programs, most of which are non-profit community groups. Community members often volunteer to support our initiatives. Outreach is done within the community and community members (Civic, Faith-Based, Business Leaders) are asked to help communicate the mission of the Alexandria Mentoring Partnership.

Lessons Learned

It has been beneficial to have mentoring programs that operate in the same jurisdiction work together in a collaborative fashion; pooling experience, resources, expertise, and staff.

Programs should align themselves with the National Mentoring Partnership and/or State Mentoring Partnership early and often. They offer a wealth of information and resources.

Advice for Mayors

Bring together as many mentoring programs that you can and create a central clearinghouse, with a website linked to the jurisdiction's website. It is recommended that a budget is set aside to recruit, train and support adults to be volunteers and that a mentoring coordinator position be created in each jurisdiction.

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Gang Prevention and Intervention

Mayor William D. Euille

Alexandria, VA

The City of Alexandria, in collaboration with the Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force, staffs a Gang Prevention & Intervention Coordinator.

In addition to representing the City on the Regional Gang Task Force, the Coordinator staffs the Senior Policy Group on Gangs -consisting of 13 agency Department Directors or Supervisors- and the Alexandria Gang Prevention Community Task Force -consisting of 17 members, including elected officials, school representatives, members of the business/faith-based/non I profit community, parents, and youth. The employment of a Gang Prevention & Intervention Coordinator is in accordance with the best-practice model of the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention.

This staff member also coordinates the Alexandria Mentoring Partnership, a collaborative of 15 mentor programs within the City, focusing on recruiting, training, and support of adult mentors.

Established

The Gang Prevention & Intervention Coordinator position was created, in conjunction with the Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force, in November, 2005 to focus on gang prevention and intervention.

Along with members of Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force, the City of Alexandria determined to enhance the manner in which those at-risk of gang involvement or those involved in gangs were being served. The Senior Policy Group on Gangs and the Gang Prevention Community Task Force were created and the Coordinator serves to staff these advisory boards and to coordinate the initiatives borne out of these groups.

Effectiveness

Each of the initiatives being instituted by or in collaboration with the Senior Policy Group on Gangs and the Gang Prevention Community Task Force is being measured to determine effectiveness. For example, the Gang Prevention & Intervention Coordinator's effectiveness will be measured in part by the number of additional mentors enlisted through the Alexandria Mentoring Partnership, the number of persons who receive gang prevention training (public or private agency staff, community members, and parents) and the number of youth at-risk of gang involvement who receive specific outreach and services. The overarching goals of the Task Force include reducing gang incidents and improving school performance and use of out of school time.

Funding

For the first two years, the Gang Prevention & Intervention Coordinator position was funded by the federal dollars through the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

As of the fall, 2007, the Gang Prevention Coordinator position will be reviewed for local funding by the Alexandria City Council.

Other Involvement

The Senior Policy Group on Gangs includes: the City Manager's Office; Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities; Commonwealth's Attorney; Mental Health, Mental Retardation, Substance Abuse; Northern Virginia Regional Juvenile Detention Home; Sheriff's Department; Police Department; City Public Schools; Public Defender's Office; Adult Probation & Parole; Human Services, Office on Women; Court Service Unit (juvenile probation);and the City's Gang Prevention & Intervention Coordinator, staffs the group.

The Gang Prevention Community Task Force is appointed by the mayor and includes**:** two members of the Alexandria City Council; one member of the Alexandria School Board; the City Manager or his designee; one representative of TC Williams High School; one representative of City Middle Schools; one representative of Alexandria Elementary Schools; one representative of the Private Schools in Alexandria; one representative of a Community-Based Organization with specific outreach to the Latino community; one representative of a Community-Based Organization with specific outreach to the African-American community; two representatives of Alexandria youth, At-Large; one representative of the Alexandria Interfaith Council; two representatives from the City at large; one representative of parents of Alexandria youth; and one representative of the business community.

Lessons Learned

Both the Senior Policy Group on Gangs and the Gang Prevention Community Task Force have been instrumental in creating proactive and responsive gang prevention and intervention programming. The collaboration across the City among public, private and community-based agencies, groups and members has been a vital key to success.

These groups began by hosting a Gang Awareness Summit. It was a highly engaging and successful program that brought attention and community investment into this important issue.

Advice for Mayors

The Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention recommends that a community include social programs, training opportunities, good law enforcement, agency changes, and community involvement in its gang prevention initiatives. This work involves a great deal of coordination and strategic planning. It is recommended that a staff member be dedicated to coordinating the various groups and activities in order to ensure that the community is responsive to youth and adult gang involvement on all fronts.

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Project Discovery

Mayor William D. Euille

Alexandria, VA

A significant proportion of the nation's high school students assume that college is simply not an option for them. Project Discovery of Alexandria inspires students to pursue opportunities in higher education in spite of financial limitations or prior academic performance. The program targets students from low-income households and those who will be the first generation in their family to attend college. It enrolls at least ninety percent of its students in accordance with the following criteria: 1) the family's income is within 200% of the federal poverty guidelines; 2) the student would be the first-generation of their family to attend college (i.e. neither parent graduated from a two-year or four-year college); and/or 3) the student receives free or reduced lunch at school.

While only thirty-three percent of the students at the city's public high school are immigrants, forty-nine percent of the students participating in Project Discovery are from another country. Ranging in age from 14 to 19, these students represent various cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Many are enrolled in the English as a Second Language (ESL) program, a tiered system to address the different language proficiency skills of students. ESL students score lower on the SAT due to their limited language skills and/or because are not familiar in the standardized test culture of the American school system. This is a learning curve not accounted for in the structure of the SAT. The new writing section of the SAT is especially challenging for ESL students. Bienvenidos, Inc. (a non-profit that serves the Latino community) provides bilingual support to Project Discovery, including the recruitment of adult sponsors and mentors. In addition, Project Discovery hired bilingual staff and utilizes a language line that matches callers with interpreters.

As a drop out prevention initiative, Project Discovery motivates students to succeed by staying in school and enrolling in challenging courses. This is accomplished by weekly educational workshops; SAT tutoring; homework help; community service learning projects; monthly field trips to universities; and cultural activities. Workshop topics include college admission and financial aid procedures, career development, study skills, time management, and substance abuse and pregnancy prevention. Weekly sessions are structured to meet differing levels of proficiency in English. Tutors are recruited and trained by the Make a Difference Foundation, a non-profit that raises funds for specific projects for disadvantaged children and youth.

During individual meetings, students collaborate with staff members who serve as coaches. In concert with their coach, students develop a plan comprised of academic and career goals, strategies for enhancing participation in community service learning projects, and testing and time management techniques. Self-esteem is enhanced as students learn to set goals and identify the options available to them. The process of applying for college and seeking financial aid provides students as well as their families with newfound sense of control over their lives and their destinies.

Structured visits to colleges are a core element of the Project Discovery program. The trips provide students with the opportunity to visualize their dream of going to college. Actually walking on campus, eating in dining halls, and talking with administrators and students reinforces the fact that attending college can be a reality. Year after year students credit the college visits as one of the primary inspirations to attend college.

In 2006, the program was expanded to include the Junior+ component, which provides high school juniors with individualized career and college counseling. Transitioning from high school to college is an overwhelming and intimidating process, even more so for students with the greatest needs and the most limited resources. While more affluent students have access to private counseling services to improve their chances of being admitted to the college of their choice, the under-representation of low-income students in schools of higher education can be at least partially attributed to weaker, less polished applications. Too often students fail to equip themselves with sufficient time to complete application requirements, build a resume of volunteer or work experience, and identify adequate amounts of scholarship support. The Junior+ program component counters this inclination by: 1) reminding students to begin the college admissions process in the summer of their junior year; 2) encouraging students to take Advanced Placement and Honors classes; 3) preparing students for college admission entrance exams; 4) teaching students to network with teachers, counselors and community leaders; 5) increasing parental involvement in the college admission process; 6) cultivating such life skills as team-building, public speaking and communication; and 7) increasing student involvement in community service projects

Project Discovery requires that each student perform a minimum of eight hours of volunteer services during the school year. The community service component affords students the opportunity to participate in projects that enhance the quality of life in the neighborhoods they call home.

The transition from high school to college can be as challenging for parents as it is for students. To that end, Project Discovery staff has individualized contact with parents to discuss the progress and needs of their students. In addition, parents are invited to accompany their children on college trips, attend parent workshops sponsored by Project Discovery, and acquaint themselves with community-based resources.

Established

Total Action Against Poverty, a community action agency based in Roanoke, Virginia, launched Project Discovery as a pilot program in 1979. With funds raised by the business community of Alexandria, the Office of Economic Opportunities launched Project Discovery-Alexandria as a drop out prevention pilot program in 1985. With an initial enrollment of twenty-seven students, Project Discovery-Alexandria was established to address the dilemma of unequal access to higher education for low-income students. In 1986 the Virginia General Assembly appropriated funds for seven programs throughout the state of Virginia, with the agreement that half of the money required for operation would be raised locally. Since that time the Project Discovery network in Virginia has grown to twenty sites and seven states now sponsor Project Discovery programs. With an initial enrollment of twenty-seven students, the program currently serves approximately 150 students each year. Over 1,700 students have taken advantage of its services and support since establishment.

Effectiveness

The primary measure of the effectiveness of Project Discovery is the number of students who attend college after graduating from high school. For the past three years, an averageof ninety-two percent of Project Discovery seniors attend institutions of higher learning. In addition, Project Discovery administers surveys and conducts focus groups to document student views on program components and how they can be enhanced.

Funding

The City of Alexandria, Alexandria City Public Schools, and the State of Virginia provide the majority of the funding for Project Discovery-Alexandria. Approximately $25,000 in donations from the community is received each year. In-kind contributions (volunteers, food, administrative services, office supplies, postage, equipment and space) from schools and local businesses average $85,000 each year.

In addition, Project Discovery sponsors a walkathon every fall, the *Walk for the Future: Taking the Right steps for College*. Students, parents, community businesses, elected and appointed officials, and citizens gather to raise funds to support educational activities. The Project Discovery Advisory Board raises money for book scholarships for graduating seniors and alumni to offset the high cost of college textbooks and materials.

Other Involvement

Over the years the program has collaborated with many other organizations, city departments, businesses, and schools to ensure that program objectives are met. Weekly meetings are held at T.C. Williams High School and Chinquapin Park Recreation Center. School staff refers students to Project Discovery and program events and activities are posted throughout the schools.

The program currently partners with the Make a Difference Foundation to plan and implement the SAT Tutoring/Homework Help component. Especially valuable is the partnership with the Scholarship Fund of Alexandria (SFA). Project Discovery students and parents attend the financial aid workshop sponsored by the SFA. There are two scholarships in the SFA earmarked for Project Discovery seniors. In addition, sixty to seventy percent of Project Discovery seniors receive a scholarship from the SFA.

Lessons Learned

Some important lesson learned are to: 1) devise and implement a strategic plan; 2) create workshops and activities that are innovative and engaging while appealing to all learning styles; 3) offer youth leadership opportunities within the program; 4) maintain contact with program alumni to promote networking activities and generate a pool of potential volunteers; 5) solicit feedback for all stakeholders and use the feedback in planning and; 6) create a civic and community involvement component.

Advice for Mayors

Specific advice for mayors wishing to replicate this program in their city includes: 1) promoting the accomplishments of the program and its students in the media; 2) maintaining visibility in the schools served and in the community; and 3) recognizing and celebrating the resonating effects of a community based college access program.

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Street Outreach

Mayor William D. Euille

Alexandria, VA

The Intervention Prevention Education (IPE) Counselor Program (Street Outreach) is considered a national best-practice in the prevention and intervention of gang involvement. The Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force, of which the City of Alexandria is a part, has enlisted IPE Counselors to provide street outreach and case management services in the region, and specifically within the City of Alexandria, for those at risk of gang involvement or for those involved in gangs.

At-risk community members between the ages of 12 - 21 receive services either through direct referral from any member of the community - agency staff, faith-based member, mentor, parent, and peer - or through interaction with the IPE Counselors, who keep non-traditional evening and weekend hours and remain visible in the community. Clients and their families receive an assessment, education, and services focusing on employment, counseling and mentoring. Cases remain open for 90 days, with follow up for 9 months following closure.

Due to the success of this program, the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities is utilizing its expertise and resources by redeploying staff to provide services that will mirror and complement the IPE Counselors' work.

Established

Employing Street Outreach workers to mitigate the threat of gang involvement is considered a best practice by the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. The theory is that those at risk of gang involvement or those who are involved in gangs are in need of specific outreach to bridge the gap between them and needed services. This program began in the City in April, 2007.

Effectiveness

Each IPE Counselor maintains statistics on the number of youth and adults with whom he/she has street outreach contact. Additionally, client cases are opened for 90 days. Follow up and tracking occurs on each case for the following 9 months. Measurements include school attendance and performance, employment, mentoring relationships and family functioning.

Funding

The regional IPE program is funded through federal grant money through the U.S. Office of Juvenile & Delinquency Prevention.

Other Involvement

The Senior Policy Group on Gangs, including the City Manager's Office, Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, Commonwealth's Attorney, Mental Health, Mental Retardation, Substance Abuse, Northern Virginia Regional Juvenile Detention Home, Sheriff's Department, Police Department, City Public Schools, Public Defender's Office, Adult Probation & Parole, Human Services, Office on Women and the Court Service Unit, is an advisory board which oversees the gang prevention and intervention initiatives in the City.

All staff from any of these programs and multiple public and private agencies may refer at-risk clients to the program. The Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities is creating staffing deployment that will support, mirror, and complement the work of the IPE Counselors.

Community members also may make referrals to the program for both individual services and to request that an IPE Counselor provide specific outreach to groups congregating in areas of the City in an unstructured manner.

Lessons Learned

Street Outreach is a best practice to mitigate the threat of gang involvement. Outreach workers connect with youth and others in their environment. Most often, those in most need of services either do not know how to access the services or do not take the initiative to do so. Street Outreach workers can be the bridge that connects some of the neediest with support that they need.

Advice for Mayors

Street Outreach in the form of gang prevention is known to work. Any public or private agency that provides community-based outreach and service should know the community resources available to all ages of youth. Many at-risk youth who are in need of help do not know what programs are available to them or fail to follow-up on help. The research supports street outreach as a way to connect at-risk youth with community programs that support healthy development.

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The Alexandria Youth Fund

Mayor William D. Euille

Alexandria, VA

The City of Alexandria is committed to the positive development of its youth. Most are preparing for futures full of promise and will become competent, productive members of society. However, despite the best efforts of parents, educators, and youth service professionals as well as the wide array of programs and services, some youth remain at-risk of social, emotional, physical and economic dysfunction. Alexandria, like many other localities, is challenged by the nature and complexity of the issues confronting today's youth. In response to that challenge, the City of Alexandria made the determination to award funds for youth programs and services based on data documenting the well-being of its children.

To that end, the City developed a holistic approach to support its youth through programs and activities that provide opportunities for success and reduce the risk factors. While success depends on the active involvement of every segment of the community, it is also a function of the City's capacity to develop a structured and coordinated approach to analyzing available services and their impact. It was proposed that a new entity be created to elevate youth-related issues and coordinate programs and services. As a result, the City Council established the Youth Policy Commission as the authority on youth-related issues. The mission of the Youth Policy Commission is to articulate the City's youth priorities and recommend city funding for programs and services based on those priorities.

As one of its first major undertakings, the Youth Policy Commission published a three-fold plan of action. The first step was a review of youth services within the context of childhood developmental stages. The second component was the writing of a *Blueprint for Youth Well-Being,* which included goals as well as data for measuring progress from year to year. The third course of action was a strategy for encouraging positive youth development. The commission identified five primary categories of youth well-being: health, education, safety, economic security and recreation. Subcommittees were established that studied available services and identified service delivery gaps. It was determined that tracking community measures is a more useful indicator of progress than merely measuring individual outcomes since tracking reveals areas that need to be improved. The Youth Policy Commission recommended that a coordinated, city-wide approach to serving youth be devised and that city funding is the foundation for preventing poor outcomes for youth and building their competencies.

In 2000, Alexandria surveyed more than 3,700 students in grades seven through twelve using a survey developed by the Search Institute. The framework developed by the Search Institute represents a core of developmental building blocks crucial for all youth, regardless of community size, region of the country, gender, family economics, or race/ethnicity. It is a tool for assessing the health and well-being of middle and high school students that emphasizes the assets that protect youth from risk-taking behavior and nurture the development of socially valued behaviors. A profile of the youth of Alexandria was developed based on the survey results. It was the vision of the Youth Policy Commission to use that profile as guidance for the funding of youth programs. A youth member of the Youth Policy Commission presented the proposal for the Youth Fund to City Council in April 2002. By October, the program was adopted and the first grants awarded.

The Alexandria Youth Fund promotes positive outcomes for the city's youth between the ages of 6-21 and their families. It is administered by the Alexandria Department of Human Services with input from the Youth Policy Commission. Youth Fund monies are awarded to organizations with innovative programs that respond to those needs identified by the developmental asset approach.

Established

During a City Council work session in the spring of 1995, the City Manager informed the City Council that city staff would be conducting a comprehensive study of youth services programs. The City Council Human Services Committee was also studying youth issues and recommended that youth-related issues they had identified be considered in the context of a more comprehensive Youth Services Study. Among the recommendations resulting from the study was the formation of a City Council appointed commission that would be recognized as the authority on youth-related issues. It was also recommended that youth programs be assessed so that future decisions could be based on actual program outcomes within the context of an overall youth policy.

In 1997 the Youth Policy Commission was established as the authority on youth-related issues. The purposes of the Youth Policy Commission are to: 1) recommend to City Council a vision for youth well-being in Alexandria and a plan of action to carry out that vision; 2) facilitate a collaborative process to respond to emerging and existing youth issues and; 3) review progress toward meeting the vision by monitoring services and programs for effectiveness in meeting the established priorities; analyzing program outcomes; and issuing an annual report.

The goal of the Alexandria Fund for Human Services is to provide funding opportunities for human services programs in the city. This fund allows the City to support programs vital to meeting the needs of the community with broadly defined service priorities for young children, youth, seniors, immigrants and the disabled. The Alexandria Fund for Human Services is the umbrella fund that coordinates grants and special initiatives for the Community Partnership Fund, the Youth Fund, and the Children's Fund. Although the three funds have different priorities and varied allocations, together they help ensure that the City's most vulnerable citizens will be served.

The Alexandria City Council established the City Youth Fund for children in grades 6 through 12 in May 2001. In September 2002, the Fund was expanded to include youth from ages 6 to 21. The Fund is administered by the Office of Youth Services and monitored by the Youth Policy Commission. Following its implementation, the Youth Policy Commission conducted twenty-one forums with civic associations, parent-teacher associations, and other community organizations to promote the developmental asset approach and its application to the Alexandria Youth Fund.

Effectiveness
All organizations receiving Youth Fund grants provide written evaluations of their programs' measurable goals and outcomes. These outcomes pertain to the knowledge, attitudes, values, skills, behaviors and other attributes or benefits gained by the youth in the programs during and after their participation.

Funding
Funds for the Alexandria Fund for Human Services are allocated annually by the City Council. In FY 2007, $301,807 was allocated to the Youth Fund. Grants to organizations range from seed money to leverage funding from other sources. City budget staff estimate that the forty-four Youth Fund grants awarded since the fund was established has supported programs serving over 8,000 youth.

Other Involvement
The Youth Policy Commission collaborates with many segments of the Alexandria community. The City has approximately 115 citizen boards and commissions addressing a myriad of issues. The Youth Policy Commission reaches out to all of the boards and commissions that directly or indirectly address youth related issues. By way of example, the Parks and Recreation Commission, the Public Health Advisory Commission, and the Alexandria City School Board have designated seats on the commission. Non-profit agencies, youth and parents have designated seats as well. Additionally, the commission holds joint meetings quarterly with the City's Community Gang Prevention Task Force.

Lessons Learned
Some important lesson learned are to: 1) use City funding to help agencies leverage additional funding from federal, state, and foundations; 2) provide workshops and other training opportunities to assist grantees with the development of good outcome measures; and 3) educate the community regarding program outcomes to demonstrate the need for the Youth Fund.

Advice for Mayors
Specific advice for mayors wishing to replicate this program in their city includes: 1) fully funding the program; 2) maintaining visibility in the community; 3) building a base of community advocates; 4) and actively involving youth in the development of the program.

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City of Asheville Youth Leadership Academy — Mayor Terry Bellamy

Asheville, NC

The City of Asheville Youth Leadership Academy (CAYLA), an integral part of Asheville (NC) Mayor Terry Bellamy's, "Grow Your Own" initiative, provides students with civic-minded summer work experience while empowering them to take an active part in financing their post-secondary education. CAYLA is offered through the city in collaboration with the Asheville City Schools Foundation.

CAYLA recruits, trains and places local high school students at meaningful summer jobs with the city and other participating agencies. In addition, the program provides students weekly workshops on topics such as financial literacy, leadership, community service and college preparation. CAYLA will continue to engage students throughout the school year by offering career-focused enrichment activities as well as community service events. Taking place after school or on the weekend, the projects will involve the students' mentors from their summer job placements, allowing them to maintain and strengthen these adult contacts. In addition, the service events will foster a sense of unity among the students and connect them to the community at large.

Twenty students are selected by a committee of local education and nonprofit leaders, and have expressed an interest not only in attending college but in pursuing public service-related careers. Each student is required to submit an application and at least two written recommendations to the committee, and attend an in-person interview.

The City of Asheville pays the students approximately $7.00 an hour. Upon successful completion of the year-long program, they are each awarded $2,000 for a 529 College Savings Fund set up in their name.

Established

While the overall U.S. unemployment rate has decreased over the past few years, the labor market for teenagers in both the nation and state remains weak. To make matters worse, job opportunities for high school youths are distributed unevenly across key demographic and socioeconomic groups. In 2005, white high school youths were twice as likely to work as black youths and 40 percent more likely than Hispanic youths.

National research has shown that minority and low-income youths who work in high school are less likely to drop out than their peers who do not work. Students with jobs that offer work-based learning opportunities are more likely to see the relevance of school curriculum to future job performance and remain more committed to their school work. Teenage women who live in local areas that provide more job opportunities to them are less likely to become pregnant, and male teens are less likely to become involved with the criminal justice system. National, state, and local research also consistently reveals that work in high school facilitates the transition to the labor market upon graduation and increases the annual earnings of youth in their late teens and early 20s.

The goal of the City of Asheville Youth Leadership Academy is to provide students with civic-minded work experience while empowering them to take an active part in financing their post-secondary education. The Youth Leadership Academy is an integral part of the city's 'Grow Our Own' initiative, as envisioned by City of Asheville Mayor Terry Bellamy and the Asheville City Council. The City is committed to giving Asheville's young people the opportunity to stay and work in Asheville, as well as to have valuable work experiences that will advance their future careers wherever they go. The inaugural CAYLA class was selected in May 2007, with internships beginning on June 11, 2007.

Effectiveness

At the conclusion of the 8-week summer internship program, CAYLA will disseminate surveys to all participants (students as well as the 20 job site supervisors) asking for their feedback and suggestions. Student participants also submit letters, addressed to the Mayor and City Council members, describing their experiences in the program. Site supervisors are also encouraged to write recommendation letters on behalf of their student interns; these letters are given to the students and kept on file with the City. Contact information for the 2007-2008 class will also be kept on file so that efforts can be made to track the successes and achievements of CAYLA alumni in years to come.

Funding
For CAYLA's initial year, the City of Asheville committed $100,000 from its general fund to support the program.

Other Involvement
The 20 CAYLA students are placed at summer internships with the following city departments: Information Services, Public Works (Streets, Sanitation and Fleet Divisions), Water Resources, Building Safety and the Police Department. Students also work with Asheville-Buncombe Technical College Daycare, the Asheville City Schools Preschool, the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce, the *Asheville Citizen-Times* (the area's local newspaper), the Asheville Office of the Public Defender, the University of North Carolina at Asheville (UNCA), the YMI Cultural Center, Youthful HAND Daycare, and the West Riverside Weed and Seed program.

Weekly workshops for the students have featured speakers/presenters from the following agencies/organizations: College Foundation of North Carolina (CFNC), Consumer Credit Counseling Service of WNC, Junior Achievement, MANNA FoodBank, the Mediation Center, RiverLink, UNCA Leadership Asheville, UNCA Outdoor Education (low-ropes course), and the UNCA Admissions Department.

Lessons Learned
Participating job sites/supervisors must have a clear understanding of what is expected of them as employers and be given clear guidelines on appropriate assignments for the students. CAYLA is designed so that all job placements involve CAYLA's students in meaningful, substantive projects, and will expose the youth to new college and/or career options.

Drawing from research findings of effective youth development programs nationwide, CAYLA emphasizes sustained adult contact and support for achievement. Studies have shown that it is critically important that young people feel successful as they participate in a program and develop as individuals.

Students must also be (frequently) reminded of what is expected of *them* as participants in the Youth Leadership Academy. They are asked to sign a "memorandum of understanding" that addresses topics like attendance, active participation, and appropriate behavior on the job and at the weekly workshops. Throughout the program, the overarching messages directed to youth are 1) that they will be held accountable for their performance, 2) that they will receive positive as well as constructive feedback, and 3) that they are entitled to suggestions, help and support.

Advice for Mayors
A Youth Leadership Academy should be coordinated by a fulltime staff member who can dedicate him/herself to the various demands of managing an initiative of this scope. The coordinator serves as liaison between students, parents, job site supervisors and community. He/She acts as a human resources professional, and must be on call to troubleshoot any work-related issues that arise throughout the summer. Just as importantly, he/she is also a mentor and academic advisor, and must be comfortable interacting with youth and highly supportive of their educational pursuits. Experience in program management/administration and community organizing strongly encouraged.

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Youth Options Unlimited (YOU) — Mayor Thomas M. Menino

Boston, MA

Youth Options Unlimited (YOU) works with the full spectrum of adjudicated young people, including court-involved youth on probation, youth in custody of the Department of Youth Services and other high risk youth. YOU works with the youth to develop the interpersonal, academic, and employment competencies necessary to become productive and self-sufficient adults capable of making positive contributions to society. On an annual basis, YOU serves approximately 600 youth, 100 percent of whom are involved with the juvenile justice system.

YOU has developed both a detention model to work with young people prior to release and a community model to work with young people after release from custody. YOU offers a three-part service system designed to get youth on a path to skill development and self-sufficiency: 1) intervention in juvenile court, detention facilities and referrals from community re-entry centers; 2) stabilization, case management, and support services; and 3) academic remediation, job readiness training, transitional employment, and job placement.

The transitional employment program guides young people through a multi-tiered, developmental approach to employment, providing less experienced youth with community service projects designed to develop fundamental work-readiness skills, while more experienced youth participate in a Bridge program designed to provide intensive academic and workplace skill development focused on a particular trade. The goal for all participants is to develop the maturity and skills required to secure full-time unsubsidized jobs in the private sector.

Established

With comprehensive programming for hard to serve youth a high priority for Mayor Menino, Boston made a concerted and successful effort to receive several U.S. Department of Labor grants, the largest of which was in 2000, a five-year Youth Opportunity grant serving the city's HUD-designated Empowerment Zone, also focused on South Boston and Roxbury. Boston's Youth Opportunity (YO) program has been lauded in particular for its intensive case management approach, its network of alternative education providers, and its innovative transitional employment model. In 2005, as federal funding for YO drew to a close, Mayor Menino was determined to continue this effort; but, wanted the program focused on court-involved youth from across the City because Boston, like many other cities, was seeing an upswing in youth violence, gang activity, and too many young people disconnected from education and employment. It was at this juncture that YO evolved into providing case management, alternative education and transitional employment services to court-involved youth, in close partnership with all criminal justice partners. This realization led to the establishment of the current Youth Options Unlimited (YOU) model, which serves young people throughout the city, all of whom are involved with the justice system.

Effectiveness

Program effectiveness is measured by both short and long-term outcomes achieved by participants. Many participants have not succeeded in prior education or employment, and have low basic academic skill levels. YOU Staff sets high expectations for all participants, working with each person to develop long-term goals around education and employment to enable them to earn a living wage and have choices regarding their future careers. YOU carefully tracks interim outcomes toward these long-term goals.

For academic progress, YOU measures initial academic skills levels, and then tracks incremental improvement in skill levels, entry into secondary academic programs, completion of secondary credentials, and enrollment in post-secondary education or training.

For career development progress, YOU conducts an initial assessment of work readiness skills, and then tracks progress in subsidized transitional employment until young people are prepared and able to secure unsubsidized employment. Recently, YOU has worked with Northeastern University's Criminal Justice Department and the Boston law enforcement partners to track recidivism and re-offense rates as they relate to criminal activity.

Funding
Financing for the program has evolved from a single federal grant to a range of public funding streams. The program has secured grant funding from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety and the Department of Youth Services. The City also contributes funding to the program through the Neighborhood Jobs Trust, a trust established to support job training through linkage funds paid by real estate developers. YOU has also secured smaller grants through the Commonwealth Corporation, a quasi-state agency; the Greater Boston Black Ministerial Alliance; and Roxbury Youthworks, Inc., a community-based provider contracted to monitor Department of Youth Services youth released in the community. YOU is also seeking funding through private foundations.

Other Involvement
Both the Boston Police Department and the City of Boston Centers for Youth and Families are key partners. The Boston Public Health Commission also trains YOU staff on dealing with youth and families who have suffered trauma in street violence and for the pas two years their EMT staff has provided Emergency Response training to youth in the YOU Summer Jobs Program. The Boston Police Department identifies and refers young people in need of case management and employment to services at YOU. The Boston Police Department operates the Boston Reentry Initiative, a partnership between the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department, the U.S. and District's Attorney's Offices. The purpose of the initiative is to identify young offenders who are deemed most likely to re-offend and who may also have more violent crimes on their records. Through this initiative, the Boston Reentry Initiative conducts panels that inform identified offenders of available resources, such as Youth Opportunity, prior to their release. YOU is able to connect with inmates and begin services prior to release as well. The Boston Police Department also refers young people to YOU through the Youth Service Provider Network, a group of social workers who work with young people identified by police officers, and the Youth Violence Strike Force, the Boston Police Department unit responsible for collecting information and coordinating suppression of youth violence. The Boston Centers for Youth and Families employs street workers responsible for outreach to disengaged youth throughout the city. The Boston Centers for Youth and Families street workers are an important source of referral and information sharing.

Lessons Learned
It is imperative to conduct a local needs assessment and resource map of services and programs for this at-risk population in your City. An understanding the landscape services is important in determining specific gaps in services and establishing relationships with juvenile justice partners such as the police department, juvenile court and probation, the department of youth services, as well as other community-based providers.

In addition, securing safety for all is paramount in developing a service delivery model. YOU's current service population largely comprises young people with active gang affiliation. Working with law enforcement and other community partners to be sure safety is considered when putting any youth activities in place is essential.

Finally, giving your center a professional atmosphere and setting appropriate rules of behavior for youth. It is important to have an organized, attractive and respectful environment for young people to model and understand how a professional worksite operates.

Advice for Mayors
A commitment from and collaboration with law enforcement partners are essential to the success of this program, as well as collaboration with other providers who serve the target population. One program cannot provide all the services at-risk youth need. Police, probation, parole, the juvenile justice system partners, judges and public defenders should be included in the model.

Mayors should stay focused on what your city can do well. Decide which two or three services your city can provide with depth and expertise. Adjudicated youth need a host of interventions and services; and working with community organizations and other government agencies to figure out a model to best serve at-risk populations.

Mayors need to make sure their Workforce Investment Board and Youth Council have put at-risk youth high on their agenda for services. Ask them to report back to you about programs and labor market information they develop which focus on this population.

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Annual First Day Festival

Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr.

Charleston, SC

Mayor Riley learned about the First Day of School Initiative from Nashville, TN Mayor Bill Purcell who encouraged the city to sponsor this event to celebrate education and generate community support and excitement for the beginning of a new school year.

Established

The 1st annual First Day Festival was held in 2003 at Joe Riley Stadium. The Festival, now in its 5th year, continues to grow and serve more parents and children. The families who attend receive information on educational programs and student support services in addition to participating in recreational and enrichment activities. The First Day Festival serves parents and children in need of help and assistance with support services and additional resources to ensure that their child succeed in school.

Effectiveness

The greatest benefit of the First Day of School Initiative for teachers is that when parents feel welcome starting on day one, they are more likely to be allies instead of adversaries throughout the rest of the year. Parents, students, teachers and principals begin the year together on a positive note.

Other Involvement

The success of the First Day of School Initiative is the result of collaborative partnerships and extraordinary community support. Key partners provide financial, in-kind and volunteer support for the First Day Festival; which allows the City to provide this event at no cost to parents and families. The community has embraced this initiative and established a model of public engagement in support of education.

Advice for Mayors

Mayor Riley created the vision and provided the leadership in mobilizing the community to build better parent/teacher relationships. Each year he spearheads a campaign to engage more businesses to provide employees who allow parents time off to take their child to school and be involved in their child's education throughout the school year.

The First Day Festival is an initiative that positively impacts parents relationships with their child's school and teachers. The First Day of School Initiative is an example of a successful public engagement activity that can occur on an ongoing basis to reconnect the community and our schools.

Contacts

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The Mayor's Office for Children, Youth and Families
(843) 965-4190

Camp Hope

Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr.

Charleston, SC

This summer the City of Charleston Police Department piloted a free camp for underprivileged, at-risk, youth living in the downtown community. The idea for Camp Hope began with Police Chief Greg Mullen, who wanted to provide a safe and enriching place for youth during the evening hours (6:00-9:00pm).

Chief Mullen asked the Mayor's Office for Children, Youth and Families, and the Recreation Department to join him and the YMCA in coordinating the programming for Camp Hope. Each night of the camp has a different agenda and theme, with youth participating in recreation activities, cultural arts activities, leadership skill-building activities, and mentoring. Youth attend a special event every Friday night as well. The camp was held at Fraser Elementary School in downtown Charleston, and the students were selected through the school before the school year ended. The principal and teachers assisted with identifying 55 children who they felt would benefit the most from the camp, and 45 were accepted into the camp.

Funding

The majority of the funding for the pilot year came from private donations, and the main expenses were staffing, food, and materials.

Mayor Riley enthusiastically supported the Camp Hope pilot program, and has already expressed interest in offering the camp next year at more sites.

Contacts

Chief Greg Mullen
(843) 720-2400.

Upward Bound: Contact Person - Leroy Lewis – (843) 953-5469

- High school sophomores, juniors, and seniors who have demonstrated a desire to attend post-secondary institutions and have shown the capacity to succeed are given the opportunity to become involved in this college preparatory program.
- Students attend 18 Saturday academic classes throughout the course of the year as a component of the academic program. Field trips and community service activities are also incorporated into the academic aspect of the program.
- The six week summer period is composed of the Academic Enrichment Component and the Bridge Component. Students live on-campus and receive extra instruction in the major academic areas. Recreational activities, academic counseling, and social activities are also a part of the program.
- Parents must also be involved in the program, be present at special events, and cooperate with staff to encourage student success.
- In order to qualify, students' parents must not have received a college degree. Students must receive free or reduced lunch. The student must be planning to go to college and have shown academic potential.
- The program is funded through the US Department of Education and is one of 700 Upward Bound programs throughout the United States. The first 18 pilot programs began in 1964 as a part of the Economic Opportunity Act.

Charleston, SC

Communities in Schools of Charleston, SC Dropout Prevention Programs
Contact Person - Jane Riley –(843) 720-2346

Communities in Schools of Charleston was developed in 1989 after a John Hopkins study suggested that the Charleston County School District should plan drop-out prevention programs for their students.

Mentoring

- CIS students receive one-on-one mentoring from volunteer adults in the community.

Wise Guys Club

- This initiative emphasizes male responsibility and character-building. Male CIS Support Specialists hold weekly meetings with adolescent boys where they introduce a 10-part curriculum designed around concepts such as communication, STDs, and goal-setting. Service learning and peer mentoring are also encouraged for upper elementary students.

Kids In Motion

- DHEC and MUSC cooperate to provide students with a weekly fitness and nutrition club to discuss proper eating habits and physical activity. Students from the College of Nursing lead CIS students to promote overall health and fitness.

Support Our Students (SOS)

- Students with below-average reading skills receive individual mentoring/tutoring from volunteers throughout the year. During the school year, students meet with their tutors once a week for two hours. During the summer, students and tutors meet three mornings a week for two hours each morning throughout a six week period.

Teen Companion/Medicaid Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention (MAPPS)

- The South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (SCDHHS) cooperates with CIS to implement this program. The student, parent or guardian, and Student Support Specialist complete a needs assessment and case plan. Once this has been completed, the student will join Student Support Specialists for individual and group sessions. The Student Support Specialists learn the most pressing needs of the children and families and then make the appropriate referrals to community resources.

Families and Schools Together (FAST)

- FAST is an early intervention multifamily program that provides families with weekly sessions. During the sessions, the families eat together and then participate in one-on-one activities between parents and children as well as communication games.

Can We Talk? Can We Talk?

- This education program is directed at parents to give them the skills to discuss with their children difficult topics such as sexuality, drugs, and bullying.

Lion Quest Skills

- Lion Quest Skills is a curriculum designed to teach students communication skills, life skills, and to encourage positive character. The program focuses on: drug abuse prevention, diversity, community service, family support, and cooperation between families, schools, and communities.

Sea Island Advocates for Education (SAFE Initiative)

- The SAFE Initiative is based in Johns and Wadmalaw Islands and is intended to lower the dropout rate and pregnancies among teenage girls. The initiative revolves around implementing research-based programs, improving the classroom curriculum, providing programs to enhance the lives of youth and the community, and expanding health care and prevention centers to reach more people in the population.

Improving Curriculum and Instruction: Contact Person - Crystal Lottig - (843)937-6493

- *Teachers Coaches*
  - Academic reforms are encouraged in the classroom through the assistance of coaches, or experts regarding bringing reform into the classroom. These coaches offer on-site professional development to increase teacher effectiveness.
- *Extended Learning Time for Students*
  - The CCSD has proposed a plan for either an extended school year or a "summer semester" for unsatisfactory and below average schools. The proposal suggests 2-4 week summer semesters for secondary students and 15 hours/week of afterschool instruction for elementary school students.

Safe and Orderly Schools: Contact Person - Denise Newsome: (843) 720-2955

- School Resource Officers
  - The police departments from the City of Charleston, the Town of Mount Pleasant, the City of North Charleston, and the Charleston County Sheriff's Office cooperate to place resource officers in all middle and high schools.
  - The school resource officer acts as a law enforcement officer, law-related counselor/advisor, and a law-related education teacher.
- Middle School Drug Prevention Grant-Project L.I.N.K. (Learning Innovations for Network Knowledge)
  - As a part of Project L.I.N.K., 3 middle school coordinators, hired under a federal grant as a part of the Safe and Drug Free Schools program, will work in 5 middle schools in the district.
  - The coordinators are expected to determine and implement research-based violence and drug-prevention programs.
  - They must assess student and parent needs and work with parents to find out the most appropriate prevention programs.
  - Coordinators must give information to the State Education Association (SEA) on prevention programs that have worked to reduce drug activity and violence in the schools.
  - Finally, the coordinators must develop Student Assistance Teams both at the school and the district level.
- Project P.R.I.D.E.S. (Providing Resources and Intervention for the Development of Every Student)
  - The program consists of three projects located at Brentwood Middle School, Burke High School, and Stall High School.
  - The P.R.I.D.E.S. coordinators are hired under the federal grant for Safe and Drug Free Schools, and their responsibilities reflect those of the Project L.I.N.K. coordinators.
  - Additional responsibilities include helping schools develop plans to respond in the case of a catastrophic or traumatic event and working with a community-wide advisory council.
- Acceleration Programs: M-GAP, E-GAP, and P-GAP
  - The program addresses the needs of overage students, who are at a high risk for failure or dropping out.
  - Students receive double than the traditionally allotted instructional time for math and reading.
  - A school psychologist is responsible for designing instructional interventions.
  - A positive behavior support (PBS) coach is provided to teachers and classrooms to train teachers how to incorporate PBS into their classrooms.
  - Students report that smaller class sizes help them stay focused and engaged in the classroom.
  - More than 75% of students report they prefer the M-GAP school design to their preceding academic experiences.
  - Teachers also report greater academic achievement from their students and believe the intervention to be effective.
  - Two years after implementation, 404 less students were coverage.

- School Climate Resource Center (SCRC)
  - The SCRC provides consultation and information on best practices for school and teachers.
  - The SCRC also tracks the progress and implementation of programs.
- Crisis Intervention Training
  - Non-violent crisis intervention training is provided to educators district wide
- Bullying Prevention
  - Bully prevention takes place primarily in the form of awareness-raising for students, parents, and professionals. The Charleston County School District cooperates with Charleston's WCSC TV-5 in order to make information available to parents, particularly through the CCSD website or through television programs, such as the 2004 airings of "Invisible Weapons" and "A Violent Age."
  - In 2004, the CCSD introduced a curriculum through the funding of the Safe Schools/Health Schools federal grant. The program, *Steps to Respect*, was implemented in cooperation with the Cornerstone Project and the Office of Safe Schools and Guidance at the CCSD. The program is designed for 3rd-6th graders and centers on teaching educators effective methods of dealing with bullies and teaching students appropriate social, emotional, and behavioral skills.
  - Classes offered for teachers to maintain their teaching license also offer courses in bully prevention, such as the 2007 class South Carolina Self Control (SC2): A Bullying Prevention Model.

Positive Behavior Support (PBS): Contact Person - Cathy Lewis – (843) 345-0239

- www.pbis.org
- 36 schools have been trained in implementing PBS as a behavior plan within the school.
- The program is funded through a federal grant.
- The 2007-2008 school year will be the fifth year the program has been implemented in Charleston County.
- PBS is based on a system of three levels of support including primary, secondary, and tertiary. The system uses research-based methods to decrease problem behavior, increase desired behavior, and support overall student development in the classroom.
- The level of primary support focuses on the school as a whole. Primary support aims to prevent problems before they occur.
- The level of secondary support focuses on targeted groups of problem-behavior or at-risk students. Secondary support aims to decrease current problems occurring.
- The level of tertiary support focuses on specific individuals exhibiting problem behavior. These students may have Down Syndrome, autism, behavioral/emotional disorders. Other students may have no specific diagnosis but merely demonstrate excessive behavioral disrupting. Tertiary support aims to decrease the intensity of students' problem behaviors.

Burke High School: Contact Person - Principal Charles Benton (843) 579-4815

- Homework Center
  - 2 afterschool homework centers are provided on-campus for 7th-12th graders and students are rewarded for participating. Graces 7-8 attend from 4:15 PM-5:15 PM and grades 9-12 attend from 3:45 PM-4:45 PM.
  - Information from computer assisted instruction programs (CAI) on student skills and needs are available to teachers in the Homework Center.
- APS Students
  - Students who require an Academic Plan must be determined within the first two weeks of school. Parents must be notified of the plan, and it must be signed by the 30th school day.
  - Follow-up meetings are held with students and parents to discuss and monitor progress.
  - Parent and student attendance to meetings is monitored and parents are repeatedly contacted before the APS is forwarded.
  - Student grades are monitored biweekly to maintain progress.
  - All parents should receive a letter regarding their students' progress each quarter.
  - Students should be put on academic probation during their second year of APS, and they should participate in the A+ Tutorial program, a comprehensive remediation program.
- Remedial Programs
  - College of Charleston will provide weekly tutors for students in reading and mathematics.
  - College of Charleston will allow eligible students to take entry level college courses in English and mathematics.

- Career Guidance and Counseling
  - The "Learning to Work" standards and competencies from The Comprehensive Development Guidance and Counseling Program Model will be used to conduct a career guidance and counseling program.
  - A career counselor works to lead Career and Technology Education for students.
  - EEDA also will fund a middle school CDF counselor to provide career activities for 7th and 8th graders at least once a week.
  - Counselors will also help 8th and 9th grade students create and implement Individual Graduation Plans.
- Work-Based Learning
  - Students will have the opportunity to have a mentor in cooperation with community agencies.
  - Recruit teachers to help find work-based learning opportunities like mentoring and shadowing.
  - Create opportunities for students to participate in internships and co-ops through advanced-level CTE courses.
  - Encourage students to finish the CTE program.
  - Provide the opportunity to major in Health Science, Culinary Arts, and Business Education.
- Principal Supervision
  - The principal will conduct formal and informal observations of classrooms every week and deliver comments to teachers to improve instruction that relates to continuous monitoring of progress. He will also determine whether classroom instruction fulfills curriculum guidelines.
- Professional Development
  - Student and teacher needs, assessed through observations and surveys, are used to create professional development programs with follow-up sessions.
  - Some members of the Burke faculty complete the "Bridges of Poverty" course to better reach the student population.
  - Information learned at professional conferences is shared with the faculty to be implemented in the classroom.
  - Specific professional development activities that have been held include:
    - Teambuilding and Group Dynamics
    - Designing Lesson Plans and Teambuilding
    - Principles of Planning, Conflict Resolution, and Critiquing Student Work
    - Analyzing Data and Formulating Questions
- Professional Development: Leadership Academy
  - The Leadership Academy is composed of five components, including:
    - ASPIRE
      - 15 future administrators will enroll in a 2-year program centered on leadership and best practices.
      - The program consists of: attaining an M.Ed. from Charleston Southern University, completing a 3-day Summer Symposium, monthly seminars, shadowing experiences, leadership readings, reflections journals, and second-year internship.
    - Principals for Tomorrow (PFT)
      - Future principals who have obtained certification in Educational Leadership will participate in a one-year initiative centered on leadership and best practices. The participants will be responsible for attending monthly seminars, doing reflection journaling, and creating and conducting a leadership development project.
    - LAUNCH
      - New principals in the CCSD are provided through this component with support and professional development. Participants complete four days of professional development during the summer in order to become familiar with the CCSD. Current and retired administrators, mentors, and reflection journaling are also integral parts of the LAUNCH program.
    - Lead Division
      - The main concern for the lead division is that of current principals. The monthly administrative meetings for principals are structured based on the six core strategies from the CCSD Plan for Excellence.
    - Management College
      - The Management College is responsible for offering professional development opportunities to all groups of employees. The Management College will also work with local universities and technical colleges.

Alternative Schools

- Murray Hill Academy: *Contact Person: Principal Reginald Flenory – (843) 745-9540*
  - Murray Hill Academy was developed for "discipline-challenged" middle and high school students.
  - The school includes four distinct learning communities, and each community includes four classrooms with a shared middle area.
  - The school as 432 slots designated for these students.
- YouthBuild: *Contact Person: Principal Annette Goodwin – (843) 207-8308*
  - Low-income high-school dropouts between the ages of 16-24 may participate in the YouthBuild program. The program incorporates leadership and community service, in the form of building homes for low-income residents, into a program where participants simultaneously complete their GEDs or high school diplomas. YouthBuild schools also provide career skills training, counseling, and support groups that help youth to heal, grow, and move forward in life.
  - Students receive a small stipend for every day they work and for every day they attend school.
  - Sea Island YouthBuild began and 2002 and was transformed into the Charleston Area Construction Charter School in order to expand the program and offer more opportunities to students.
  - YouthBuild Charleston, five years after first opening, also was converted in 2003 into a charter school.
  - The program is funded by a combination of school district funds, state funds, and federal funds.

Freedom School at Burke High School

Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr.

Charleston, SC

As part of the city's commitment to increasing opportunities for students attending Burke High School, we partnered with Carolina Youth Development Center, the Charleston County School District and College of Charleston, Center for Partnerships in Education to offer the Children's Defense Fund Freedom School for Burke Middle School students.. While Burke High School has many challenges and has received unsatisfactory ratings on academic achievement for several years, the community strongly supports the students and the school, and the city is committed to being a partner at the table for the Freedom School and other efforts to help the school succeed.

The Freedom School model offers support to children and families in the following areas: high quality academic enrichment, parent and family involvement, civic engagement and social action, intergenerational leadership development, and nutrition, health and mental health.

Other Involvement

Mayor Riley has been at the forefront of the city's involvement at Burke and has encouraged and asked all departments of city government to make a commitments to helping at the school. The Mayor also convened a group of Community Business Leaders to establish a Burke Scholarship fund for students most in need of support services and financial assistance.

Funding

This year the city was a financial partner in the Burke Freedom School. Mayor Riley would like to continue offering the Freedom School to Charleston youth.

Amy Mitchell-Washington
(843) 745-7092

SOS Tutor/Mentor Program

Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr.

Charleston, SC

In the summer of 2003, Communities In Schools (CIS) in partnership with the City of Charleston, created the Support Our Students (SOS) program in order to provide students with an opportunity for tutoring during the summer. The children targeted are students who need extra help to pass to the next grade level, or who need extra help in order to succeed during the school year.

Established

Mayor Riley led the effort to create the SOS program to fill the vacuum left when the Charleston County School District canceled its 2003 summer school program for elementary and middle school pupils due to lack of funds. The program was so successful in engaging tutor/mentors and helping the students that CIS organized a year round SOS tutoring program to benefit children most in need of additional assistance with their studies.

The SOS Tutor/Mentor program is a unique in that it focuses on providing trained volunteer tutor/mentors for students who need additional help to be successful this school year. In addition to the academic benefits, the program provides opportunities for students to develop meaningful relationships with a caring adult. It is a great way for the community to be involved in helping our students make academic gains.

Advice for Mayors

This is a great example of the Mayor's leadership role in a community wide "call to action" on behalf of students in need of extra support services. There was a definite need for someone to step in and provide academic support for these students, and it was due to Mayor Riley's dedication that it happened.

Contacts

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Charleston, SC

Trident United Way Dropout Prevention Programs
Contact Person - Dr. Bonnie Bella - 843-740-9000

Trident United Way began operating in its current form in the early 1970s, but it can be traced back to the 1922 with the development of the Social Service Exchange, whose goal was to bring organizations together and lower competition.

Born to Read

- The program began in 1995 and quickly spread to cities throughout the country.
- Purpose
  - New parents receive information on early literacy and child development.
- Target
  - Clients at:
    - Public Health Clinics
    - MUSC Children's Care
    - MUSC OB Clinic
    - MUSC Children's Hospital
- Lead Organization
  - Charleston County Public Library/Friends of the Library
- Collaborating Organizations
  - DHEC WIC Program
  - MUSC Children's Care
  - MUSC OB Clinic
  - MUSC Children's Hospital
  - Volunteer organizations

Reach Out and Read

- Purpose
  - Doctors have informal conversations with clients about literacy.
  - Reading/education centers are located in waiting rooms.
  - Volunteers read to children.
  - Parent education literacy classes are offered.
  - Parents receive referrals to related community service groups.
- Target
  - MUSC Children's Care of North Charleston and Moncks Corner
- Lead Organization
  - MUSC Children's Care
- Collaborating Organization
  - Exchange Club Center
  - Community parent education/literacy organizations
  - Volunteer organizations

Parents Play

- Purpose
  - Parents receive instruction regarding positive parenting skills and interactive literacy skills.
  - Parents receive and provide support for each other.
- Target
  - All parents in the tri-county area
- Collaborating Organizations
  - Faith-based organizations
  - Tri-county libraries
  - Parks & Recreation Departments
  - Children's Museum
  - Non-profit organizations
  - Schools

Raising A Reader

- Purpose
  - Library systems are set up within classrooms.
  - Children have permission to bring books to their home.
  - Parents receive education on promotion literacy with their children.
- Target
  - Children at child care centers, in child development programs, and in 4K classrooms
- Lead Organization
  - Child Care Resource & Referral of the Lowcountry
- Collaborating Organizations
  - Child care centers
  - Area School Districts
  - Area First Steps programs

Countdown to Kindergarten

- Purpose
  - Parents receive literature on school entry.
  - Community events hold sessions related to school transitions and the use of play as a teaching opportunity.
  - Businesses are encouraged to be involved with "Kindergarten Days" in the summer.
  - A book club is offered to 4-year-olds in the tri-county area.
  - At-risk children receive intensive summer education.
  - Community reading events are offered to children.
- Target
  - Children in the tri-county area preparing to begin kindergarten
- Lead Organization
  - Trident United Way (TUW) Success By Six
- Collaborating Organizations
  - Municipal Offices of Cultural Affairs
  - Mayor's Office for children, Youth and Families
  - Parks & Recreation Departments
  - Berkeley, Charleston, & Dorchester County School Districts
  - Berkeley, Charleston, & Dorchester County First Steps
  - Children's Museum
  - Faith-based organizations
  - Child care providers
  - Volunteer organizations

Media-Sponsored Parent Education

- Purpose
  - Businesses sponsor TV ads to educate parents about positive parenting skills.
  - The television program "Success by 6" is offered on cable television.
  - Newspaper articles feature literacy and early education topics.
- Target
  - Parents in the TV viewing/newspaper distribution audience
- Lead Organization
  - TUW Success By 6
- Collaborating Organizations
  - Charleston viewing area commercial television stations
  - Charleston viewing area cable television stations
  - SC Educational TV
  - Tri-county newspapers

Charleston Youth Master Plan

Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr.

Charleston, SC

The City of Charleston is partnering with other municipalities, organizations, and agencies in Charleston County to create the Charleston Youth Master Plan (CYMP), a plan that contains goals and strategies to improve and enhance the lives of young people in the community. One of the focus areas of the plan is education, and the goal is to increase the number of youth who stay in school. Strategies for this will involve building on partnerships among those already engaged in dropout prevention efforts so that we are working together and not duplicating our efforts. The vision for the CYMP at its most basic point is to create successful, contributing adults, and dropout prevention is certainly a key to achieving this vision.

Established

We began the process of creating the CYMP in October 2005, and are currently finalizing the goals of the plan. Once this is completed, we will adopt and implement the plan. This was a natural evolution for our community to create a youth master plan, given the wide range of programs and initiatives for youth. Our community needs to collaborate and create community ownership and sustainability of the plan to ensure that the services are not duplicative. For example, our recreation directors are currently working together to be sure that the programs they are offering meet the needs of today's youth.

Effectiveness

The plan will contain outcome measurements in the strategies that will allow us to see how well we are accomplishing the goals of the plan.

So far, this Initiative has been very positive for our community. We have built on existing relationships between and among agencies and organizations in Charleston, and we have forged new ones. Creating a Youth Master Plan is a long term process, which is a plus for communities because the time it takes to create the plan, and the necessity to involve all stakeholders in the process, is a great recipe for building commitment.

Advice for Mayors

For any community creating their own youth master plan, focusing on relationship building throughout the entire process will help ensure that the plan is successful. Certainly, the Mayor can provide political leadership for creating and utilizing a Youth Master Plan. Implementing the plan does require financial resources; therefore, the leadership in the community must be on board.

Contacts

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Summer Youth Program

Mayor Ron Littlefield

Chattanooga, TN

The Mayor of Chattanooga has two approaches to proactively prevent gang development and combat gang violence: a) city and county law enforcement agencies, and b) a coalition of partners providing a positive alternative to the attraction of gangs. The Mayor took the lead by strategically setting aside $100,000 as an investment in his target population.

The City of Chattanooga, Hamilton County, the School System, local foundations, faith and community based organizations have invested more than $360,000 as the response to Mayor Littlefield's second approach – the Summer Youth Program (SYP).

School Resource Officers, School Principals, Coaches and the Chief of Public Housing Police provide lists of names of at-risk youth ages 13-18 years who have been in trouble in the past or who are known to be gang-associated. The 13-15 year olds are referred to training programs that offer job readiness training, money management and stipends for successful completion. The 16-18 year olds are contacted by the Summer Youth Program Placement Coordinator to attend an interview process, with a parent if under 18 years, and are coached on attire, preparing character reference lists and manner of conduct.

The County Department of Education, City Parks, Recreation and Public Works Departments schedule group interviews. In addition, interns are hired in the Mayor's Office, the Chattanooga Office of Multicultural Affairs, General Services, Information Technology and the Chattanooga Area Chamber of Commerce. Youth are paid as temporary, part-time employees - $6.25 to $8.50 per hour - during the seven-week program.

Established

In 2006, Chattanooga had a number of gang-related killings, two per week for several weeks. Mayor Ron Littlefield gave a grant to a national organization, Stop the Madness, Inc. from Fort Wayne, Indiana to work with gang members and the community. The Mayor then appointed the Director of the Office of Faith-Based and Community Partnerships to develop a coalition of partners to address the needs of the at-risk youth.

Effectiveness

The effectiveness the Summer Youth Program is gauged by a formal youth exit survey designed by a professional analyst at Community Impact of Chattanooga, one of the SYP partners.

Notably, since the creation of the "Crime Suppression" unit and during the seven weeks of the SYP, there have been no youth/gang related shootings. In addition, during the summer of 2006 there was a 97 percent completion rate.

Funding

Mayor Littlefield took the lead by setting aside $100,000 and challenging the county to advocate for peace and the well being of at-risk youth. The community met the challenge knowing that prevention measures costs less than to arrest, detain and re-arrest.

The Front Porch Alliance, a local organization created to form partnerships and administer funds, was appointed as the fiduciary agent for the Summer Youth Program. In total the programs is financed as follows: $100,000 from Hamilton County; $100,000 from the City of Chattanooga; $100,000 from a local foundation; $54,000 from churches and faith-based organizations; $5,000 and in-kind services from Community Impact of Chattanooga; and $1,000 from the Chattanooga Area Chamber of Commerce.

Other Involvement

Many city agencies came to the table to support the 2007 Summer Youth Program by hiring interns for the seven-week program or providing support services. The feedback from the different departments has been overwhelming positive. Many intern supervisors admitted hesitation about having at-risk youth in the office, but at the program's conclusion, the supervisors' stereotypes and attitudes about at-risk youth were changed for the better. The Public Works Department supervisor has asked to have a ten-week program in 2008, with two five-week sessions so that he can work with twice as many young people.

Lessons Learned

A positive first step to development of the program was meeting with the gang members. After the multiple shootings, Mayor Littlefield; the Director of the Office of Faith-Based and Community Partnerships; and a number of area pastors and faith-based leaders went to the streets to meet with gang members to hear their voices, wants and needs.

In addition, the program would not have been as successful if it had been just a job placement service. The SYP is a training ground, teaching workplace expectations as well as responsibility. When a youth is insubordinate, instead of ejecting them from the program immediately, the Placement Coordinator met with them to examine the situation and coach them through it. One at-risk youth told the Placement Coordinator that he can't run the streets at night because he has to get in bed so he can get up for work the next day. He said he liked being able to tell his peers that he has a job to go to in the morning.

Advice for Mayors

The mayors need to be the first to put up the cities' investments and take the lead in the raising additional funding. Bring all the stakeholders to the table - the direct, youth service providers, the indirect, support providers, law enforcement agencies, school systems, coaches and community leaders - to determine who can provide what. Example of collaborations: 1) Recreation Department has buildings that may not be used in the evenings and a youth service provider could expand their services if they had an additional site. 2) Stop the Madness, Inc. trains mentors and is willing to work with the "most at-risk" youth. 3) Concerned citizens, may be willing to volunteer in the centers reaching out to youth.

In addition, mayors should establish the desired, specific, measurable outcomes in the beginning, have an instrument developed for measuring those outcomes, and remember that this is "training" not just job placement.

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The Regional Career Development Center

Mayor Richard Daley

Chicago, IL

The Regional Career Development Center (RYCDC) designs and implements both a year-round and summer workforce development program for youth ages 14 to 21. Each center provides training for at least 250 youth and places approximately 100 of these youth in jobs and/or internships. The center emphasizes "soft-skills" training including good work ethic, critical thinking and problem solving skills, basic oral and written communication skills, etc. Every RYCDC features an employment resource center where youth can learn about educational and skills requirements for various occupations and participate in a variety of training sessions including a six to ten week youth job readiness training program. Each center has a Youth Board to provide youth a voice in the ongoing operations of the employment resource center. The RYCDC is responsible to reach out to all youth within the region via partnerships and/or satellite offices.

Established
The program started operation in January 2007. The RYCDC's role is to prepare young people to access and maintain entry-level employment.

Effectiveness
Currently staff tracks the implementation of the program plan, attendance and placements. The program will engage in an evaluation process in 2008

Funding
The program is financed with city corporate dollars as well as a delegate agency match.

Other Involvement
The program works very closely with the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development and the Workforce Board providing advice and guidance. The Chicago Jobs council also provides assistance to the RYCDC.

Advice for Mayors
Comprehensive training of agencies in youth and workforce development is crucial to the success of this type of programming.

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Juvenile Diversion Program

Mayor Alan Corlin

Culver City, CA

The Culver City Police Department's Juvenile Diversion Program targets at-risk teens ages 12-17 years who have gone off course by either getting arrested for a first time offense (i.e., shoplift, possession of marijuana, graffiti, fighting, etc.) or by being incorrigible towards parents or other authority figures. Through this program teens are instilled with a new found understanding of what is important in life - family, school, respect and self-esteem - and given a roadmap of how to achieve these goals while avoiding certain pitfalls that many teenagers face in today's world.

In a group setting, the teens learn such things as life skills, problem solving, conflict resolution, critical thinking and reasoning skills. Another critical element of the program is the parenting classes. The parents are mandated to attend a parenting course which teaches them how to deal with uncompromising and out-of-control behavior. These classes are also translated in Spanish by support staff and/or volunteers. In addition to the teen and parenting classes, the program also has guest speakers talk to the teens and parents about drug/alcohol use and abuse, gang involvement and intervention, personal hygiene and health. The teens also attend various field trips, including a weekend camping trip focused on team building, leadership development and self-esteem improvement; and the California Youth Authority (CYA) where inmates talk to teens about prison life, how they ended up in prison, and how to avoid that path. Finally, each teen is required to undergo counseling from volunteer therapists.

Established

The Culver City Police Department's Juvenile Diversion Program was established in 1988 and involves two programs a year; a Fall and Spring program which correlate with the school district's semesters. The classes meet once per week for two hours (Thursday nights) and two five hour Saturday classes per session.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness of the program is measured in two ways. On the first and last day of class, the teens are given a self-esteem questionnaire. This questionnaire (Consulting Psychological Press) identifies the teen's self-esteem in four areas, which includes a lie detector component for assessment accuracy. The four areas of assessment are: 1) general, 2) social, 3) home and 4) school. The ideal result is that the teen's self-esteem rises in some or all of these areas. The other means is by way of self report and subsequent arrests. The teens are periodically monitored to track recidivism and when practical a self-assessment interview is done.

Funding

The program is funded by the City through the Police Department's fiscal yearly budget. In addition, the program receives a yearly grant in the amount of $7,500. The grant is provided by Justice for Athletes by way of the Culver City Education Foundation and helps compensate for the weekend challenge field trip.

Other Involvement

The Culver City Police department is provided referrals to the program from the Culver City School District, the court system and probation.

Lessons Learned

Some successful topics discussed over the 18 week program include: How to deal with authority; Understanding your parents; Self-esteem; Peer Pressure; Gangs; Substance abuse; Decision making; School and Juvenile laws; Problem solving; Managing anger; Communication skills; Teen suicide; Cultural diversity; and Nutrition/Fitness.

Advice for Mayors
One of the most important components of the program is parental involvement. Often times, teenage problems stem from problems at the home, and therefore parental involvement is crucial. In addition, compassionate and interested program staff is critical to success.

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Creating Strong Families Program

Mayor Stephen R. Speed

Dover, DE

The Delaware Parents Association's Creating Strong Families Program is a comprehensive, family and community strengthening program which focuses on the strengths of high-risk youth and their families. The program is designed to reduce violence, increase resilience, enhance communication skills, social skills, self-esteem, self-empowerment and reduce the frequency of alcohol and other drug use. The approach is community based and multi-level. The program uses community mobilization, family and youth prevention training, peer counseling, referrals to community services, case management follow-ups through telephone contacts and home visits, and recreational, academic, vocational and cultural outings. The core alcohol, tobacco and other drug prevention training is taught using the Creating Lasting Family Connections Curriculum, published by Council on Prevention and Education: Substances. This curriculum employs an interactive instructional approach, which combines learning through social and thinking skills. Youth and their families attend classes on topics including: Developing Positive Parental Influences; Raising Resilient Youth; Developing a Positive Response; Developing Independence and Responsibility; and Getting Real Communications Training. The focus is on building strong, healthy, supportive and resilient individuals.

Established

Creating Strong Families was created in 2000. In 1997, P. Antal and R. Wilson reported in a study on Delaware's Alcohol and Drug Abuse indicators that Dover has a composite index of 11-15, the highest severity index, while Smyrna ranked in the 6-7 severity index and Middletown scored in the 8-10 severity index range.

Effectiveness

The effectiveness of Creating Strong Families is measured by oral and written feedback from participants, family members, and members of the community, along with a pre/post survey which is included in the scientific-based core curriculum used.

Funding

Creating Strong Families is financed through grants and donations. Funding sources include and have included Safe and Drug Free School and Communities Act, Governor's Portion, United States Department of Education, Delaware's Department of Substance Abuse and Mental Health, Federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, Delaware's Children's Department – Office of Prevention and Early Intervention, City of Dover, Wal-Mart, Sam's Club, and local Churches.

Other Involvement

The Delaware Parents Association is a member of the Delaware Prevention Network (DPN). All of the DPN members use the same core curriculum in prevention implementation. The Delaware Prevention Network is an alcohol, tobacco and other drug (ATOD), violence, and teen pregnancy prevention program. DPN has three components: Youth Connection, Family Matters, and Community Prevention. DPN has been a successful initiative since 1987, originally funded by a Center for Substance Abuse Prevention Federal grant.

Lessons Learned

One of the most important lessons learned with Creating Strong Families is that prevention is a process and takes years to show definitive results/outcomes. Also, effective community prevention programs require community-wide collaboration.

Advice for Mayors

It is very important that intended participants are included in the program from the very beginning. With their buy in, the program will progress quickly and with balance.

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The Mayor's 100 Teens

Mayor John F. Cook

El Paso, TX

The Mayor's 100 Teens is a program that recognizes and praises El Paso youth for their important contributions to the world around them. Many of these young people achieved significant goals by overcoming obstacles in their lives, and often times their contributions go by unnoticed. This program provides a forum to recognize these exemplarily students and allow them to become a positive role model to others in the community.

The Mayor's 100 Teens program is for teens completing 9th, 10th or 11th grades who are nominated during the spring of each year by teachers, counselors, friends, clergy or family (but not their parents). The nomination process is publicized through local media, all area schools, libraries, police regional command centers, and a variety of youth and community organizations

Typically the program seeks nominees who have: 1) overcame a significant obstacle in their lives; 2) perform community service; 3) demonstrate scholastic achievement; and 4) set a good example to others and are positive role models.

The Mayor's 100 Teens was modeled after a similar program that has been implemented for the past nine years in Colorado Springs. The program's mission is to create a community that values teens and promotes a positive image of them. The program's goals are to: 1) recognize a diverse group of high school teens who normally do not receive recognition; 2) collaborate with youth-serving organizations and businesses; 3) achieve prominent exposure for promising teenagers in the community; and 4) send a strong message to teens that they are important to the community.

Established

The program began in 2006 with 56 students selected. This year, the program received over 130 nominations for the 2007-2008 school year, in which 86 were selected.

Effectiveness

The teens get involved in community work and participate at different events with Mayor Cook. Throughout the year, the teens are honored as follows: 1) a kick-off event in October hosted by the Mayor; 2) a published yearbook profiling each honoree; 3) attendance at local events and meeting as guests of the Mayor; 4) formal introduction at a City Council and County Commissioners Court meetings; 5) various community parades and celebrations; 6) a picture ID card and T-shirt; 7) media recognition; and 8) benefits from sponsors such as free entrance to games, bowling, food, and other services.

Funding

The program is financed with private funds solicited from the business community and constituents; no taxpayer dollars are used to fund this program. Last year, the program received approximately $10,000 in monetary donations to finance the activities throughout the year, as well as in-kind donations from many businesses such as, free pizza coupons from Domino's Pizza, products from Helen of Troy for gift baskets, bowling passes, Jack in the Box coupons, etc. The program does utilize Executive Secretary Diana Nuñez's staff time to organize the program and coordinate all the activities for the teens.

Other Involvement

The business community and the constituency graciously contribute monetary and/or in-kind donations to the program. A group of volunteers from the Optimist Clubs reviews all nominations and makes the final selection as laureates into the program. The media generously promotes the program and features the teen events. Other city departments assist us in finding activities such as the Parks and Recreation Department, who request for the teens to participate as volunteers in their special events. Other agencies involved include the County who introduces and honors the teens at a County Commissioners meeting, and State Senator Eliot Shapleigh who recognizes the teens in every opportunity he has and utilizes them as volunteers.

Lessons Learned
The major lesson learned from the program is that teens appreciate recognition and enjoy acting as role models to other teens and the community.

Advice for Mayors
It is essential to involve the entire community, especially the business community, to assure the program becomes a success.

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Building Future Leaders

Mayor J. Christian Bollwage

Elizabeth, NJ

Since his election to office in 1992, Mayor Chris Bollwage has recognized the need for safe, structured activities for youth, to help them acquire new skills and develop into responsible adults. Understanding that after-school hours are a critical time for youth, Mayor Bollwage created the Office of Youth Services within the Department of Health and Human Services in 1998. After-school programs offer healthy and positive alternatives, keep children safe, improve academic achievement and help relieve the stresses on today's working families. They can also be an important resource to youth violence prevention and provide intervention strategies. The mission of the Office of Youth Services is to promote positive youth development and improve conditions for children. Children ages 6-13 years are encouraged to participate in the City's Special Opportunities for Achievement and Reawakening (S.O.A.R) and Safe Haven after-school programs.

Established

Building Future Leaders (BFL), the newest after-school program, began in October 2003. This program targets young people between the ages of 13 and 18 years that have aged out of the S.O.A.R. and Safe Haven programs. It brings together a diverse group of youth to build community values, volunteer in the community, plan community events, gain leadership skills, receive mentoring and explore various art forms.

Effectiveness

BFL issues pre-and post-questionnaires to students to discover needs and gauge levels of knowledge related to topics and issues that the program will address. Through a database, the program measures retention rates throughout a four-year span and enables success rates to be calculated for those youth who completed all programs. Once the youth have completed the BFL program, assistance is provided in applying to various institutions of higher learning, civil service positions, job placement and the armed services. The final component is the parent and community partnership surveys that measure the needs and outcomes of all Office of Youth Programs.

Funding

The program is financed primarily through local tax dollars. Small grants have also been received from Verizon, Bank of America, Infinium and Schering Plough for specific activities. There is a full time program coordinator employed by the City of Elizabeth, Office of Youth, and two part-time employees.

Other Involvement

The Office of Youth collaboratively works with the Department of Recreation, Office on Aging and the Office of the Bureau of Tourism, Cultural and Heritage Affairs. The Office of Youth also networks with the local YMCA of Eastern Union County, the Urban League of Union County, Proceed, Community Access and Planned Parenthood. The Department of Recreation and the Office on Aging provide space to host many of our events. Some transportation is provided by the Office on Aging. The other agencies provide various workshops, seminars and displays at community events.

The community is invited to attend events and some workshops. Many residents of the community volunteer at the events. Seniors from our Senior Centers have volunteered to mentor and tutor our BFL youth.

Lessons Learned

The focus of this initiative was to create a comprehensive youth program that identified the diverse needs within the Elizabeth community. It is important during this process to define clear goals and objectives, as well as infuse innovation and vision, to meet the current needs of residents throughout the community. Initial contact with community-based organizations and agencies to map out their interest and support, creates the best foundation for programs to thrive in an urban community.

The most important lesson gained since the creation of the Office on Youth-Building Future Leaders Program is that the emphasis of all programs should be solely on youth and their needs. Accurate assessments of the backgrounds of the participants will give the program the personal touch that is needed to achieve success. Strong partnerships and collaborative efforts are key to transformation and an improved quality of life.

Advice for Mayors

With the evident growth of population and housing opportunities, families are once again looking to Elizabeth to live and raise a family. Elizabeth is a destination, complete with wonderful restaurants and exciting artistic, musical, and vocal performances. From an award winning Urban Enterprise Zone to the Elizabeth Avenue Farmer's Market, residents can enjoy hometown magnificence with urban brilliance.

The City of Elizabeth is the fourth largest municipality in the State of New Jersey, and recently experienced a 4.7% increase in population according to the U.S. Census. As a thriving urban center, the need for additional youth services has increased in order to accommodate new residents. Therefore, we would strongly encourage all mayors to make location a priority. Placing a program near a school creates a pool of participants.

Secondly, relationships with parents are very important. The primary reason that this program has been so successful is the ability to engage the parents through special activities and projects. Lastly, building strong relationships with the schools is paramount to the academic growth of the children in your programs. Having open channels of communication with schools, parents and your program can result in the "Triangle of Success" - Community, Family, and Schools. Input from the community and innovation are critical in conquering potential roadblocks and achieving success.

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EOP, Inc.

Mayor John S. Tonello

Elmira, NY

As a Community Action Agency, EOP has developed a continuum of services to build resilience in children and youth as a proactive measure to prevent risk behaviors that predispose children and youth for academic and social failure. The service continuum begins with Head Start serving 351 children at ten sites throughout Chemung County, continues with an after school program entitled "New Day" serving 120 children 5 to 12 years of age at four elementary school sites in the Elmira City School District, and extends to an adolescent after school program serving youth 13 to 21 years of age at the Ernie Davis Community Center (EDCC). The EDCC programs are in part supported with funding from Community Development Block Grant funds.

Established

In response to a growing need of working mothers for safe and developmentally appropriate child care, EOP developed day care and Head Start as early as 1965. First developed as a type of "latch-key" program, New Day had its beginnings in 1987 as an after school recreational and cultural program, again to ensure a safe environment and provide positive experiences for children. Previously known as the Elmira Neighborhood House dating back to the 1940s, the EDCC came under the EOP umbrella in 1987. As a community center EDCC dedicated its efforts to strength based programs and services for youth aimed at social competence, school retention, employability, and ultimate self-sufficiency.

Effectiveness

Utilizing a family development model that is person centered and strength based, each program has specified performance measures with benchmarks for determining outcomes. While Head Start performance measures are legislatively prescribed, measures for New Day and EDCC have been developed around academic performance, character building skills, and health/fitness.

Funding

Head Start is primarily federally funded through the Department of Health and Human Services. Funding sources for New Day include: the United Way, and matching preventive funds through the New York State Office of Children and Families referred to as 65/35 dollars. Funds to support EDCC come from a number of sources including funds from the Community Development Block Grant, private foundations and private donors, contributions from local businesses, and the Child and Adult Feeding Program.

Other Involvement

EOP views private and public partnerships as a primary avenue for capitalizing resources and maximizing benefits to the community. Within the County, EOP is involved in several partnerships to augment a number of programs and services across the Agency. In relationship to Head Start, New Day and the EDCC, partnerships exist with several entities as follows:

Head Start's major partners include:

- The Elmira City School District – classroom space, transition planning
- Chemung Co. Health Department/Dental Clinic – dental services for children
- BOCES – special service transition planning for children with special needs
- The Community Foundation – funding and support for the comprehensive School Readiness Project

New Day's major partners include:

- Elmira City School District – classroom space and collaborative efforts to enhance academic and behavioral outcomes.
- Corning, Inc. – Science Discovery Program provides experiential learning
- Central NY Health Careers Consortium – instruction and materials for "All Kids Are Scientists" program
- Head Start – for special consultative services for children with behavioral needs
- Chemung Co. Youth Bureau – monitors program outcomes and serves as a funding pass-through for preventive dollars
- Chemung Co. Department of Social Services – initiates preventive funding request from NYS Office of Children & Families and monitors program outcomes.

EDCC's major partners include:

- Community Development – Block grant funding and monitors program outcomes
- Southern Tier Food Bank – provides food supply for meal programs and certifies space for Dinner Program
- Southern Tier Pediatrics – sponsors an obesity prevention program with youth and their parents entitled "Fit Families in the Southern Tier"
- Elmira City School District – coordination and referral for youth in need of additional tutorial services
- Chemung Co. Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Consortium including six community based agencies (Chemung Co. Health Department, BOCES, Arnot Ogden Hospital Women's Center, Elmira City School District, YMCA and Planned Parenthood of the Southern Tier) – pregnancy prevention programs including use of character building curricula, peer education, and academic enhancement opportunities
- Tanglewood Nature Center and Museum – Meg Lowman Summer Camp for young women and Urban Environmental Club for experiential learning
- Wings of Eagles – simulated science project for youth
- NAACP – several events aimed at enhancing cultural awareness and diversity, and on-going activities with a focus on "Back to school/stay in school".
- Three Treasures Martial Arts School – instruction in Martial Arts

As an Agency, EOP provides regular opportunity for community input and involvement in a number of ways including the following:

- Satisfaction surveys by program participants, parents and teachers
- Community focus groups scheduled throughout the year in various neighborhoods
- Co-sponsorship with other local public and private entities of topic forums open to the public for discussion and feedback
- "Parent-Teacher Mixers" providing an opportunity for informal exchange and recognition of youth achievement
- All programs have a formal process for volunteer recruitment as needed and role descriptions for active involvement

Lessons Learned

- No one entity has "a corner on the market" in providing quality services. Partnerships truly reflect that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.
- Often times qualitative partnerships result in a greater capacity to serve without necessarily a significant increase in cost.
- Strength based Youth leadership is critical to the success of youth serving programs.
- While we often think about the grand scale concept, having small successes to build upon tend to have longer lasting effects.
- Youth programs in isolation from the family and the school do not reach deep into the supports needed by youth to grow and thrive.

Advice for Mayors

It is critically important that a public/private partnership be formed to begin the brainstorming, planning process. Developing a vision/mission/values statement provides the guidepost for determining the goals of the program. Goals should be based on evidenced based best practice models that are person-centered and strength-based. Measurable outcomes with benchmarks are also essential. Staff engaged in the service delivery process must be "passionate" about working with youth and families.

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Summer Basketball League

Mayor Doug Hutchinson

Fort Collins, CO

The Summer Youth Basketball League targets low-income students that statistically face the greatest chance of engaging in at-risk behaviors such as drug abuse, unprotected sex and crime. According to the Fort Collins school district figures, one in every five K-12 students receives free or reduced-fee lunches and 23 percent are being raised in single-parent households.

The Summer Basketball Program attracts boys and girls of all ethnicities and ages from ages 8-18 years. The program attracts organized teams, pick-up teams, and beginners. Teams are divided into divisions by Recreation Department staff based on age and overall ability and are coached by adult volunteers. Teams are either all males, all females or co-ed. Games are scheduled weekly throughout the summer at a local recreation center, with a season-ending tournament scheduled the last weekend in July.

For many, the league's greatest appeal is its uniqueness of bringing a diverse group of children together to gather, play, and become friends. This program allows children to interact in a positive activity without the pressure of many competitive sports - there are no try-outs, no all-star teams, and no bench-warmers. Quite often it's the players who recruit the coach, not the other way around. The program provides leadership, volunteer and job opportunities, and life skill development and training. The program also functions as a bridge between an enjoyable low-cost sport that promotes active, healthy lifestyles and the opportunity to help kids see ways to develop into productive adults.

Established

The Recreation Department's Summer Youth Basketball League began in 1992 as a way to help curb gang involvement among teenagers. Since then, this popular program has expanded to include all children ages 8-18 years, as well as a separate adult league. Although the youth/teen league is still designed to provide these kids with a way to spend their time constructively, the program's main objectives are to let kids play, improve their overall fitness, and have fun.

According to Recreation Department figures, the Summer Youth Basketball League averaged 27 teams in its first six years of existence. In 1999 that number more than doubled, attracting 67 teams and 700 participants. In 2006, the program attracted 92 teams and 1,200 participants.

Effectiveness

The Summer Youth Basketball League provides an environment where kids from all walks of life meet on a level playing field to interact, compete, and learn life lessons related to teamwork, sportsmanship, and fair play.

The program fosters a community consciousness that values recreation and fitness in developing youth character. It also instills a sense of ownership and stewardship where adults and businesses feel compelled to be involved as volunteers or financial contributors.

The greatest measure of program success and effectiveness comes when past participants return to the program to officiate or to coach a new generation of players to help instill in them an attitude that promotes a positive future.

Funding

The program began in 1992 with no city funding and for many years it was financed by donations, sponsorships and grants. Currently, minimal fees are charged to help offset costs, and much of the program is funded through the Recreation Department's budget. Donations and sponsorships continue to supplement the program.

Other Involvement

The original program was created with collaboration between the Recreation Department, the Sheriff's Office, and interested citizens. The community continues to maintain its involvement with the program through donations, business sponsorships, and individuals who volunteer as coaches and officials.

Lessons Learned
The program structure should remain simple and flexible. Teens, in particular, do not like to be over-programmed in the summer and inflexibility will lead to disinterest on the part of the group you are trying to attract. It is, however, essential to maintain tough rules concerning behavior on and off the court while in the public facility and should be stringently enforced. Failure to enforce from day one will lead to disciplinary problems as the season progresses and will undermine efforts to develop and build positive character traits.

Advice for Mayors
Mayors should develop and mobilize a strong base of community members who support the program's goals and can help generate financial support as well as volunteer to coach or officiate. If possible, involve as many of the potential participants as possible in focus groups to determine their level of interest and support for the program as well as ideas about structure and implementation. Once this has been accomplished, the programming professionals can simply implement the league. The other necessary piece of implementation is providing a level of financial support with public dollars so that the focus can be less on fund-raising and more on providing the best possible program.

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MOVERS Program

Mayor Sharon Goldsworthy

Germantown, TN

The City of Germantown's MOVERS program provides at-risk eighth graders an opportunity to acquire social and leadership skills, learn about responsibility and consequences, and explore career options, all intended to prepare them for a successful transition from middle school into high school. Guidance counselors at the four middle schools feeding the two high schools discreetly identify six students who are most likely to "fall between the cracks"- underachieving students who are neither the worst nor the best in behavior and academics; and therefore less likely to get the attention that will support and encourage them to succeed in High School. They are prone to be influenced by others or adrift without friends.

The students participate in a half-dozen activities between January and May, including an introduction and orientation event with their parents; a ropes course for team building and personal confidence, a session on fitness, healthy eating and personal organization; career exposure and interaction with medical professionals at the community hospital, police personnel and the city prosecutor; and touring the high school they will attend and meeting with the principal and guidance counselors; a four-course dinner with instruction in "white tablecloth" manners; and a concert at the city's performing arts center following instruction in concert behavior. The series concludes with a graduation ceremony and buffet dinner, with their families, at a country club. The students develop a power point presentation on their activities to show to the audience.

Established

A major corporation approached the mayor, offering support for a youth leadership program. The City's administrative team concluded that there were reasonably adequate opportunities for higher achievers (City Youth Commission, Youth Leadership Conference and school-related programs) and teens at high-risk for failure (through school system, Juvenile Court and youth-focused service groups). However, the team was concerned about the kids who weren't currently "problem kids" but who lacked the true self-confidence critical to adjusting to a high school environment and its challenges.

Effectiveness

From the beginning, professional evaluations have been conducted with the students and separately with their parents. Uniformly, both groups have consistently noted improvement in the skills and confidence levels. One of the graduates from the first class gave a motivational speech at the 2007 orientation and another received the city's monthly "Student Excellence Award". Anecdotally, parents, guidance counselors and staff comment about the success of the students.

Funding

Initially, the program had corporate funding. When this resource was no longer available, the expense was fully shifted to City government.

Other Involvement

City administrative staff coordinates the program arrangements; police department personnel demonstrate and instruct; the mayor teaches the table etiquette segment; the performing arts center director teaches concert manners; city fitness center staff lead exercises; and other City personnel voluntarily help supervise and assist with activities. The school counselors select the students and advise on program development; high school principals and counselors meet with their future students; the ropes course is undertaken at a private hospital facility; a nutrition specialist with the state university system teaches nutrition; a leading specialist in child development handles the evaluation process; and the community hospital gives tours and explanation of several departments, including emergency services.

Lessons Learned

Most city services and programs apply to large numbers of citizens or students. While the city meets the needs of the masses, there is merit in addressing the needs of smaller groups. MOVERS have yet to figure out how to bring the program to scale to help a greater proportion of students who could benefit from this program. Nevertheless, the program continues to explore that prospect and in the meantime is substantially reducing the risk of failure for two dozen young teenagers.

Advice for Mayors

When replicating the program mayors should focus on skills that truly build confidence and increase their comfort level. At the same time, the activities have to engage and interest the teens. Mayors should evolve the program content based on the student evaluations and staff observation; and convey to the students and parents that they were chosen because of their potential for success in high school.

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Gang Resistance Education and Training

Mayor Mara Giulianti

Hollywood, CA

The Hollywood Police Department has adopted the Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) program within the elementary and middle schools to help improve students readiness for high school and to prevent gang development. The G.R.E.A.T. program is a school-based, law enforcement officer-instructed classroom curriculum that promotes a positive lifestyle free from crime, violence, and drugs. G.R.E.A.T. was started in Phoenix, Arizona in 1991 through a joint effort of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms and the Phoenix Police Department. The G.R.E.A.T. program is currently sponsored by the Bureau of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, which conducted several studies on building a preventative program against gangs, crime, and drugs. The program is in effect across the country in all 50 states, and includes Canada, Bermuda, Puerto Rico, and military bases in Guam, Japan and Germany. Only officers who have completed a sanctioned G.R.E.A.T. Officer Training can teach the curriculum which consists of a middle school, elementary school, summer, and families component.

The G.R.E.A.T. programs objectives are to alter perceptions about gangs, develop social competency skills, foster empathy for victims, encourage pro-social affiliations, and promote social responsibility.

The middle school curriculum consists of thirteen lessons. Lessons consists of such topics as decision making, empathy, getting along with others, keeping your cool, and working it out. The elementary school curriculum is designed to reinforce the concepts in other subject areas, such as language arts, literature, science, art, physical education, and technology. Some of the topic areas in the elementary school curriculum are bullying, communication, anger control, respecting others, and being a G.R.E.A.T. citizen.

The G.R.E.A.T. family component has been added because inevitably family relationships play important roles in the development of positive lifestyles, free from crime, violence, and drugs. All families are considered, not just those with serious problems. This component is directed to families with children ages 10 to 14, and consists of five 2-hour sessions and one 3-hour session. G.R.E.A.T. officers can assist these families in providing specialized resources that exist within the community. Topics during the sessions include communications, family skills, role models, family relationships, and the electronic age. The Communications session touches on communication assessment, overcoming communication barriers, and practice listening skills. The Family Skills sessions examines rules and limits, monitoring and supervision, and discipline. The session pertaining to role models discusses positive role model characteristics, applying personal values, common personal dilemmas, and consistent expectations and actions. Family time assessment, family priorities, and family action plans are included in family relationships. The last session deals with the influences of the electronic age, such as TV and movies, video games, and music, with a discussion on internet safety for families.

Established

The Hollywood Police Department first adopted the G.R.E.A.T. program in 2001. G.R.E.A.T. was first introduced in Hollywood middle schools using the middle school curriculum component. As the schools and the community became familiar with the program, the police department received more support for the program. In 2003, the family component and the first summer camp program were introduced. School Resource Officers also began to be involved in all aspects of the program. G.R.E.A.T. was introduced next into the elementary schools during the 2006-2007 school year; and in 2007, the Police Department for the first time sponsored two G.R.E.A.T. summer camps - one operated on the west side of the city and one on the eastside enabling children from all over the city to participate.

Effectiveness
The success of the G.R.E.A.T. program is founded on the mutual commitment of law enforcement and educational agencies, united in a common goal to: 1) provide children with the skills necessary to combat the pressures of gang involvement; 2) provide children with accurate knowledge about gang involvement; 3) provide children with the skills necessary to resolve conflicts peacefully; and 4) help children understand the need to set realistic goals.

The Hollywood Police Department reports to the Bureau of Justice Assistance bi-annually on program goals and effectiveness. The effectiveness of the program is also measured by feedback from the School Resource Officers, the schools, families and students.

Funding
Federal grant funds are offered annually through a competitive proposal solicitation by the Bureau of Justice Assistance to provide funding for the G.R.E.A.T program.

Other Involvement
G.R.E.A.T. has developed partnerships with nationally recognized organizations, such as the Boys & Girls Clubs of America and the National Association of Police Athletic Leagues, specifically the Hollywood Boys and Girls Club and Hollywood Police Athletic League. These partnerships encourage positive relationships among the community, parents, schools, and law enforcement officers.

Lessons Learned
G.R.E.A.T. lessons focus on providing life skills to students to help them avoid using delinquent behavior and violence to solve problems. The G.R.E.A.T. program offers a continuum of components for students and their families that were developed through extensive research conducted by the federal government which is considered scientifically validated prevention research.

Advice for Mayors
The G.R.E.A.T. program is a valuable program for any city to adopt. Information on the program can be found on the G.R.E.A.T. website at http://www.great-online.org/.

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Honolulu Juvenile Justice Center

Mayor Mufi Hannemann

Honolulu, HI

The Honolulu Juvenile Justice Center (JJC) is an adolescent diversion program that has redirected approximately 3,700 status offenders (i.e., runaways) and first time law violators from further criminal conduct or involvement in the juvenile justice system by holding them accountable to face individualized consequences that make them aware of and answerable for the loss, damage, or injury perpetuated upon the victim and or the community. Of those redirected through the JJC, less than 5% have re-offended.

Currently, the JJC's target population includes those youth who have been arrested for first-time law violations, such as school assault, shoplifting, criminal property damage, and promotion of drugs. The youth that are referred include boys and girls from all economic and social levels and all ethnic groups.

The JJC case managers provide police-referred youth with in-depth assessments and other immediate consequences or sanctions that hold the juveniles accountable for their offenses. Immediate sanctions include police counseling, substance abuse education and counseling, intensive case management services, anger management classes, and mediation. The Center's two locations, one in urban Honolulu and the other on the rural Leeward coast make it possible to conveniently serve all of Honolulu's youth.

Established

Since 2001, the City and County of Honolulu through its Department of Community Services (DCS) has operated, in collaboration with the Honolulu Police Department, the Juvenile Justice Center. The Center was created to address the needs of juveniles who become involved with the Honolulu Police Department through status offenses (e.g. runaway) and first-time law violations (e.g. school assault). The goal of the Center is to keep these youth from further involvement in the juvenile justice system.

Effectiveness

Program evaluation measures are as follows:

1. The program coordinator conducts weekly staff meetings to discuss his review of staff weekly reports that identifies the number of juvenile assessed and referred to sanctions and follow up services needed for program completers;
2. The JJC case management staff conducts weekly examinations of the database to ensure that juvenile information is current and updated;
3. The program coordinator also initiates quarterly planned and random reviews of juvenile case files;
4. Upon the completion of their sanctions, the youth evaluate the effectiveness of the sanctions (i.e., substance abuse education) through surveys and self-reports; and
5. At program completion, JJC staff conducts exit interviews with each youth to gather data about attitudinal and behavioral changes, mastery of interpersonal skills, evaluations of services and/or sanctions, school status and other achievements, as well as to cite problems experienced

Funding

Since its inception in 2001, the JJC has been funded through the federal Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grant (JAIBG) administered by the State of Hawaii Office of Youth Services. The federal funds are allocated to the State's four counties to support and strengthen the juvenile justice system and hold juvenile offenders more accountable for their actions.

Other Involvement

The JJC partners with the Honolulu Police Department for youth referrals and police counseling and with the Honolulu Juvenile Crime Enforcement Coalition (JCEC), which is responsible for overseeing the use of Honolulu's JAIBG funds and the development of a Coordinated Enforcement Plan (CEP). The Plan provides a seamless system of graduated sanctions across all juvenile justice agencies in Honolulu. Members of the JCEC represent the various juvenile justice agencies (e.g. City Prosecutor's Office) and community-based agencies (e.g. Boys & Girls Clubs of Hawaii).

Other community agencies provide program services and sanctions such as substance abused education from Hawaii Education and Counseling Center, anger management classes from the Institute For Family Enrichment, and mediation services from the Mediation Center of the Pacific.

Lessons Learned

An effective adolescent diversion program is contingent on establishing and maintaining strong partnerships with various juvenile justice agencies and community service providers. These partnerships ensure that enforcement and social service agencies are working together to keep youth from further involvement in the justice system through the sharing of resources and information on juvenile participants.

Advice for Mayors

During the planning phase of the program, identify all the major stakeholders from the juvenile justice system and the community that would be involved with youth participants and solicit their involvement to create an adolescent diversion program that meet their agencies' goals. Furthermore, implement focus groups with youth at-risk for court and gang involvement to solicit their recommendations and concerns about creating a diversion program.

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Expectation Graduation

Mayor Bill White

Houston, TX

Expectation Graduation is designed to expect and ensure that each student graduates from high school with the skills needed to go on to college, secondary training, or successful employment.

A "Reach Out to Dropouts Walk" takes place after the first week of class each school year. The Mayor, the Superintendent of the Houston Independent School District, representatives of other area school districts, and hundreds of trained volunteers go door to door to offer non-enrolled students encouragement to return to school. Resources are provided to alleviate root causes of dropping out such as lack of immunizations, transportation or school supplies, gang problems or the need of students to earn money. Volunteers are trained in advance training on what to expect and are how to handle specific situations. For example, one teen dropout told volunteers she thought she was prohibited from attending school while she was pregnant. The volunteers were able to quickly get her back into school.

To promote a culture of staying in school and prevent students from dropping out Mayor White engages in a letter and Commitment Card Campaign aimed at ninth-graders. In the late fall, the Mayor mails a personal letter to each student. His letter outlines the importance of staying in school and the financial implications of a student's decision to continue with education. The Mayor challenges students to make a commitment to completing high school by signing a Commitment Card included with his letter. Many students have written personal letters to Mayor White in response to his efforts, and the Mayor always sends each student a reply speaking to the unique content of each student's letter.

Support and encouragement are given throughout the year in a variety of ways to enable students to graduate. The Houston Independent School District created positions for dropout prevention specialists to work with students who returned after dropping out. The Mayor's Office schedules special events throughout the year to recognize the commitment made by students, educators and community partners to Expectation Graduation. One year, students who signed Commitment Cards were invited to participate in NBA All-Star Week events, and this year, students attended a Harlem Globetrotters game and a Beyonce concert. The Mayor and other civic leaders participate in special school assemblies dedicated to teaching Houston's youth the importance of staying in school.

Relationships play a big role in Expectation Graduation, and students are inspired by the efforts of the Mayor, school officials and hundreds of community volunteers. A pilot mentor program pairs students with mentors who they see at several group events throughout the year. The students are supplied with BlackBerrys to allow frequent and prompt communication among the student, mentor and teacher, and e-newsletters are sent to the students on the devices.

Established

Only 42.2 percent of the Houston Independent School District class of 2004 graduated. A high dropout rate results in personal tragedies for individual students and a host of economic and social problems for the wider community. To earn a living wage in the new knowledge-based economy students must finish high school prepared for college, career training or successful entry into the workforce.

In the past the emphasis was on the "three R's" of reading, writing, and arithmetic, but today education must go beyond that to include rigor, relevance and relationships. Students must be taught to think and analyze rather than memorize. Interest must be sparked with the study of material that relates to student lives in the rapidly changing world, and all students need adult mentors who know them and encourage them to achieve.

After taking office in 2004, Mayor White made education a top priority, formed a partnership with the Houston Independent School District, and mobilized community groups and businesses to launch Expectation Graduation. Expectation Graduation creates bridges between community resources and the needs of at-risk students.

Effectiveness
Thousands of volunteers from all sectors of the community have participated in the first three years of Expectation Graduation. In just three years the "Reach Out to Dropouts Walk" has brought back over 3,200 students to high school. Expectation Graduation started in 2004 with three schools in one district and has already expanded to 25 schools in two districts for the 2006-2007 school year. Plans are in place to add more schools in more districts.

In the two years the Mayor has written letters to ninth-graders asking them to commit to completing high school, over 12,500 students have signed commitment cards expressing their desire to graduate. Statistics show that the Houston Independent School District graduation rate has gone up during the Expectation Graduation years while the Texas graduation rate has gone down. Representatives of schools in Dallas and South Carolina joined the "Reach Out to Dropouts Walk" in 2006 to see firsthand how Expectation Graduation works.

Funding
Expectation Graduation is based on a collaborative effort among governments, school districts, corporations, and community groups and depends heavily on donated funds, goods, and services and volunteer hours, so the cost to the city government remains low. Houstonians have been generous. In 2007, a non-profit corporation was established to facilitate the acceptance of donations and public and private grant funds. A $1 million corporate grant was split between the Houston Area Urban League for programs that include a weekend college to prepare high school students for high education curricula and a Hip Hop Center that will utilize modern media for education enrichment and the Houston Independent School District for programs including costs for a new high school for immigrants and the hiring of dropout specialists to work directly with kids at risk.

Other Involvement
Many city programs support the mission of Expectation Graduation by providing services and safe activities. The City Health Department operates four health clinics in the schools and is piloting a wrap-around social services program. The Houston Police Department provides gang education and awareness programs. The Mayor's Office offers a teen model City Council that meets regularly, a Teen Task Force that motivates teens to serve in the community, and summer enrichment programs that begin in the second grade to deter problems through early intervention. School districts, individuals, corporations and non-profit groups are all integral parts of Expectation Graduation.

Lessons Learned
The Mayor and the city have considerable power to help solve the dropout problem and improve education in other ways even if the school districts formally govern the schools. It is important to build consensus across political, social, and economic lines and partner with many diverse community organizations, businesses, and all levels of the education establishment. Treating education as a strategic investment in the city's social and economic future is a lesson all cities must learn.

Advice for Mayors
It is essential for the Mayor to consistently send the message that disconnected youth can be brought back to school and kept in school. It is important to reclaim these students at the beginning of the school year so they do not get further behind. Facilitating access to social services and other pragmatic efforts such as having the schools open during the "Reach Out to Dropouts Walk" to immediately re-enroll dropouts is important.

Planning and working with so many different groups can be frustrating, but sharing credit and giving credit to partners helps. There are many resources available, but often those who need them the most are unaware of them. This is where the Mayor's role of building relationships can be helpful - by connecting students and their families to the resources they need.

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Dropout Retrieval Program

Mayor Mark Funkhouser

Kansas City, MO

The purpose of the Kansas City, Missouri School District dropout retrieval program is to assist disconnected youth between the ages of 16 and 21 in returning to school to obtain their high school diploma. The program is operated at the Manual Vocational Career Center. As part of the program design, youth participate in alternative secondary school services utilizing the Plato Learning system, tutoring, study skills training and instruction, and leadership development/community service learning. The program is self paced to better meet the needs of the youth.

The goal for the students is to complete the program within the academic year so that they may obtain their high school diploma at year's end. Instructors at various schools throughout the Kansas City, Missouri school district are responsible for identifying high school seniors who are having difficulty and are in need of specialized instruction so that they may graduate. The instructors also identify youth who have dropped out of school for referral to the program.

Established

The program was created in 2000 due to the low graduation rate of youth in the Kansas City, Missouri School District. In 2003, the graduation rate was only 65.2 percent. The graduation rate for 2006 has increased to 75.8 percent.

The purpose of the program is to provide more intensive, individualized instruction to assist youth in obtaining their high school diplomas, and entering post-secondary education or obtaining employment. The program targets both dropouts and youth who are not on track to graduate.

Effectiveness

The program's effectiveness is indicated by: 1) the number of youth enrolled who obtain their high school diploma - the goal is 65 percent and the actual performance for program year 2005 was 78 percent; and 2) the number of youth enrolled who enter either post-secondary education or unsubsidized employment/placed in a job - the goal is 74 percent.

Funding

The program is financed through Kansas City, Missouri School District funds received from the State of Missouri (average daily attendance funds), and from Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funds. The Full Employment Council subcontracts with the Kansas City, Missouri School District to provide services to both in-school and out-of-school youth under the WIA Title I Youth program.

Other Involvement

Outreach is conducted throughout the Kansas City, Missouri School district and through the One-Stop Center for referral of youth to the program. The Adult Basic Education and Truancy programs also refer youth to the program. Employers participate in the program by providing internships to youth so that they may gain valuable work experience during their participation in the program. Linkages are made with post-secondary institutions so that youth will enroll in post-secondary education following their attainment of a high school diploma.

Lessons Learned

The key to a successful program is the early identification of youth who are in need of specialized assistance. It is important that the participating schools have a thorough understanding of the program design, so they know the full array of services available to the students.

Additionally, youth must have a minimum of 14 credit hours in order to enroll in the program, so they can graduate at the end of the year with 22 credit hours.

Another key component is the linkage to employers to assist in placement of internships and unsubsidized employment for youth

Advice for Mayors

A partnership between the school district and the Workforce Development One-Stop Operator is necessary to successfully implement this program.

WIA funds have been instrumental in enabling youth to enter post-secondary education. Additionally, the Full Employment Council has designated staff to work with employers to develop internships and unsubsidized employment for youth. Youth are provided paid summer internships and are guaranteed funds for vocational and technical skills training upon graduation.

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The Gang Response Intervention Program

Mayor Julia Pirnack

Longmont, CO

The Gang Response Intervention Program (GRIP) focuses on working with the community on gang prevention and intervention. The services in this area range from community organization and mobilization to prevention and intervention services for youth and families. Early prevention focuses on working with second, fifth and eighth grade students on positive decision making and saying "no" to gangs. In addition, the Longmont community has implemented a mentorship program for those youth who are at risk of becoming gang involved. This program began in the fall of 2007. Intervention services include a nine week class for youth who have legal involvement or school problems due to their gang affiliation. There is group work, case management and resource referral that occur at this level. Mediation and a tattoo removal program are also part of our intervention services. Community education and gang awareness are a component of GRIP; presentations to neighborhood groups, parent teacher organizations, schools and non-profits help to create a dialogue about gang intervention and prevention in the community.

Established

In September of 2003, City of Longmont Children & Youth Resources received information about the concern of youth gang involvement and its increase in Longmont. Statistics showed that 62 percent of Boulder County youth who are committed to the Department of Youth Corrections come from the City of Longmont. In addition, eight out of nine youth who have gang ties and that are committed the Department of Youth Corrections come from Longmont. Furthermore, Longmont Police Gang Unit reported an increase in gang related police contact as well as the increase of serious incidences involving weapons. As a result Children & Youth Resources staff called together community agencies and providers to talk about how to work on this issue at a community level. What resulted from these meetings was the formation of the Gang Response Intervention Program.

Effectiveness

The program will be implementing a grant in partnership with our City's police department through the Colorado Division of Criminal Justice that will allow us to track the effectiveness of our interventions. The software purchased would assist by implementing a validated, reliable assessment and case planning system for youth who are affiliated with gangs. The platform would enable management intake, assessment administration, case plan management and outcome reporting.

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Funding

The Gang Response Intervention Program is taxpayer funded through the City of Longmont, Colorado.

Other Involvement

GRIP is a collaborative effort of the City of Longmont Community and Neighborhood Resources, City of Longmont Police, City of Longmont Municipal Probation, St. Vrain Valley School District, El Comité, Longmont Community Justice Partnership, Boulder County Social Services, Boulder County 20th Judicial District – Probation and District Attorney's Office, Alternatives for Youth, Compass House Services, Boulder County Aids Project and Twin Peaks Mall Security.

Many of the agency representatives sit on the GRIP Taskforce and participate in various subcommittees. Other agencies are referral sources for the program.

Lessons Learned

Cities must tailor their programs based on the needs of the community. A program that would work in one city may not work in another because of the difference in community dynamics.

Advice for Mayors

Research from the Crime and Violence Prevention Center of the California Attorney Generals' Office proves that the key to prevention is taking action. Effective anti-gang efforts begin with partnerships with all the stakeholders to assure that the emerging needs of the community are met while focusing on building youth leadership skills. Finally, research states that the most effective gang intervention and prevention programs have a point person that organizes the effort. This is important when mayors begin structuring a similar program in their city.

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Youth Opportunities Unlimited Center — Mayor Jerry E. Abramson

Louisville, KY

The Youth Opportunities Unlimited (Y.O.U.) Center is a One-Stop Career Center that provides employment help - e.g. job search, resume preparation - to all 16-21 year olds in the Louisville community. It also provides an intensive set of services - e.g. assigned career planners, GED instruction, job placement assistance, stipends for progress- to approximately 500 high school drop-outs between the ages of 16-21.

Each young person is assigned to a career planner – a caring adult who will mentor them throughout their involvement. Since most come to the program with reading and math skills below the 9th grade level, participants are offered intensive GED instruction. Each is offered one-on-one help creating a career plan, preparing a resume, preparing for a job interview and applying for work. Many participate in a *Create Your Success* class that helps them with the basics of job readiness.

Established

The Y.O.U. Center was created in the spring of 2005. Louisville's Youth Opportunity (YO) Grant from the Department of Labor was expiring and no additional funds were forthcoming, despite the grant's measurable successes. KentuckianaWorks, Greater Louisville's Workforce Investment Board, commissioned research to determine the key factors that had contributed to the YO grant's success. Mayor Abramson then convened a group of community leaders to help determine how we could keep in place those key elements, despite the severe cut in funding the grant's expiration represented.

Effectiveness

Given that the Y.O.U. Center is partially funded from Workforce Investment Act funds (WIA), performance is tracked and measured in accordance with federal requirements for WIA-funded youth based programs. In addition, the program focuses on four measurable outcomes: 1) measurable learning gains on the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE); 2) earning a GED; 3) enrollment in college; and 4) getting a job. In its first two years, the Y.O.U. Center has helped over 400 youth make measurable learning gains on the TABE, over 135 youth have earned their GED, over 60 participants have enrolled in college and over 440 have been helped to get a job.

Funding

The program is funded with a blend of federal, local and private dollars. In FY 2007-08, Mayor Abramson has budgeted $400,000 of local government dollars to supplement the $600,000 of Workforce Investment Act funds set aside for the program. Additionally, contributions from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Housing Authority of Louisville, local corporations and individuals will add over $100,000 to the total.

Other Involvement

The Mayor's Office of Youth Development has been a critical source of referrals to the Y.O.U. Center. Mayor Abramson himself also speaks about it regularly in his many public appearances. The Jefferson County Public Schools Adult Education office runs the Y.O.U. Center, providing significant in-kind resources like access to their family literacy program for participants at no additional charge.

Lessons Learned

The most critical lesson is that mayoral leadership is the key to making a program like this a success. Without Mayor Abramson's commitment of local government dollars to the Y.O.U. Center, federal dollars alone would not be sufficient to run the program. Additionally, the local funding allows the program to serve every young person who asks to enroll. If the program's only source of funding was federal dollars, "eligibility" questions would have to be asked at the door and candidates deemed ineligible would have been denied services.

We have also learned that financial incentives can play a major role in helping young people stay motivated and on the "right track." The Y.O.U. Center provides incentives for measurable learning gains on the TABE, as well as for staying on the job for 1-, 3- and 6-months. The largest incentive ($350) is paid to those young people earning their GED. These payments make the difference in helping a young person see evidence that they are making progress and keep them coming back the next week.

Advice for Mayors

Mayors should plan to leverage federal dollars with local government funding and other sources and build incentive payments into program design. Remember that a caring adult must be attached to each participant in order for them to succeed. And finally, know that helping young people get real jobs – even before they earn their GED –keeps them coming back to work on their educations.

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Miami, FL

City of Miami Uniting for Peace

The City of Miami Parks Department in partnership with collaborators throughout the neighborhood of Coconut Grove within the City of Miami designed Uniting for Peace (UP) to reduce youth violence through youth empowerment and nonviolence training. The program brings together nonprofit, government, community advocates and law enforcement organizations to establish a common understanding of critical issues and produce a culturally appropriate course of action for violence intervention and prevention. The program supports the underlying principle that people must unite in order to achieve peace.

The City of Miami chose its park site, Virrick Park, as parks are areas where youth feel safe and welcomed. At this site, the City of Miami implements a program strategy to interlock four key components: civic engagement and youth development activities; community policing; free therapeutic support; and public awareness campaigns promoting nonviolence. The overarching program goal is to offer supportive services infused with nonviolent practices and aimed at guiding youth and families towards becoming nonviolent and productive community members.

The services offered center on its core mission of ending youth violence and providing opportunities to engage in productive and meaningful activities. Community policing activities include officer orientation, Citizens on Patrol, and community meetings and events. Civic and community activities include nonviolence training, mentoring, youth leadership training, tutoring, job training, experiential learning through cultural tours, criminal processing and school suspension interventions, and intergenerational family dialogue sessions. Additional skill and confidence building activities include sports and arts programs. Upon referral, Brief Strategic Family Therapy will be provided for particularly at-risk families. A public awareness campaign will provide large community events, promotional materials, youth radio programming and roundtable discussions between youth and celebrities.

Established

Uniting for Peace was created in May 2007 to address the underlying factors that escalate youth towards violence. The city of Miami convened community-based partners, city departments and the school system to assess the current needs and underlying factors for the alarming trends in Miamian youth behaviors. These collaborative meetings surfaced the need for more programs to engage youth in the community to redirect their energies from negative to positive behaviors, build self-esteem and pro-social activities. The need to involve the police and schools in true partnerships with other city departments and the community-based organizations was also a clear message from these fact-finding meetings. In doing so, youth and police would become socialized to and more trusting of each other.

Thus, the City of Miami designed UP to serve the target population of male and female youth ages 8-18 years and families in Coconut Grove as an initial pilot. The population is predominantly minority, with approximately 14 percent Black and 71 percent Hispanic students in local schools. The majority is low income, with free/reduced lunch provided to approximately 49 percent of students. Approximately 28 percent of the combined population had 15 or more absences, a high risk statistic for truancy, dropping out and later criminal activity (MDCPS 2006).

These youth were targeted not only because of the poverty that makes them vulnerable due to a lack of opportunity, but existing risk factors. The factors for violence later in life associated with this population include an elevated number of teen pregnancies, child protective investigations, and food stamp recipients (SSMP 2004). Seven hundred and sixty-nine police incidents were reported in these schools, including alcohol and narcotics possession, weapons possession, assault and battery, and theft (MDSPD 2006). In 2005, there were a total of 2,045 crimes reported in this community, including homicides, larcenies, assaults/batteries, and sex offenses (Miami Police).

Effectiveness
The effectiveness of the program is measured in each component area and in overall youth, family and institutional outcomes. Specifically:

a. Youth outcomes:

- Youth ages 8-18 years participating in the City of Miami Parks Uniting For Programs will demonstrate decreased high risk behaviors.

b. Family Outcomes:
Families participating in the teen intervention and/or prevention programs will demonstrate an increased perception of social support within the community for families.

- At-risk youth between the ages 8-18 years and their families will demonstrate enhanced family communication skills.

c. Institutional Outcomes

- Local schools and school district staff will be consistently represented in the Uniting for Peace Program governance and Town Hall meetings, at local Crime Watch meetings, Homeowners' Association meetings, and other related community meetings.
- Local neighborhood security will increase through enhanced and expanded community policing efforts.
- Local residents' reporting of violent incidents will increase upon the completion of the Citizens on Patrol training and participation.

Funding
The City of Miami Uniting for Peace program is partially funded with a grant from The Children's Trust. Significant in-kind services from the City of Miami and Miami-Dade County Public Schools comprise of the rest of the resources necessary to make this program a success.

Other Involvement
The City of Miami designs its programs to involve all pertinent parties to leverage efforts and funds to create sound and efficient programs that serve their constituents' best interests. For UP, the Parks Department took the lead, including the Miami Police Department and Office of the Mayor as entities with critical resources and roles in this effort. Miami Police Department (MPD) takes a lead role in the required community policing efforts. This includes orienting officers through a Nonviolence Orientation and youth development workshops that includes Neighborhood Commanders, NET Administrators, and Coconut Grove Neighborhood Crime Watch. Simultaneously, police officers work to make a stronger presence in UP community meetings, events held in city parks, operate truancy sweeps and participate/mentor through Crime Watch and expanded PAL programs.

The Office of the Mayor acts as the community liaison through its relationship building efforts to the Coconut Grove neighborhood, faith-based community, community-based service providers, Miami-Dade County Public Schools, and youth correctional services.

The community, defined as the community at-large, and community-based organizations, are key collaborators in the program, as both recipients of capacity building and service providers. To reduce youth violence, targeted programs at schools or parks is not enough; an environment must be created where nonviolence is the norm and positive behaviors are modeled and reinforced. To build community capacity, UP raises awareness of positive parenting strategies, creates public relations campaigns promoting nonviolence, and engages residents in community policing activities. To build community based organizational capacity, UP is offering organizational development services for nonprofits in the community.

As direct collaborators, community-based organizations provide targeted youth enrichment and counseling services to engage and empower each child to learn, grow and succeed in healthy ways. Only by this holistic and collaborative approach is true change effected and sustained.

Lessons Learned

This is a new program, however, there are several initial lessons learned that would be helpful for other mayors to review in designing their own program. First, though a trouble area might be geographically specific, targeting the whole neighborhood is the only way to ensure the activity does not just move to another part of the neighborhood. By targeting neighborhoods as a whole, those involved in destructive behavior will not find a place to begin their activities anew. Secondly, involving all community stakeholders is critical. It may seem easier and faster to convene community-based organizations that work to reduce youth violence as their specific mission, however, involving all the organizations and institutions involved in a young person's life is critical to ensuring success - youth serving organizations; workforce development agencies; academic institutions; public schools; public school police; correctional institutions; court representatives; police; substance abuse and counseling agencies; faith-based organizations; and local municipal departments. Thirdly, close partnership with the funder is critical to ensure that both parties' objectives are met and that the city can educate the funder about its true needs for youth violence reduction. Finally, constant communication efforts about the launch, performance outcomes and completion of the effort must be made to ensure resident engagement and adoption of the programs so that the youth involved will be supported throughout the community as they attempt to change the direction of their lives.

Advice for Mayors

In developing this proposal, the City conducted several community roundtable meetings to evaluate current conditions, available services and programs, and greatest needs. Coconut Grove providers indicated that in the neighborhood a high instance of petty crimes were committed by youth. Though there were some scattered activities, these providers also indicated the need for a system to coordinate intervention and prevention activities. Youth serving organizations are established in the neighborhood, however, are under-funded or in need of capacity building services to increase the numbers of youth they might serve.

This process, as mentioned above, directly impacted the design by the Parks department. Beyond providing direct services, there was a clear mandate to connect agencies in a working collaborative and provide capacity building services. Through this coordination of monthly cross-community collaborator meetings, the program brings providers together in regular dialogue, which helps ensure that their services are fully integrated within the continuum, that duplication is avoided, and that strategies are shared. In doing so, efficient truly youth-oriented programming is possible and youth violence prevention achievable.

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Miami, FL

City of Miami Truancy Reduction Plan

The City of Miami, Miami-Dade County Public Schools, and the Eleventh Judicial Circuit Court operate the Truancy Reduction Plan in five City of Miami middle and high schools. The school system alone did not have the resources or support to comprehensively address the high incidence of truancy within the school system. The City of Miami took the lead in designing a collaborative partnership between the City of Miami, Miami-Dade Public Schools, the Eleventh Judicial Court, and the juvenile correctional agencies to create a systemic plan to address truancy among repeat offenders. The program combines early intervention and a truancy court with prosecutorial enforcement of Florida's Compulsory Education Laws. The resulting Truancy Reduction Plan serves 500 students who have five or more unexcused absences within two City of Miami high schools and their corresponding middle schools. There are two phases in the rollout of this program: 1) planning; and 2) implementation. During the planning phase, the program conducts a needs assessment of targeted students, identifies research-based best practice models, and collects community input about needs and priorities.

The goals of the implementation phase include increase student attendance, student achievement, and family involvement. The program tracks student attendance throughout the school year. Once identified, students and parents are informed of the program with a letter from the Miami-Dade County Schools Police Department and are mandated to attend an orientation describing the program. This is prior to the critical benchmark of five incidents of truancy.

Upon reaching the third incident of truancy, a Truancy Child Study Team meeting takes place with the student, parents, social worker, school administrator and mentor. In these meetings, the challenges regarding attendance are reviewed and various suggestions are presented to the family by the Team to assist in consistent school attendance. Those students who continue to demonstrate truant behavior are referred to Truancy Court. Upon presentations by the family and the school, the judge determines appropriate sanctions/interventions from a suggested list generated during the planning phase including, mentoring, tutoring, parent workshops, counseling, psychological evaluation, and drug testing. The court system follows up with the family for a period of ninety days to gauge the impact of intervention. All Truancy Court summons will be delivered by School Police Officers. Positive Behavior Plans are implemented to motivate individual schools, students, and families that are demonstrating improvement as it relates to attendance rates.

Established

The Truancy Reduction Plan was created in 2005 with a grant from The Children's Trust and the Safe Schools Healthy Students Initiative. Within the Miami-Dade County School system, schools located within the City of Miami rank highest for juvenile arrests and referrals, rates of crime and violence, and truancy rates. Studies have proven that high truancy rates are linked to daytime juvenile crime rates and that truancy is a gateway to crime. Truancy is often the "first sign" of trouble in a young person's life, frequently preceding dropping out, delinquency, drug abuse, and adult crime. The compelling need to prevent youth from entering a life of violent crime drove the collaboration and design of the Truancy Reduction Plan.

Effectiveness

The Truancy Reduction Plan closely tracks student performance and attendance once they have been referred to the program. To benchmark its efficacy, the Truancy Reduction Plan measures increased attendance, increased grade point average, and increased family involvement. These are the critical benchmarks to ensure that the family is engaged in supporting the young person and that the young person has truly changed their behaviors. The threshold of success for the City of Miami is 80 percent of targeted students to demonstrate increased attendance through quarterly attendance records; 50 percent of targeted students to demonstrate an increase in their cumulative grade point average. Additionally, the program expects a 60 percent increase in family involvement for targeted students through a survey given to the parents.

Funding
The City of Miami Truancy Reduction Plan is partially funded with a grant from The Children's Trust and the Safe Schools Healthy Students Initiative. Significant in-kind support is provided by the City of Miami in oversight, infrastructure and programming to enhance the program.

Other Involvement
The City of Miami Truancy Reduction Plan is a collaborative effort between the City of Miami Office of the Mayor, Miami-Dade County Public Schools, the Eleventh Judicial Circuit Court, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Miami, YMCA of Greater Miami, the Children's Psychiatric Center and Switchboard of Miami. The City of Miami Office of the Mayor manages the program and assures support from City Agencies whenever necessary. Miami-Dade County Public Schools provides the school staff, Police Officers to deliver letters and summons, provides all documentation, takes the lead on the Truancy Child Study Team meetings and represents the school in Truancy Court. The Eleventh Judicial Circuit Court hears and follows up on all of the cases brought forward. The Switchboard of Miami is a referral network so that any barrier to consistent attendance can be removed.

Lessons Learned
Often youth violence and truancy prevention programs focus solely on the school system. The Truancy Plan's design created four unique components that have been responsible for its success. First, treating the child as unique that does not have a boiler plate recommendation for supporting the child to change their behaviors. Rather, the Child Study Team assesses each child to prescribe the combination of support services best suited to address that child's needs. Second, treat the child, and the family. Often truancy is a sign of trouble at home - economic factors, domestic violence, abuse or health issues. Mandating parental involvement is critical to surfacing these issues and reducing their impact on the child. Third, monitor progress and communicate with collaborators. Each of the 500 youth involved are closely watched to ensure that they will not fall back into old behaviors. This requires that the program communicate with school officials, teachers, school police, Miami police, community-based organizations, families and any other organization involved in the child's life so that everyone is informed if there is progress or relapse. This ensures that immediate and consistent reinforcement occurs at all levels. Fourth, collaborate with the correctional system. Intervening and preventing youth from going into jails is critical as those entering jail as recidivism is likely to occur as an adult. To avoid exposing the youth to this environment, the program creates alternative sentencing that empowers rather incarcerates the youth of Miami who may be acting out because of a lack of emotional support, gang activity in their neighborhood, or domestic issues.

Advice for Mayors
The City of Miami Truancy Reduction Plan focuses on long-term change in the lives and behaviors of youth. A successful program needs a strong collaboration with the local school district, the local court system and community-based organizations that provide the services necessary to assist these students.

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Miami Youth Council

The City of Miami Office of the Mayor operates the Miami Youth Council for high school students in five of the city's high schools. The risk factors associated with the student populations include extreme economic deprivation and rebelliousness as indicative of delinquency and school dropout rates. The Miami Youth Council fosters positive youth development through the promotion of civic involvement in the community for youth by youth; encouraging and nurturing cultural competence in youth; and strengthening relations between local schools, community organizations, and the municipal government.

To launch a Miami Youth Council in a school, a teacher sponsor is identified and a Youth Council is developed consisting of approximately 20 students. Each of these Youth Councils receives training through the school-based "Project Citizen" curriculum which is a program that focuses on education for democratic citizenship. Students work in groups to identify and study a public policy issue, propose a solution, and develop an action plan for implementing their policy. Furthermore, each of the Youth Councils organizes a Community Showcase Event highlighting their culture and their community. The City of Miami supports the implementation of the selected project and Community Showcase Events.

The members from each Youth Council elect two representatives to represent their group on the Miami Youth Council. These elected leaders are the voice of the students at City of Miami Commission Meetings, Advisory Board meetings, and in regular meetings with the Mayor and his staff.

Established

The Miami Youth Council was created in August 2005 with a grant from The Children's Trust. The Miami Youth Council was needed for two reasons. First, it facilitates a community youth network that organizes the voices of the youth. Second, the development of the Miami Youth Council trains a future adult-citizen base that will have faith in the functions of government and will understand how to generate support and advocacy for their community's needs. This is critical to Miami sustaining its progress in addressing its economically and socially distressed communities with significant levels of neighborhood poverty, substance abuse, and juvenile crime and delinquency.

Effectiveness

The Miami Youth Council evaluates its program based on increases in civic knowledge; increases in knowledge of how change is made and effected in the City of Miami; the ability to design and implement plans for change; increases in self-esteem; and an increase in cultural competency and appreciation for Miami's multi-cultural community. The standards for these evaluation areas are high. In the area of promoting civic engagement, it is expected that 90 percent of the students will demonstrate an increased knowledge base on how change can be made within the City; 90 percent of the students will demonstrate leadership and the ability to plan and carry out action plans that lead to community change; and 75 percent of the students will demonstrate increased self-esteem. In the area of encouraging and nurturing cultural competence, it is expected that 70 percent of students and parents in the community showcase events will demonstrate an appreciation and understanding of cultural, racial and/or ethnic backgrounds.

Funding

The Miami Youth Council is partially funded with a grant from The Children's Trust. The City of Miami provides significant inkind services in the management and infrastructure support for the program. Miami-Dade County Public Schools also contributes support in facilitating the role of the teacher-sponsors and allowing youth participants schedule flexibility to ensure their full participation in the program.

Other Involvement

The Miami Youth Council is a collaborative effort between the City of Miami Office of the Mayor, the City of Miami Neighborhood Enhancement Team, Miami-Dade County Public Schools and five community-based organizations. The City of Miami Office of the Mayor manages the program and assures that the program receives support from city agencies whenever necessary. The city's Neighborhood Enhancement Team matches an Administrator to each of the Youth Councils to provide support and guidance as they move forward with their action plans in the community. Miami-Dade County Public Schools, through the Division of Social Sciences, assists the Miami Youth Council by serving as a vehicle of communication to schools for recruitment efforts, provide support and technical assistance in the development of curricular materials to support the program, and collaborates in the implementation of "Project Citizen." Each Youth Council group is paired with a community-based organization that works with the group to provide community expertise, assist with planning the Community Showcase Events, and advise the students in the development of their action plans.

Lessons Learned

For a multi-site program that allows each youth council to set the agenda, maintaining the balance between empowerment and structure is key. Strong management must be provided to guide the youth, give them room to grow into leadership skills, and attention to detail to make sure promises made by the City are kept. This management can be provided by one staff person, to facilitate all trainings, events, and meetings for the Miami Youth Council; supervise teacher sponsors; support the collaboration with the community-based organizations; facilitate the organization and implementation of student plans for Community Showcase Events and facilitate producing a monthly newsletter to document and share progress. The youth will be responsive and eager to engage in this project, however they and their teacher sponsor will typically have few resources. Much like supporting a board of directors, providing resources and management are critical to creating working youth councils.

Advice for Mayors

The youth of your city provide fresh, unvarnished and often more strict insight into where the city works and where it could be improved. Engaging youth provides an important perspective for any city assessing the best way to address the issues that matter to its citizens. To best support this engagement, however, strong collaboration with the local school district and identified community-based organizations is key to creating a powerful civic engagement experience. By creating this team, youth have positive experiences working with adults, city officials and their school administrators that often inspires them and equips them to be ambassadors for civic engagement in their communities. Any city struggling with apathy should consider creating youth projects such as these to increase the interest in and impact of its efforts to maintain or improve the city.

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Miami, FL

Miami-Dade County Juvenile Services Department

The National Demonstration Project (NDP) with the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) and national researchers, ongoing since 2000 was the cornerstone of the programming designed to address issues of juveniles both arrested and at risk, the ultimate objective to reform an active, functioning system with the Juvenile Assessment Center (JAC), which by state statute is an arrest processing facility.

Developing alternatives to the traditional juvenile justice system, we now offer a continuum of diversion programs designed to serve a range from minor offenders to more serious offenders. An important initial component in that continuum was the development of the Post Arrest Diversion (PAD). This is an alternative arrest-processing program that has allowed the JAC to keep first-time-arrested juveniles for minor offenses from entering the traditional juvenile justice system. This program also provided a format to apply the best research practices at the earliest point of entry, identify risk factors and apply a personalized diversion program that addressed the issues of the child, including the family, and not the offense. We were successful in getting Florida State Statute language passed to allow juveniles successfully completing the program an opportunity to eliminate their arrest record.

Miami-Dade County, Florida moved into a new era in the field of juvenile justice. While this was the first program it is but one of many current programs, with the creation of the Juvenile Services Department (JSD) in 2005, the nationally recognized work in assessment and casework developed in Miami at the Juvenile Assessment Center (JAC) for arrested juveniles was now able to be used for children without the arrest. Now positioned to use successful juvenile justice tools and systems with children who are at-risk but not under arrest, we built the structure around an arrest facility, so that help is available 24 hours a day.

Established

In the 1990's, the arrest process for juveniles in Miami-Dade County, Florida was so dysfunctional that organized crime was using juveniles as its labor force and coaching them on how to provide false information, preventing law enforcement and officials from knowing if this child was already in the juvenile justice system. In an urban community of over 2 million, juvenile arrests hit 20,000 in 1995 with dire increases predicted. High profile and violent juvenile offenses were discouraging visitors from all over the world, jeopardizing Miami's largest industry which is tourism. In an era where information holds the key, the only information authorities in Miami-Dade County had about the juvenile arrest population was the actual number of arrests. Even that information was difficult to obtain, with over thirty municipal law enforcement agencies processing arrested juveniles independently of each other with no coordination.

At this time, the Florida Legislature created language in the state statutes that established the concept of Juvenile Assessment Centers (JACs). These facilities represent, first and foremost, arrest-processing centers that coordinate the different agencies that interface with arrested youth. As the JACs have developed and opened in Florida, the twenty facilities reflect the needs and resources of the individual community they operate in. Miami-Dade County's needs dictated a large, comprehensive state-of-the-art facility designed to be the starting point for juvenile justice system reform.

Effectiveness

Since opening, juvenile arrests have been reduced by 30% from the year 1998 (16,532 arrests) to 2005 (11,690 arrests). In the same time period, juvenile arrests in the entire State of Florida were reduced 11%. Miami-Dade County has documented a savings of over 759,000 hours of police officer time with juvenile arrests, saving $21.6 million in police costs. Miami-Dade County has documented a community systems savings of $35.1 million by keeping 9,367 juveniles out of the juvenile court system with the first time offender diversion program. That is a total of over $56 million in system efficiencies in just two areas alone.

Funding

The Juvenile Services Department is funded by local General Fund Dollars, Both State and Federal Grants and a Congressional earmark.

Other Involvement
With the collaboration of Juvenile Justice Partners such as: The Miami-Dade County State Attorney's Office, The Miami-Dade County Public Defender's Office, The Miami-Dade County Public Schools System, The Department of Juvenile Justice, The Administrative Offices of the Courts, Community Based Service Organizations, all local law enforcement agencies, and the local Juvenile Justice Board, Miami-Dade County has recognized that a community does not need to wait until a juvenile gets arrested to utilize the advancements that have been made and implemented for this population.

In 2005, the Board of County Commissioners voted to change the Juvenile Assessment Center to a Juvenile Services Department, expanding our scope and mission. The first year was spent stabilizing and training employees of the department which doubled in size and developing our long range plans.

While we maintain offices in the centrally located downtown Miami with our 24 hour arrest facility, we now have two additional offices in the north and south areas of the county. With advanced technology and laptop computers, our employees visit schools and the homes of families we serve.

Lessons Learned
During the first year of operation as efficiencies were achieved, two very important observations were made. First, the overall arrest population could be broadly categorized into three groups: 1) kids behaving in a typical delinquent way, i.e. loitering, shoplifting, school fights, etc.; 2) kids acting out on serious issues in their lives, i.e. substance abuse, family and school problems, etc; and 3) serious, habitual, and potentially dangerous juvenile offenders. Second, there was a great deal of quality research being conducted throughout the United States in the area of juvenile justice. Unfortunately, no instruction was given on how to apply the principles of the different areas of research in a system that was processing a diverse and complex population of children.

This was the basis that led the Miami-Dade Juvenile Assessment Center (JAC) to propose the National Demonstration Project and receive funding from the United States Congress and the United States Department of Justice that would partner researchers and operational staff in the reform of an active, functioning system. This project has been ongoing since 2000. It has allowed Miami-Dade County to develop the foundation needed to effectively plan and strategically apply specialized, research-proven interventions and programs based on the needs of the children in the system. In a time of limited resources, it would ultimately be possible to provide an alternative to the mass production manner of dealing with an entire population of juvenile offenders.

Prior to the opening of the JAC, as stated above, there was a strong degree of dysfunction among the many parts of the system. As a result, many children were not being served in an effective manner and valuable resources were being wasted. Due to that, we planned the National Demonstration Project to approach our system from multiple directions. The systems of applying assistance and appropriate interventions can be available to all children at-risk and families in crisis

Advice for Mayors
As stated, we have exceeded the other counties in the State of Florida and the United States in reducing juvenile arrests. We fully expect to reduce our current arrests by an additional 25% in the next year. Our long-range goal is to see current juvenile arrests reduced by 50%. By doing that, we will have gone from over 20,000 juvenile arrests in 1995 to 5,000. That would represent an overall reduction of 75% in slightly over 15 years. We may still work with the same number of children we see now, or even more. But it will mean that we can save our community millions of dollars by serving them outside of the systems that currently exist. More importantly, we can help these troubled children move into adulthood as productive citizens without the shame of a criminal record. We do not need the incarceration and the shackles. We will safeguard not only the futures of our children but their dignity and spirit. Treat each juvenile as an individual and appropriately assess needs to determine services.

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Jobs for America's Graduates

Mayor Tom Barrett

Milwaukee, WI

The Jobs for America's Graduates - Wisconsin (JAG-WI) program target students who are most likely to drop out of school prior to graduation. JAG-WI specialists deliver a unique set of in-school and out-of-school youth services that, once achieved, will result in high school graduation. Students are enrolled in the Dropout Prevention Program, and later transition to the School-to-Work Program. The ultimate objective of JAG-WI is to keep students in school through graduation, and to attain a positive outcome rate. The Comprehensive JAG model provides continuous support for students from grades 9-12, with a 12-month follow-up commitment after graduation.

Established

In 1998, Jobs for America's Graduates - Wisconsin was established. Today, JAG-Wisconsin operates 3 programs serving students in grades 9-12. JAG Model programs are designed to identify students who possess a significant number of barriers to stay in school, complete a high school diploma, secure an entry level quality job that leads to a career, and/or pursue a postsecondary education. JAG-Wisconsin Specialists, work with 35-45 in-school students in grades 9-12.

Effectiveness

The Jobs for America's Graduates specific measurable outcomes are 90 percent graduation rate; 80 percent positive outcome; 60 percent job placement; 60 percent full-time employment. All outcomes are measured by the JAG Electronic National Database Management System. The database is used to serve every student enrolled in the JAG program. The JAG Electronic National Data Management System (e-NDMS) provides a data base capable of answering three questions: 1) who is served 2) what services are delivered and, 3) what results are achieved?

The JAG Career Specialist monitors every aspect of the students' academic, attendance, and work history. Report cards and attendance is pulled and reviewed very six weeks, and individual development and career plans are reviewed on a quarterly basis to ensure students' achieve graduation and other positive outcomes after high school. The JAG Specialists conduct follow up activities with the JAG student for one year following high school graduation.

Funding

The Jobs for America's Graduates Wisconsin Program is funded through the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) Office Administered Funds.

Other Involvement

The JAG program is a partnership between Milwaukee Public Schools and the Private Industry Council (PIC). The JAG program coordinate activities with the STEP-UP and REACH-Milwaukee programs as well as the Milwaukee Career Center (MCC), which are existing programs within the PIC. JAG participants are co-enrolled into other PIC programs, if appropriate, so that they can participate in summer and year round employment opportunities in addition to the many other services they offer.

Lessons Learned

In order to accurately gauge the magnitude and nature of the dropout problem at a particular school, JAG-WI staff considers the following statistics: number of students that have dropped out of the high school during the past three to four years; in which year of school the dropouts tend to withdraw; characteristics of these dropouts; and whatever information is available regarding high-school dropouts in the year following their disengagement with school. JAG-WI Specialist makes an effort to initiate and develop a trusting relationship with each participant. The availability of a concerned, helpful adult day or night – whether it be to provide reassurance, crisis counseling for modeling of positive behaviors-correlates to ultimate success in the program's education and employment outcomes. In addition to class time offered, the JAG program provides a minimum of one-hundred twenty (120) hours of contact time to students to improve their academic performance and personal attributes. Parent engagement, tutoring and continued monitoring of students progress all contribute to success outcomes.

Advice for Mayors

The majority the students are eligible for free lunch, which means they fall within the state definition of poverty. Our students are targeted based on barriers they face. Most of the students we service have at-least 5 barriers, which are defined by JAG, in the area of education, family, disability, and work experience. The curriculum offers the students skills in practical education, things the students feel they need and are important to them, such as, job attainment, job survival, and life survival skills. JAG specialist allows students to access them outside of the school setting which is instrumental in the students' success. Students need positive role-models and support when non-academic situations arise. The JAG program understands and assists the students in rebuilding the world around them one day at a time. JAG specialist completes an Individual Development Plan (IDP) on each student. This plan assist gives students a plan beyond graduation. This is one of the essential steps in helping our students become successful after graduation.

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Reach Build Program

Mayor Tom Barrett

Milwaukee, WI

Reach Build implementation program uses comprehensive and multidisciplinary approaches designed to prepare young adults who have dropped out of high school for educational and employment opportunities by employing them as construction trainees on work sites for housing designated for homeless persons and low- and very low-income families.

Established

REACH Build was established in 2006. Reach Build implementation program uses comprehensive and multidisciplinary approaches designed to prepare young adults who have dropped out of high school for educational and employment opportunities by employing them as construction trainees.

Effectiveness

The programs effectiveness is measured on how many students are in the program- the program goal is 20. Also the students progress at school and on the job. The retention rate is also measured. The program has had several students drop out of the program, so that's an area that is currently looking to be improved. The goal of the program is for the students to receive either their High School Diploma or GED.

Funding

The program is financed through a Youth Build grant from former Wisconsin Governor Tommy Thompson.

Other Involvement

The agencies involved with the Reach Build program include: the Dr. Howard Fuller Foundation and the Northcott Neighborhood Center. Both agencies provide on the job training to interested participants on how to build homes from the ground up. These homes are built for the community, primarily for low-income families and even shelters for families.

Lessons Learned

The biggest lesson learned from this program is realizing the circumstances and situations that surround the potential candidates. The retention rate has been low partially due to the lack of commitment on the participants' behalf. The program has found that participants are not receiving the right nutrition, which leads to fatigue and lack of energy to perform work duties. To rectify this problem efforts are being made to do a better job of screening the candidates at a much more intensive level to make sure they are capable of handling the responsibility. In addition, the program is considering the idea of providing breakfast, and lunch for participants.

Advice for Mayors

When participating in a program such as Reach Build, it is crucial to figure out how to assist perspective candidates with their basic needs before and during employment. That is not to say that a program should be spoon feeding the participants as they should be aware that they have responsibilities as well.

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Milwaukee Career Center

Mayor Tom Barrett

Milwaukee, WI

The goal of the Milwaukee Career Center (MCC) is to work with young people to eliminate any obstacles that keep them from achieving their educational and employment goals. In coordination with other programs at the Private Industry Council (PIC), the MCC offers training for jobs such as information technology, construction, welding or culinary arts and food service. The MCC offers a variety of information and resources to help youth: 1) identify and access job openings; 2) complete a career assessment; 3) meet with representatives from UW-Milwaukee, Milwaukee Area Technical College and UW-Oshkosh; 4) attend ACT preparation classes; 5) learn how to build a resume, search for jobs, interview effectively, dress for success and be successful on the job; 6) complete financial literacy; 7) apply for the college of their choice; and 8) acquire financial aid and scholarships.

Established

The MCC has provided a full range of youth One-Stop services at the Private Industry Council. In the fall of 2005 we expanded our services to include those listed above, as well as drivers' license recovery and job development.

Effectiveness

Students that participated in ACT preparation increased their composite score by 2.1 points when comparing their pre-test score to actual ACT national exam during the first year of program operation. The final report for the 2006-2007 year will be available in late July, but preliminary analysis shows comparable improvements. The prgram have served over 1,000 students thus far.

Funding

Milwaukee Career Center is funded through the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), National Education Association Foundation, and the Milwaukee Public Schools.

Other Involvement

As the Milwaukee Career Center program expands at the PIC, JAG works closely with them and takes advantage of the many programs they offer. Some of the programs include: Support in completing college application and identifying financial aid resources for college; ACT/SAT instruction with pre and post-testing; financial literacy classes which assist youth in money management and budgeting; job readiness that helps youth prepare themselves for the workplace; customer service training; career assessments which provide a way to gauge a wide range of skill sets that employers look for as well as to explore and collect information about various careers; TABE testing; and exposure to many different careers through presentations by different employers. In addition JAG works with MATC and other outside agencies such as Running Rebels, and National Guard Armory to provide students with numerous opportunities to be successful in the workplace, the military and/or in post-secondary education.

Each Job Specialist is responsible for recruiting companies and organizations and building relationships with them to work with our students' by providing employment opportunities. On a larger scale our Milwaukee Career Center staff together with our Youth Job Developer and the Milwaukee County Executive's Office have teamed together to identify employers in the community that are willing to offer summer and year-round employment opportunities to our youth. The goal is to build active partnerships with a host of other companies in the Milwaukee Area that will work and mentor our youth and assist with preparing them for the workforce of tomorrow. You can access these employers through Milwaukee County's website or the PIC's website. All of these opportunities are made available to students enrolled in the JAG program.

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The Minneapolis Promise

Mayor R.T. Rybak

Minneapolis, MN

The Minneapolis Promise is a cluster of coordinated efforts designed to eliminate barriers to post-secondary education and improve job readiness for Minneapolis youth. These efforts have created a ladder of opportunity for youth consisting of summer jobs for youth, career and college centers in every Minneapolis high school and need-based college financial aid.

As Minnesota strives to compete in an increasingly global economy, the state's single greatest asset is the children of the next generation of Minneapolis, who already speak more than 80 languages, come from all over the world and spend every day crossing cultural boundaries. By giving them the skills to compete we are helping to keep our region strong.

Established

In 2006, Mayor R.T. Rybak made a commitment to kids, "if you go to school, if you work hard, if you develop a life plan, and if you graduate, we will support you. The Minneapolis Promise will get you the counseling you need to plan your future, will help you find a summer job and will help you get the funds you need to go to college."

STEP-UP is the Summer Youth Employment and Training Program which began 30 years ago as part of the "War on Poverty." The purpose has remained constant: to help youth acquire good work habits. SYETP eventually evolved into two programs, the Younger Youth STEP-UP Program for youth ages 14-15 and the STEP-UP Program for youth ages 16-21.

The first step on the ladder of opportunity is the Younger Youth STEP-UP Program. This program, administered by the Minneapolis Employment and Training Program, provides summer jobs for low-income, 14-15-year-old Minneapolis youth who work 30 hours a week for nine weeks of the summer. In addition, students attend class one day a week to earn high school credit and can take part in a mentorship program and an optional environmental summer camp experience. In 2006, 453 youth learned employability skills at 38 non-profit organizations and some schools in learning-rich environments that provided them an opportunity to develop the behaviors, knowledge and skills necessary for success in employment. Wages are paid by the Younger Youth STEP-UP Program.

The next step on the ladder is the older youth STEP-UP Program which is operated by Achieve! Minneapolis, in partnership with the City. The program prepares Minneapolis students (ages 16-21) for employment and places them in summer jobs. STEP-UP students complete a rigorous work readiness training program certified by the Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce and customized with insight from local businesses. Students work 30 to 40 hours per week for private and public sector employers. The youth can also participate in workshops on finances, careers and leadership. In the summer of 2006, 121 employers provided jobs and an average wage of $8 an hour for over 500 youth.

Career and College Centers, created in 2006 to build on existing school, community and government programs to create a more comprehensive system that ensures all students have a plan, knowledge and skills for moving from high school to further education, training or work. The centers operate in all of the Minneapolis comprehensive high schools as well as many of the alternative high schools. They are staffed with coordinators who help students determine their interests and talents and find the resources they need to achieve their career goals. Students are guided through the creation of a life plan using technology, counseling and mentoring.

Power of YOU began in 2007 partly in response to a report that found that by 2010, two-thirds of all jobs will require education and skills beyond a high school diploma. Yet only about four percent of black and Latino students, who make up 70 percent of students in Minneapolis and St. Paul public schools, were expected to achieve a bachelor's degree before they turned 25.

The program covers the cost of tuition and fees for two years at Minneapolis Community and Technical College (MCTC), Saint Paul College or Metropolitan State University. Applicants must be graduates of a Minneapolis or Saint Paul public high school and must reside in either Minneapolis or Saint Paul. They must meet criteria to apply for federal financial aid and must meet the college's admission requirements.

The University of Minnesota Founders Free Tuition Program, created in 2006, combines federal, state and university grants to cover 100 percent of tuition and fees for all Pell-eligible students. The program serves low-income Minnesota students and has enrolled 214 students from the Minneapolis Public Schools. Over the next three years, university administrators foresee the program benefiting 4,500 low-income students – with minority students making up 30 percent of the scholarship recipients.

Effectiveness
Already, the components of The Minneapolis Promise have yielded significant results:

STEP-UP Program - 2006 surveys of employers and students reveal that 96 percent of supervisors feel that the program was a success at their company. 94 percent of youth said their summer jobs were a valuable learning experience. 80 percent of youth in the program graduated from high school compared to the district's overall graduation rate of 61 percent. Success can also be measured by the 67 percent increase in the number of jobs from 2006 to 2007, and a 75 percent increase in employers from 2005 to 2006.

Our school-based *Achieve! College and Career Centers* have made thousands of connections with students in every Minneapolis high school, helping them to research careers, college and financial aid options and jobs. The centers have also connected with parents, businesses and community members, providing information on careers, colleges and work readiness.

The Power of YOU enrolled 200 Minneapolis school graduates in 2006, an increase of nearly 60 percent compared to the previous year. Seventy-five percent of these are students of color with median family incomes of less than $30,000.

At MCTC, 97 percent of the Power of YOU enrolled students finished fall semester, and most enrolled for spring semester, high figures when compared with other students. Academically, they performed as well as other students (3.0 GPA at MCTC) and were less likely to be put on academic probation.

The Founders Free Tuition Program has enrolled 214 students from the Minneapolis Public Schools. When the program is fully implemented in 2008, an estimated 450 students from Minneapolis high schools will benefit.

Funding
The Younger Youth STEP-UP Program receives funding from State Workforce Development funds, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Minnesota Youth Program and the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). The STEP-UP Program receives Close the Gap (city funding).

To date, $2,725,375 has been pledged to support the Career and College Centers. Mayor Rybak and the City Council, the Winston R. Wallin Foundation, Ameriprise Financial, the Cargill Foundation, the McKnight Foundation, Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, the Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce, and many others have provided consistent funding and support.

More than $2.5 million has been raised for Power of YOU through individual, foundation and corporate donations, Hennepin County, and the City of Minneapolis.

Other Involvement
The Younger Youth STEP-UP Program and the STEP-UP Program are programs based in community partnerships. Community based organizations and schools provide quality work/education experiences for youth in Younger Youth STEP-UP. Minneapolis Employment and Training contracts with government entities and community based organizations to perform intake and eligibility services, run the mentorship program, provide academic enrichment, supply payroll services and Worker's Compensation and to afford the students an opportunity to participate in an environmental camp. Minneapolis City Departments provide jobs and supervisors to approximately 30 of the Younger Youth STEP-UP students each summer.

Minneapolis Employment and Training contracts with Achieve! Minneapolis, a Minneapolis Public Schools foundation, to operate STEP-UP. Partnerships provide youth employment and education, e.g., University of Minnesota. STEP-UP is spearheaded by corporate champions US Bank and the Star Tribune which provide jobs for youth and find additional jobs with other large companies such as Xcel Energy and the Target Corporation. The local Workforce Service Area's Youth Council makes recommendations and policy decisions for both STEP-UP programs.

Public and private sources provide the Career and College Centers with funding and program support. Center coordinators work with businesses on internships and career fairs and with colleges on scholarships and tours.

Advice for Mayors

- Pool federal, state and local funds to meet the summer employment needs of youth.
- Assess gaps in youth services by conducting focus groups.
- Determine the appropriate size of the program based on funding.
- Identify goals of the program and work towards meeting them.
- Evaluate and modify program goals when necessary. Inventory and assess employer needs; ensure needs are met.
- Enlist committed community based organizations to provide assistance for your program.
- Elicit private sector support by designating "champions" from high profile companies and organizations to help lead efforts.
- Contract with government agencies to provide routine services.
- Communicate regularly with stakeholders including city council members, legislators and school officials to let them know about your successes and challenges.
- Use your city's and your partners' public relations staff for publicity and promotion.
- Partner with local WIA board to discuss and recommend program needs and policy changes.

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Out-of-School Time Initiative

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg

New York, NY

New York City's Out-of-School Time (OST) initiative is the nation's largest municipally-funded after-school program. Administered by the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD), the initiative supports programs operated by 200 community-based organizations (CBOs) in 550 locations that enrolled approximately 75,000 young people in the 2006-2007 school year. In order to engage as many high-risk youth as possible, the city used a data-driven approach to place sixty percent of these programs in high need neighborhoods.[1] As a result, thirty-nine percent of participants are Latino/Hispanic, and thirty-five percent are African Americans/Black. The city recently dedicated additional funding for the OST initiative, which will enable funding of an additional 15,000 elementary school-age children annually as of January 2008.

Four features distinguish this initiative: 1) requiring uniform quality standards; 2) ascertaining program structure and tracking participants' enrollment and attendance through a web-based management information system, *OST Online*; 3) providing technical assistance to programs to increase capacity and sustainability through an independent vendor; and 4) incorporating an outside evaluation of the initiative from the outset.

Established

Research demonstrates that the ways young people spend their time outside of regular school hours has important consequences for their development. Unsupervised time places youth at-risk for academic and behavior problems, drug use and other risky behaviors. Conversely, young people benefit when they spend time engaged in structured activities that offer opportunities for positive interactions with adults and peers, encourage them to contribute and take initiative, and include challenging and engaging tasks that help them develop and apply new skills and personal talents. A recent review of evaluations of over 70 programs shows that youth who participate in high quality after-school programs make significant progress in three areas: 1) feelings and attitudes, 2) indicators of behavioral adjustment, and 3) school performance.

Although the City of New York previously provided valuable out-of-school time services to its school-age youth, the system was fragmented and did not align goals with research on at-risk youth. Further, years of decentralization resulted in duplicative efforts, gaps in service provision, limited evaluation of program quality or impact and unnecessary administrative costs. Under the current system, which started operation in 2006-2007, DYCD serves as the lead agency and coordinates with and draws on the public resources of other city agencies, including the Department of Education, the New York City Housing Authority, and the Department of Parks and Recreation. This initiative created a more coherent, comprehensive, flexible, and strategically coordinated system that better meets the needs of the City's youth and their working parents.

Effectiveness

Program effectiveness is measured in two ways. First, DYCD developed *OST Online*, a web-based management information system. This ground-breaking tool is central to the city's ability to monitor and track - in real time - enrollment and attendance in OST, and to develop indicators of program success and progress in a system that enrolled 75,000 young people in FY 2007. In addition, staff at each program site can use this information to assess their own program's effectiveness.

Second, the city contracted with a nationally-known firm, Policy Studies Associates, Inc. (PSA) to conduct an independent evaluation of the initiative. In addition to using data from *OST Online* and from the New York City Department of Education - to assess school attendance, credit accumulation, grade promotion, and standardized test scores-, PSA staff conduct surveys with participants, staff, parents, program directors and executive directors, and observe program activities in a representative sample of programs.

Funding

City tax levy constitutes the majority of funding (85 percent) for OST direct services. New York State contributes 15 percent. Additional funding for system-building, infrastructure and pilot programs comes from private foundations, including The Clark Foundation and The Wallace Foundation. A subset of our programs (20 percent), are required to match 30 percent of their budget with funding from other sources. In addition, even when not required, many of the funded programs use funds from other sources to enhance programming (e.g., 21st Century Community Centers Learning funding).

Other Involvement
Multiple stakeholders assisted in the two-year planning process of this initiative - community leaders and parent groups, service providers, foundations and representatives from City agencies, including DYCD, the Department of Education, the Department of Parks and Recreation, the Department of Cultural Affairs, the Administration for Children's Services (ACS), the New York City Housing Authority, and the three New York City Library systems. This effort was supported by a planning grant from The Wallace Foundation and assistance from The Fund for the City of New York.

While DYCD is the lead agency administering the OST initiative, multiple city agencies are also involved. Most programs are located in places where they are most needed - public schools, public housing (controlled by the New York City Housing Authority), public parks (operated by the Department of Parks and Recreation), and detention facilities (operated by the Department of Juvenile Justice).

Lessons Learned
Through the planning process, the first two years of implementation and evaluation findings, several important lessons were learned. First, having a public-private partnership is essential for sustaining the OST initiative. This partnership operates on multiple levels, mainly through the collaboration of city government with the non-profit CBOs that operate the OST programs. In addition, the City provides CBOs with access to facilities -schools, parks, public housing-, thereby leveraging public resources for multiple purposes. This allows facility costs to be offset and helps OST providers invest in program infrastructure. Other private partners provide technical assistance that build capacity among CBOs, and private foundations that support pilot programs and system-building efforts. The program also leverages public funding by requiring a minimum of 30 percent private share match in a subset of the programs. Encouraging service providers to diversify their funding sources rather the relying on government funding exclusively further promotes program sustainability.

Second, accountability is essential to growth and robust data is crucial in making informed policy decisions and for accountability and measurement to OST goals and outcomes. The city can account for the use of public funds through data in *OST Online*, which tracks enrollment and attendance of participants in each funded program. Programs that are not able to enroll and retain the number of participants for which they are contracted are first offered technical assistance and capacity building. If after repeated trainings and consultations they still fall short of their target, a portion of their payment may be diverted to other programs able to attract and retain more participants. This raises the bar for the use of public dollars and enables the system to grow through the efficient allocation of available funds.

Finally, in order to sustain the OST initiative, the youth development field needed to increase its own capacity. Through funding from The Wallace Foundation, DYCD created DYCD Scholars, a pilot program in which a select group of forty youth development staff from the funded programs attend college classes that would culminate in a Youth Development Certificate and twelve college credits toward a Bachelor's degree. DYCD is also training its own employees to perform broad program management functions in addition to their traditional role as monitors of contract compliance. In this new role, program managers will assess program quality and recommend additional technical assistance/capacity building to service providers.

Advice for Mayors
In creating an OST initiative, it is imperative to cultivate support of a broad base of constituencies early on in the initiative. Elected officials from both the executive and legislative branches of city government, community advocates and representatives should all be included in the planning process leading up to the establishment of an OST system. It is important to build implementation and planning into the timeline. Having multiple stakeholders at the planning table provide a clear understanding about overarching goals and desired outcomes across multiple levels (participant, program, and system).

The usefulness of tracking enrollment and attendance of program participants cannot be over-emphasized. This system enables staff in funded programs to conduct their own quality control through monitoring their participants' enrollment and attendance in activities, as well as other information important to programs such as health status and emergency contacts of individual participants. Programs can leverage public funding when they use information about their own performance to raise funds from other sources. Informing program staff about these features can enhance programs' buy-in for using the tracking system. Furthermore, this system enables the city to monitor and evaluate the performance of programs in enrolling and retaining participants, and allows technical assistance to be offered when needed or corrective actions. Municipalities should make every effort to use such a system in implementing programs that serve high-risk youth or that aim to reduce high school dropout rates. In order to achieve greater efficiency, the various data systems used by direct service providers should be compatible with each other. This can be achieved through collaboration and coordination with private funders and other government agencies. It is also important to invest in training of provider staff on use of the data system to ensure reliable data.

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Office of Youth Services — Mayor Patrick H. Hays

North Little Rock, AR

The Mayor's Office of Youth Services provides support to the Office of the Mayor, City Council and other city departments on a continuum of issues relating to the city's youth. The Administrator and staff are responsible for monitoring, centralizing and coordinating the city's federal, state and local grant operations relevant to youth services and other special projects as assigned by the mayor and/or city department heads. Staff provides research and distribution of current trends among youth in the community to the correct departments. The Mayor's Office of Youth Services provides an integral function in the reduction of juvenile crime by providing intervention and prevention programming support and consultation to the city's public, private and faith-based youth service agencies.

In addition to the Mayor's Office of Youth Services, Mayor Hays appointed the Youth Services Advisory Council (YSAC) which consists of city departments, youth service agencies and social services partners. YSAC meets monthly and deals in a pro-active fashion with problems brought before the council. It is a planning and strategy group that provides a forum for concerns and a center of coordination for the city's efforts to reduce and eliminate gang participation and gang activities, as well as, to address positive alternatives to promote high school retention, increased graduation rates and improved job readiness. The Council also addresses the issues of truancy, teen drug abuse, graffiti, and discusses innovative ways of meeting the needs of our city's at-risk youth.

The Mayor's Office of Youth Services and YSAC's mission statement is to provide policy leadership and advocacy that improves the health, safety, education and quality of life of children, youth, and families in North Little Rock. Over the past five years these two programs have developed a concise community action plan that has proven to alleviate juvenile crime and gang involvement by providing the needs most at-risk youth are seeking. The North Little Rock ACTION plan:

A - After School Programming
C - Community Oriented Policing
T - Teams of Support Groups for Parents and Youth
I - In-School Anti-Violence, Bullying and Conflict Mediation Groups
O - One on One Mentoring Programs
N - Neighborhood Involvement

Established

Mayor Hays, the citizens and public officials of the City of North Little Rock have an abiding concern that its children and young people have every opportunity to become decent, productive, well-adjusted adult citizens. However, gang participation, violence, unemployment, and abuse and neglect are palpable threats to these ideals. For these reasons, the Mayor's Office of Youth Services was given the mandate by Mayor Hays in late 2000 to develop and implement long-term, organized strategies and comprehensive policies to address local youth related issues.

More than two years ago, Mayor Hays created the Youth Services Advisory Council to foster collaboration and participation among not only city departments, but among youth service delivery and social service agencies to better address the needs of our city's youth. With the foresight of Mayor Hays and the staff of the Mayor's Office of Youth Services, they realized that gangs and the insufficiencies that our city's at-risk youth experience, are community problems. Communities must work together to deal with them; hence, the mayor established YSAC in order for our community to actively compete against negative influences for our youth. One of the mantras of YSAC is: "To beat gangs, you must compete with gangs." That means we must offer the things that our youth are seeking in anti-social activities, which are: identity, recognition, belonging, discipline, love and respect. It is easy to remember too that many of these kids also belong to the 5-H club. Many are *Hopeless, Homeless, Hungry, Helpless and Hug-less.* YSAC allows the people, agencies and programs that interact with the youth on a daily basis to come together to discuss the issues facing our youth, and collaboratively work towards effective solutions to meet those needs.

Effectiveness

The effectiveness of the Mayor's Office of Youth Services and the Youth Services Advisory Council is measured by feedback received from the Mayor, city department heads, youth service providers, partner agencies, residents, parents and the youth themselves. Positive feedback from the police, school resource officers, teachers, administrators, community leaders as well as that received from several neighborhood associations and the local media lead us to believe that the work being done through the Office of Youth Services and YSAC is helping to improve the quality of life in our community and for our youth.

Funding
The Mayor's Office of Youth Services salaries are contained in the city budget. There are no major costs associated with the Youth Services Advisory Council. Any incidental costs for YSAC are absorbed by the Mayor's Office of Youth Services. Currently, YSAC and the Office of Youth Services have applied for two federal grants to expand the scope and mission of the programs to incorporate capacity building among its partner agencies, and to create a daytime truancy center to identify and direct delinquent youth to the appropriate social services available within the city.

Other Involvement
There are multiple city departments involved in YSAC (Police, Parks & Recreation, City Attorney's Office, and Community Relations), Health Department, Housing Authority, the School District, the District Courts, Baptist Health, as well as public, private and faith-based youth service agencies (Boys & Girls Clubs, Police Athletic League, Methodist Family Health, Family Service Agency, Mayor's Youth Council, Pulaski County Youth Services and several non-profits and local churches). The members of YSAC collaborate on citywide strategies aimed towards at-risk youth.

The community is engaged in many of the activities related to YSAC and the Mayor's Office of Youth Services. As part of its mission statement, and as an advocacy group for improved health, safety, education and quality of life of children, youth and families in North Little Rock, YSAC has undertaken many informational campaigns and projects to engage the community at large. YSAC has tackled youth prescription drug abuse, graffiti abatement, truancy, and teen suicide and gang recruitment.

Moreover, the Mayor's Office of Youth Services provides classes and consulting to various individuals, community groups, civic clubs, governmental agencies and non-profits. The Office of Youth Services regularly responds to calls for assistance by citizens and provides referrals and resources to youth and families; the staff also visits neighborhoods and streets throughout the city weekly, proactively addressing problems such as graffiti, truant youths, gangs and other issues.

Lessons Learned
Collaboration efforts among many partners is not only desired but urged to deal with these issues.

Advice for Mayors
Build collaborations by bringing every part of the community together to offer an effective strategy in tackling these challenging issues.

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WorkReady Philadelphia

Mayor Michael Nutter

Philadelphia, PA

WorkReady Philadelphia is the City's system for youth workforce preparation. Established by the Philadelphia Workforce Investment Board and its Youth Council, WorkReady coordinates all major youth employment programs and expands the number of high-quality workplace internships available for young people, primarily through leveraging new private sector investments. In the 2007-08 program year, WorkReady programs provided approximately 10,000 young people with unique learning opportunities that feature work readiness, academic achievement, and exposure to postsecondary education and careers, managed by dozens of youth-serving community organizations throughout the City.

WorkReady programs span a continuum of progressive workforce preparation activities, including:

- Job Shadowing opportunities for 9th graders during the school year;
- Business Mentoring Youth Programs for 10th graders, providing the chance to spend several hours each week in workplaces with trained employer mentors;
- Summer YouthWorks, that offers high-quality academic-enriched programming primarily for 14-15 year-olds in non-profit settings from July to mid-August;
- Summer Development Institute, that provides work and service opportunities for high school students participating in summer schools;
- Year-round YouthWorks, that offers a range of enriched academic and workplace experiences for 14-17 year-old students during the school year and the summer;
- Summer Career Exploration Program, which provides subsidized employment for 16-18 year-olds in predominately community-based and small businesses during July and August;
- Employer-paid internships, which offer summer and year-round internships for 16-21 year-olds prepared for professional-level experiences in primarily private sector settings.

Importantly, WorkReady programs offer each youth participating in summer and year-round programs the opportunity to earn academic credit for their work. Younger youth, who typically participate in work experience, service corps or college exploratory programs, must complete projects that reflect both their placement experience and mastery of school district academic standards. Certified teachers serve as academic advisors to organizations operating programs, training staff on the elements of project-based instruction, and also evaluating student projects and gauging whether or not they are credit-worthy. Older youth are often placed in formal workplaces, and prepare portfolios that demonstrate their understanding of essential employment competencies. These young people also participate in Friday seminars where they explore topics relating to career preparation and success. Historically, more than one-half of all students who participate in WorkReady programming are recommended to receive high school credit for their projects or portfolios.

Established

Research suggests that workplace experiences, particularly when tied to schools and academic achievement, have the potential to promote increased school performance and graduation rates; boost postsecondary participation and success; and result in higher wages and employment rates. But research also suggests that economically disadvantaged youth who reside in urban centers are much less likely than their more affluent peers to have access to these potentially powerful learning experiences.

WorkReady Philadelphia was designed to increase access to high-quality workplace internships and experiences for young people in the City of Philadelphia. Specifically, WorkReady was created: (1) to bring more coherence and coordination to existing youth employment programs; and (2) to brand the system in ways that would help to attract new partners and investors, creating more opportunities for youth to gain high-quality workplace experience. The Philadelphia Youth Council unveiled WorkReady Philadelphia in Fall 2002 and implemented the new system in Summer 2003.

Effectiveness

WorkReady Philadelphia performance measures include:

- Meeting announced targets for slot levels and leveraged funds;
- Increasing numbers of students who earn academic credit for portfolios and projects;
- Achieving established academic and work readiness goals for participating youth; and
- Holding subcontractors to standards associated with youth enrollment, attendance and goal attainment.

Funding

- The City of Philadelphia (Mayor and City Council)
- The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (state funds through the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, state funds through the Department of Labor and Industry and federal TANF dollars through the PA Department of Public Welfare)
- Employers, with leadership from the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce
- The Philadelphia Housing Authority
- The Philadelphia Workforce Investment Board and Philadelphia Workforce Development Corporation (Workforce Investment Act in-school youth funds)
- The School District of Philadelphia
- The United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania
- The William Penn Foundation and other area philanthropies

Other Involvement

The City of Philadelphia included a $1M appropriation in the City's 2007-08 budget for summer youth employment through WorkReady, which enabled more than 800 additional young people to have access to high-quality workplace experiences. Other City agencies are also directly involved, including the Department of Human Services' support for some of WorkReady's strongest program models, and the Department of Recreation, that employs young interns in several different capacities. Throughout his candidacy and in his early days in office, Mayor Michael Nutter has been an active and vocal supporter of WorkReady, speaking to hundreds of young interns and challenging the City's employers to double the numbers of private sector internships in 2008.

WorkReady programs are operated by over 70 youth-serving community organizations, and the Youth Council, that oversees the overall system, has significant voices and representation of community agencies and leaders.

Lessons Learned

- Visible and persistent employer leadership, in individual terms as well as through employer organizations like the Chamber of Commerce, is key in taking recruitment efforts to a citywide level at any significant scale.
- An effective intermediary organization is essential to success. The intermediary complements employer recruitment efforts by enrolling youth, preparing them for successful workplace experiences and helping to place and monitor them in the workplace. The intermediary also serves a key role in recruiting employers and braiding multiple public and private funding sources to maximize the number of youth who can be served.
- Young people want to work and prepare themselves for successful careers. All they need is a chance to learn the skills they need for workplace success, and then to practice them in real-world contexts.
- Employers are overwhelmingly positive about having young people in their workplaces, and often want to keep them on after their internships are complete. Evaluations from participating employers consistently indicate high levels (over 95%) of satisfaction with their experiences.

Advice for Mayors

- Visible leadership from the Mayor, particularly in the early stages, helps to demonstrate the importance of youth workforce preparation, and is an important key to long-term success.
- Ongoing mayoral leaderships to keep momentum going and partners engaged.
- Establish clear access points to the system for employers, youth and youth-serving organizations that operate programs.
- Ensure that the schools are active partners so that the youth employment experience promotes academic achievement consistent with district and state standards.
- Leverage as many funding streams as possible, and seek flexibility and creativity in the use of funds at all levels. Given the cutbacks in federal funding, private sector investment is essential. And while public dollars are increasingly scarce, there are ways to use existing resources to support youth internships. Furthermore, foundations can be important funding partners, as can school districts.
- Give yourself at least nine months planning time to put an internship program in place – or even more if you don't have an intermediary organization that can deal with connecting activities that are essential to an effective program.
- Focus on system-building that offers a range of high-quality, progressive career preparation experiences, rather than individual programs and services.

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Project U-Turn

Mayor Michael Nutter

Philadelphia, PA

In a powerful response to the growing concern, locally and nationally, about the numbers of young people leaving high school without earning a diploma, Philadelphia launched Project U-Turn, a citywide campaign to elevate the visibility of Philadelphia's dropout crisis and begin a drive to create more high-quality learning options that will re-engage youth who have left school or are close to doing so.

The campaign represents almost three years of discussion, consensus-building, and coordinated planning by the Project U-Turn Collaborative, comprised of leaders from the school system, city service agencies, research institutions, advocacy groups, and youth-serving organizations, that was originally established through the Youth Council of the Philadelphia Workforce Investment Board. The Collaborative, which is managed by an intermediary, the Philadelphia Youth Network, works across systems and sectors to support new high-quality learning options that will enable many more Philadelphia youth to return to education and graduate prepared for college and careers.

The Collaborative grew from a 2004 grant funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation designed to support a one-year strategic assessment of capacity and potential to improve outcomes for out-of-school and other vulnerable youth. Philadelphia's William Penn Foundation provided significant matching funds, with additional resources provided by the Philadelphia Foundation's Fund for Children and the Samuel S. Fels Fund.

The primary goal of Project U-Turn is to develop data-driven solutions to the dropout crisis. The Collaborative began its work in 2005 by gathering and examining data in order to understand more fully the dimensions of the problem and the characteristics of struggling students and out-of-school youth. The research, conducted by the University of Pennsylvania and Johns Hopkins University researchers, was summarized in a groundbreaking report, "Unfulfilled Promise: The Dimensions and Characteristics of Philadelphia's Dropout Crisis," with related policy recommendations issued by the Collaborative in a companion volume, "Turning it Around."

In the past two years, the Collaborative has been successful in increasing the number of committed partners as well as influencing policy and funding among important institutions including the School District of Philadelphia. For example, in 2006, the District adopted several Collaborative recommendations including:

- Creation of new transitional/accelerated high schools;
- Placement of dropout prevention specialists in seven hard-hit high schools; and
- A commitment to align the policy for parenting students with state timelines for child care availability.

Additionally, new educational opportunities are being offered to the target audience:

- Youth returning from delinquent placement can now receive education, life skills and employment support in the City's five community-based E3 youth centers (Education, Employment and Empowerment) as part of Philadelphia's Reintegration Initiative;
- New instructional tools targeting youth with very low literacy levels were created, piloted and are being field-tested;
- New opportunities for out-of-school youth were developed through the replication of the Portland Gateway-to-College model; and
- Hundreds of new seats were created in the School District's accelerated high schools to serve youth who had dropped out or were off-track for graduation.

Important progress continues to be made. For example, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has adopted the Project U-Turn collaborative model for statewide replication, and there is increasing energy at the state-level on issues relating to struggling students and out-of-school youth. Furthermore, with support from a major grant from the U.S. Department of Labor, Philadelphia will further expand the number of seats available in its accelerated high schools; replicate New York City's Learning to Work Model, that combines work and social services support for returning former dropouts; establish a new Bridge program that prepares former dropouts to enter educational programming; and provide new supports for youthful offenders returning to their communities from delinquent placement.

Established
As noted above, Project U-Turn was created to address Philadelphia's dropout crisis by promoting solutions that are driven by data and built through collaboration and consensus of key partners. The roots of Project U-Turn can be traced to 2003, when the Youth Council of the Philadelphia Workforce Investment Board recommended that the WIB focus more attention on the needs of out-of-school youth. As a result, a subcommittee on out-of-school youth was established, and the funding floor for out-of-school was raised to 50% from the 30% statutory minimum. Based to a considerable extent on these efforts, Philadelphia was selected in late 2004 as one of five cities to receive funding from the Youth Transition Funders Group, comprised of funders committed to improving educational outcomes for struggling students and out-of-school youth. After 21 months of research, planning and design work, Project U-Turn was launched in October 2006.

Effectiveness
Project U-Turn accountability goals, announced at the campaign launch, include:

- Leveraging $2 million in new and existing resources toward addressing Philadelphia's dropout crisis.
- Reducing dropout rates among youth most at-risk of leaving school without a diploma (e.g., youth returning from delinquent placement, in foster care, and/or pregnant and parenting teens) by at least 10% over the next two years.
- Increasing the number of high-quality alternative education opportunities from the current level of 2,800 to at least 5,000 by the 2008-2009 school year; and
- Reducing the number of dropouts by 25% (or more than 2,000 students) by the 2010-2011 school year.

In November, the Project U-Turn Collaborative commemorated the one-year anniversary of the campaign launch, announcing more than $10M in leveraged funds and other progress made toward the accountability goals. Mayor Nutter convened the event, which featured remarks by state and federal elected officials, and young people who had successfully re-engaged in educational programming.

In his inaugural address, Mayor Nutter identified the dropout issue as a key target of his new administration, and pledged support to reach a goal of cutting the dropout rate in half within 5 to 7 years.

Funding

- The City of Philadelphia (Department of Human Services)
- Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (state funds through the Department of Labor and Industry, federal WIA Incentive funds through Labor and Industry, state funds through the Pennsylvania General Assembly and federal TANF funds through the Department of Public Welfare)
- Philadelphia Workforce Investment Board and Philadelphia Workforce Development Corporation (WIA out-of-school youth funds)
- National philanthropies – currently Charles Stewart Mott Foundation (prior start-up funding came from the Youth Transition Funders Group: Gates, Carnegie and Mott)
- The Pew Fund for Children and Families
- The Philadelphia Foundation Fund for Children
- The Samuel Fels Foundation
- The William Penn Foundation

Other Involvement
The leadership and staff of the Division of Social Services, the Departments of Human Services, the Reintegration Initiative and Juvenile Probation are heavily involved in Project U-Turn, serving on key committees, providing funding support to initiatives, and determining how programs and services of the agencies could be changed to support the work.

The Collaborative also includes the voices of many individuals and community organizations, including the Eastern Pennsylvania Organizing Project, a faith-based organization representing 50,000 families in the Philadelphia region.

Lesson Learned

- Developing and analyzing data on dropouts is essential to any coherent effort to prevent or re-engage dropouts;
- Data should not only quantify the problem but also point to solutions, by identifying credit histories, literacy levels and involvement in public care systems of youth who dropout;
- A citywide coalition of city agencies, the school district(s), youth-serving and advocacy organizations and citizen action agencies should drive this work, and be responsible for identifying and delivering effective strategies;
- Out-of-school youth are not who we think they are. Most often they are not the disengaged troublemakers they are made out to be. In fact, when surveyed, almost 90% indicated that they want to return to school and make something of their lives.
- Some things do work. The efforts of cities around the country are bearing fruit in developing effective practices for struggling students and out-of-school youth. The challenge now is to resource them at levels necessary to serve more of these disconnected young people.

Advice for Mayors

- Don't be afraid to take on the issue – everyone knows the problem is extremely challenging, and many will be willing to rally around an organized and ambitious effort to find and implement solutions.
- There is strength in a broad coalition of interested stakeholders – this problem is too big for any individual organization or system.
- Rely on a high-quality intermediary organization to connect key stakeholders and keep them on-task.
- The schools must be involved. In fact, they must own the problem. At the same time, school leadership must be supported for taking on the issue, not attacked for owning up to the reality of the situation.
- Dropout prevention and retrieval must be integral components of high school reform, particularly in large cities.

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Youth Violence Prevention

Mayor Tom Potter

Portland, OR

The Mayor's Office of Youth Violence Prevention was created during Mayor Potter's tenure to focus exclusively on gang-related violence and at-risk youth in the greater Portland area. The office oversees the City's Small Grants Program, which offers funding and support to local, non-profit organizations actively engaged in the lives of young people. The office serves as a "connection hub" between public and private organizations, partnering much-needed financial resources with community programs already working to address the problems posed by gang violence. The Gang Violence Taskforce, co-chaired by the Portland Police Bureau and the Mayor's Office of Youth Violence Prevention, also serves to develop solutions, interventions and prevention strategies to reduce gang-related violence and crime in Portland and Multnomah County.

Established

Mayor Potter and the City Council have placed public safety and family-friendly neighborhoods among their highest priorities. The Office of Youth Violence Prevention was created to address these concerns. In December of 2006, the Mayor's Office developed a Youth Violence Implementation Plan, containing a number of recommendations that was presented to Portland's City Council. The Gang Violence Task Force and a separate community advisory group were instrumental in reviewing and approving the Implementation Plan prior to presentation before Portland's City Council.

The Office of Youth Violence Prevention was created on July 17, 2006 to focus on reducing violence in Portland, with a special emphasis on reaching out to youths and gangs. Key statistics fueled the development of the program: 1) from 2003 and 2006, Portland had seen an increase of 31.5 percent in gang membership; 2) increased metropolitan gang presence in many areas of the city; and 3) the lack of available funding for youth and gang outreach intervention services. The office was created to generate and target programs that would help young people escape violence. In a press release announcing the new office, Mayor Potter remarked, "Bringing together families, businesses and the faith community to focus on youth will make Portland a model in reducing violence among our young people."

Effectiveness

All organizations receiving grants are scrupulously examined beforehand to determine whether or not their continued efforts will be successful in aiding at-risk youth and preventing violence. Grantees must already be heavily involved in their communities and have a track record of successful interaction with youth.

The Office of Youth Violence Prevention works continuously with all organizations involved in the Small Grants Program. Ongoing evaluations are also conducted to ensure that all programs are able to stay on track. Surveyors include the young people that are involved in the programs and that are most influenced by the services they provide.

Funding

In December of 2006, the Portland City Council approved through an ordinance the ability of the Mayor's Office of Youth Violence Prevention to offer grant funding to existing private non-profit organizations for assistance in providing a range of outreach, intervention, prevention, counseling, education and recreation programs and activities. A total of $400,000 was made available for the Small Grants Program. The program will be fiscally administered by the Office of Neighborhood Involvement. All other program oversight is performed by the Office of Youth Violence Prevention. The money was generated from the city's general fund.

Grants were divided into two program groupings: $310,000 going towards Outreach Intervention Services and $50,000 going towards Summer Activities for Youth in Portland. Five organizations received $62,000 per grantee in the Outreach Intervention Services category, to supply intervention, outreach, prevention, counseling and education services to at-risk youth up to the age of 25.

The following organizations received funding from this category: 1) Brother's and Sister's Keepers (aimed at young African-American women and single mothers); (2) Catholic Charities – El Programa Hispano (aimed at Latino youth); 3) Emmanuel Community Services (aimed at African-American youth); 4) Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (aimed at Asian community youth); and 5) Native American Youth and Family Center.

Two organizations received $25,000 in the Summer Activities for Youth category, charged with providing educational and recreational activities to at-risk youth under the age of 21 in North and Northeast Portland. Receiving funding from this grant fund: 1) Oregon Outreach, Inc. (in conjunction with McCoy Academy, aimed primarily with African-American youth), and 2) Latino Network (aimed at Latino youth)

Other Involvement
As noted earlier, the Office of Neighborhood Involvement - a citywide bureau focused on supporting neighborhood coalitions and associations and supports crime prevention activities citywide - is heavily involved in the Small Grants Program and is responsible for its fiscal administration. Numerous other city agencies are included, however, in consultation with the Community Safety Coordinator (CSC) of the Mayor's Office of Youth Violence Prevention. These agencies include Portland Parks & Recreation, Portland Public Schools, the Housing Authority of Portland and the Portland Police Bureau. The CSC also works closely with local community organizations and members, including the Oregon Youth Authority, gang outreach specialists, faith community representatives, and families and youth. Additionally, both city and community representatives serve on the Gang Violence Task Force in an advisory capacity to the Mayor's Office of Youth Violence Prevention.

Lessons Learned
The Office of Youth Violence Prevention had a great deal of success in identifying community programs that are already leading the charge against youth violence in defense of at-risk youth. These local groups and associations have a vested interest in their districts and neighborhoods, and no one is in a better position to save youth from cycles of violence and despair. The office learned that providing financial support to pre-existing programs in the Portland area is a very effective way of reaching out to at-risk youth, and is much more efficient than a City program started from scratch.

The Mayor's Office of Youth Violence Prevention serves a conduit between public and private enterprises, and the Small Grants Program provides an opportunity to bolster local programs with a proven track record of success. It is important to broaden the conversation and allow every voice in our community to be heard. This is an essential feature in efforts to reach out to at-risk youth in the Portland area.

Advice for Mayors
Mayors looking for answers to local problems should look to learn from those in their community that are already finding local solutions. No City office can be an island unto itself; by partnering with local organizations, civic resources can be channeled to meet public problems in the most capable and cost-effective way possible. Increased communication will also provide your City with greater transparency in government and a heightened awareness of your involvement with local issues.

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"4 Steps Into the Future"

Mayor Robert A. Cashell, Sr.

Reno, NV

The City developed a school-to-careers partnership with Procter R. Hug High School in 2002. This high school is located in a socially and economically disadvantaged neighborhood that serves a significant "at-risk" high school population. The "4 Steps Into the Future" course features an integrated curriculum in which students learn about municipal government and participate in a paid internship program sponsored by the City, while earning academic credit towards high school graduation. Students are matched with available internships based upon their career interests. A scholarship program was created to assist eligible students in their post-secondary studies at any publicly funded Nevada college or university.

Established

City staff developed the "4 Steps" program in 2002 at direction of Council. The goals of this program include: to inform high school students about governmental operations at the local level; to expand the future applicant pool for City positions; to increase the diversity representation of this applicant pool through targeted community outreach; and, ultimately, to increase citizen understanding of and participation in local government.

Effectiveness

"4 Steps" success is measured by evaluating student outcomes. Over the past 5 years, 53 students have participated in the program. Of this number 48 students graduated from high school, 16 scholarships have been awarded totaling $10,500.00, 12 students have been hired by the City after completing their internships, and at least 27 students have continued their post-secondary education at a State college or university. This program has also been successful in reaching out to minority students; 32 students have been minorities, including 22 Latinos.

The National League of Cities awarded its distinguished "Cultural Diversity Award", second place recipient for this City's size category, to the "4 Steps" program in 2004. The Innovation Groups invited the City to present its "4 Steps" program at its national conference held in Reno, also in 2004.

Funding

"4 Steps" has been funded by Council out of the general fund since the program's inception in 2002. The total budget for fiscal year 2007/2008 is $35,000.00. This includes the students' wages, course instructor's salary, books and materials, student bus passes, and miscellaneous supplies. Estimated costs per student are $2,000.00 per academic semester; hence, up to seventeen students can participate given the current level of funding.

Other Involvement

The Office of Organizational Effectiveness, a division of the City Manager's Office, coordinates the program. The Diversity and Training Manager serves as the staff liaison between Hug High School and the City; she markets the program to the school, schedules guest speakers to present their knowledge and municipal role to the class. Other functions include matching students' interests to worksites, assists worksite supervisors, coordinates performance evaluations, counsels students, serves as the staff liaison to the advisory board, coordinates training, and performs most administrative tasks.

Nearly all City departments have sponsored student interns over the past five years. Direct supervision is provided by the departments to which the interns are assigned. Supervisors evaluate students' performance over the course of their internships. They serve as mentors for the students; they encourage them, motivate them, and support them to excel at school and in their internships. Supervisors have reported that they feel their supervisory skills have improved because of their work with student interns.

City Council established an advisory board for "4 Steps" when it first funded the program. This board is comprised of individuals from different sectors of the community, including representatives from the City's Civil Service Commission, the local community college, education, business and the City's Neighborhood Advisory Board in which the high school is located.

Lessons Learned

The City has learned many valuable lessons over the life of this program. It is important to obtain the "buy-in" from the school district and the Management Team at the onset. Talk with the Board of Trustees, Superintendent of Schools, and department heads to obtain their support and have them designate staff to assist in the development and implementation of the program. Designate a lead staff member to coordinate the activities of the work team comprised of individuals from the City, school district, high schools (including instructors, administration, and students), and the community to ensure that the program is designed to meet the needs of all stakeholders.

Staff should develop a supervisor manual for those employees who will be responsible for directing, coaching, and evaluating the work of student interns. Worksite supervisors should be provided training on how to work effectively with student interns. Students will gain more from their work experience if they are held to high standards and are held accountable for their performance.

Advice for Mayors

Mayors considering implementing a similar program should first meet with the Superintendent of Schools to design a program that best meets the needs of the students, schools, the school district and the City. If academic credit is to be made available, course materials must meet the district and/or state educational standards. The City's Management Team has a critical role in a program's eventual success, too; if department heads do not support their supervisors having an active role in supervising and mentoring students the internship will be negatively impacted. This creates an unsatisfactory work experience for the student; likewise, the worksite supervisor may come to feel burdened with the additional supervisory responsibilities. All stakeholders must understand the goals and value of the program to the municipality, to the schools, to the community-at-large and, most importantly, to the students participating in the program.

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Cadet Scholarship Program

Mayor Robert A. Cashell, Sr.

Reno, NV

The Reno Police Department offers a Cadet Scholarship Program to qualified individuals who are interested in becoming police cadets. A cadet must be enrolled as a student at Truckee Meadows Community College or the University of Nevada, Reno. A cadet must be eighteen years of age, have a valid Nevada Driver's License and posses a high school diploma or equivalent. The Cadet must not have any felony criminal or disqualifying misdemeanor criminal convictions. The hiring process includes the ability to pass a criminal background investigation, including a polygraph and a drug screening.

The cadet will receive up to $1,000.00 in academic reimbursement for serving as a cadet with the Reno Police Department. The cadet must work a maximum of seventeen hours per week for each semester. The Reno Police Department is flexible in working around the cadet's school schedule. The cadet will be rotated between different department units each semester. This will give the cadet an opportunity for the cadet to learn a new unit.

Established

The Reno Police Department Cadet Scholarship Program started over twenty years ago. The Cadet program was a paid position but there was not a scholarship program offered. Since then, the program was reintroduced at the Reno Police Department and the Cadet program became active again with an extra incentive which included the $1,000.00 towards academic reimbursement. The program was created to give individuals who were seeking a criminal law enforcement career the opportunity to learn what police officers do and learn about community policing.

Effectiveness

The Reno Police Department Cadet Scholarship Program is a great program for the cadet and the department. For example, last year Reno Police Department had one cadet who was currently assigned to the Regional Gang Unit. The Cadet learned hands-on interviewing techniques, police detective skills, and gained great knowledge of community policing. When the cadet became twenty-one years of age he reached the minimum age requirement for police officer. The cadet passed the physical and written portion of the police officer testing processing. The cadet then successfully completed the eighteen week Northern Nevada Law Enforcement Academy. The cadet is now an employee of the Reno Police Department as a police officer.

The Reno Police Department gained a well trained police officer from the cadet program. The program not only gave police experience to the cadet, but the police department gained an even bigger asset to its force by later hiring the cadet to become one of its own.

Funding

The Reno Police Department Cadet Program is financed through forfeiture funds.

Other Involvement

The Reno Police Department Cadet Scholarship Program is independently run through its own department. The Cadet Scholarship Program is not a community program but rather a Reno Police Department program.

Lessons Learned

The best lesson learned from the Reno Police Department Cadet Scholarship Program is that the program is not only a good learning experience for the cadet but, also, the Reno Police Department gains a well trained employee.

Advice for Mayors

If a similar program was to be implemented within the City of Reno organization, the program would be affective in all divisions. Currently the seventeen hours per week for each semester allows the cadet to attend school and finish homework. The cadet receives $12.00 per hour for a total of $204.00 per week and $816.00 per month. The cadet allows receives $1,000.00 in academic reimbursement for serving at the Reno Police Department.

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Explorer Program Post 2104

Mayor Robert A. Cashell, Sr.

Reno, NV

The Reno Police Department Explorer program is designed for young men and women of our community. Law Enforcement Explorer posts help youths to gain insight into a variety of programs that offer hands-on career activities. The program also includes ride alongs with police officers, and yearly scenario competitions against other police department Explorers from different states. All programs are based on five areas of emphasis: career opportunities, life skills, service learning, character education and leadership.

An Explorer must meet the following qualifications to be eligible for the program:

- Be between the ages of 15-20 years of age
- Have a good moral character
- Remain in school while in the program or until graduation
- Maintain a C average (70%) or higher
- Not have a serious police record
- Take and pass written exams
- Be able to attend bi-weekly Explorer meetings
- Be willing to volunteer time to attend Explorer functions
- Be willing to commit to the Explorer Code and exemplify the professional image of the Reno Police Department

Established

The Explorer Program was first created by the Boy Scouts of America in 1930. The Explorer Program has been an active program at the Reno Police Department for over twenty years. The program was designed for youth to become involved in working as a team and under the leadership of police officers at the Reno Police Department.

"America's hope for the future lies in the youth of today." This philosophy led the Boy Scouts of America to develop its Explorer Division for career-oriented young adults aged fourteen through twenty. Members are referred to as "Explorer" and, while the program is part of the BSA, the Explorer Program is distinctively different from scouting. Explorer is a co-educational, young-adult program developed and supervised by local community organizations, businesses and individuals providing an opportunity for young adults to explore a particular career field.

Effectiveness

The Reno Police Department Explorer Program currently has twelve active members. The Explorers meet twice month at the Regional Training Center and they meet with their advisors. At the meetings, the Advisors and Explorers go over current events, upcoming events, Nevada Revised Statutes, Reno Municipal Codes, and ten-codes for call signs. The Explorers gain an understanding about crime activity within their community and learn how to identity problems that they face.

Funding

The Reno Police Department Explorers Program is financed through Explorers working at fund raisers. The biggest fund raiser of the year is the Reno Tahoe Open. The Explorers are paid $5,000.00 per year for directing parking at the event.

Other Involvement

There are no other cities directly involved with the Reno Police Department Explorer program. However, the Explorers do attend competitions throughout the year and they compete against other agency Explorers.

Lessons Learned

It is important to understand that the Explorers are dedicated to the program. The Explorers arrive on time to their bi-weekly meetings, they commit to working at special events unpaid, and they are eager to learn about community policing. The advisors also need to be dedicated to the Explorers Program as well. The Explorers respond to structure and they want to excel in the program. Some Explorers have shown an interest in applying for the Cadet position or actually testing for police officer when they become twenty-one years of age.

Advice for Mayors

Implementation of the Explorer Program an Explorer training manual must be in place. This gives the advisors a guide in what to discuss and train for each meeting.

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Summer School Plus

Mayor Robert A. Cashell, Sr.

Reno, NV

The City and the University of Nevada, Reno College of Education developed a partnership to expand the educational and work experience opportunities for high school students in Washoe County School District. The University's Dean's Future Scholar's (DFS) program is a partnership between the University and public school districts to recruit diverse students into careers in teacher education. Although a major goal of the program is to recruit students into teacher education, a more basic purpose is first to interest students in going on to higher education. But, before students can consider teaching as a career, they must first believe that college is a possibility for them.

DFS identifies students in the sixth grade to participate in this University sponsored program. To be considered for this program, students' parents must not have graduated from college. The DFS program continues to work with these students through high school and into college, providing tutoring, mentoring, and other support services to participating youth.

Nevadaworks, Inc., the local workforce board established under the Workforce Investment Act, provided youth funding to afford twenty-five DFS students the opportunity to take developmental math or English classes, plus college preparatory classes on the University campus this summer. Students are also working in meaningful and relevant work experience opportunities in departments across the campus based upon their individual career and academic interests. Their supervisors have been so impressed with the students' strong work ethic, ability to grasp new concepts and tasks, and enthusiasm on-the-job that eleven students have been offered employment on campus when this summer youth employment program concludes in late August.

Established

The "Summer School Plus" program was made possible through a grant first funded by Nevadaworks, Inc. in fiscal year 2005/2006. The original purpose of this pilot project was to build on the success of the City's "4 Steps Into the Future" program created in 2002. The "4 Steps" program (please review the City's "4 Steps Into the Future" submission) provides opportunities for students to earn academic credit plus participate in a City-paid internship. In the first year of this grant, the City collaborated with Procter R. Hug High School to provide tuition for summer school, paid internships, and support services for eligible students.

In the second year, the City sub-contracted with the DFS program to increase the number of students who could take advantage of the educational opportunities on the University campus, to provide students work experiences based upon their career and academic interests, and to provide additional resources to increase positive student outcomes. These expanded opportunities, both in the classroom and on-the-job, have helped to provide a critical bridge between high school and the university; a bridge that has shown to be a key link between students attending college or not pursuing a post-secondary education.

Effectiveness

The number of job offers extended to the students was an unanticipated benefit this summer. Worksite supervisors offered eleven students jobs on campus upon completion of their summer internships. Grade reports have not been prepared as yet; overall, the DFS staff report that students have achieved success, both in the classroom and in their individual work sites. Some students have been able to more clearly define their future academic and career directions as a result of their internships. One student changed her intended major from nursing to speech therapy after serving her internship in the career counseling office on campus. Another changed his major from physical therapy to education after mentoring the middle school youth enrolled in the DFS program. All students reported that the opportunity to network with professors and other University personnel helped them to better define their goals and instilled in them with much needed self-confidence. These student outcomes clearly demonstrate both quantitative and qualitative measurements of success.

Students were formally recognized for their accomplishments at a recognition ceremony attended by the Dean of the College of Education, worksite supervisors, City staff, family, and the program and fiscal managers from Nevadaworks. The Nevadaworks Program Manager commented to City staff, "Washington needs to see this program in action, these are the types of programs that we need to be funding." A parent told City staff that he wants his child to participate in next year's program. Students want to return next year – it just does not get much better than this!

Funding
"Summer School Plus" is funded by Nevadaworks, Inc., the local workforce board established by the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) administered by the U.S. Department of Labor. Nevadaworks, Inc. funded the City's grant for $60,000 per year; this is a continuation grant of up to three years contingent upon the City accomplishing the goals, objectives and outcomes outlined in the grant and proven sound fiscal and program grant administration. The City and the University did not seek any indirect costs for the administration of the grant.

Other Involvement
The City's Office of Organizational Effectiveness, a division of the City Manager's Office, coordinates the "Summer School Plus" program. The Diversity and Training Manager serves as the staff liaison between the DFS program and the City. She is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the grant to include fiscal and program management; report preparation, review and approval; liaison between Nevadaworks, Inc. and the DFS; publicity, public relations; etc. The City's human resources department performs the payroll function and the finance department provides fiscal support.

City Council established an advisory board for "4 Steps" when it first funded the program. This board is comprised of individuals from different sectors of the community, including representatives from the City's Civil Service Commission, the local community college, education, business and the City's Neighborhood Advisory Board. This board directed the City's Diversity and Training Manager to submit the original grant application to Nevadaworks, Inc. It has supported the revisions to the scope of work to include the partnership with the DFS program.

Lessons Learned
The lessons learned in year one were quickly implemented in year two; processes have been streamlined to improve grant administration.

All stakeholders need to fully understand the fiscal and program requirements of funding sources. They also need to know what programs currently exist so they do not replicate any existing programs. Mayors or municipalities need to work with existing programs to enrich educational offerings for at-risk youth. They should research which agencies in their communities have received youth employment funds through the U.S. Department of Labor. They should learn from others' experiences to ensure that their programs fulfill their fiscal and programmatic responsibilities.

While the City is primarily serving as the program's fiscal agent this year, this role should not be underestimated. Both students and parents are proud that they are working for the City of Reno. Students take home a paycheck from the City of Reno; this is excellent public relations throughout the community. When you consider that twenty-four students are minorities and all will be the ***first*** in their families to ultimately graduate from college the City is not only creating good will but "building its own" for future job vacancies!

Advice for Mayors
This program is unique because few universities and colleges have a program that follows-along students from sixth grade into college with weekly mentoring at their home school site. Also, this program provides college courses that act as a critical bridge between high school and the University. For these reasons, it is best that they contact the City of Reno for more information.

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YPUP & The Mayor's Youth Advisory Council — Mayor Robert Duffy

Rochester, NY

The Youth-Police Unity Project and the Mayor's Youth Advisory Council are two key initiatives through which the City of Rochester is engaging at-risk youth in positive youth development and social change. We hope that this outline will benefit the efforts of our colleagues around the country.

Youth-Police Unity Project (YPUP)

YPUP emerged from Teen Empowerment's Youth Organizing Initiative. In this initiative, TE hires young people (ages 14-19), including those at-risk for gang involvement and other negative behaviors, to organize their peers to improve their communities. TE believes that with the proper tools and resources, all people—including urban youth—can think deeply about the most difficult social problems, and work effectively with others to create significant change. Each year, TE trains a group of 12 youth organizers in organizing, public speaking, conflict resolution, and group facilitation skills. YOs use these skills to analyze their communities, determine priority issues, and implement a strategy to address the identified issues. Through this process, TE youth identified youth-police relations and youth voice in public policy as a pressing issue and the YPUP became a major component of their work. The activities implemented since the start of this project have had a significant impact on police-youth relations, interactions among teens across the city, and youth input into public policy. Program activities thus far include:

- Youth-Police Dialogue Sessions in which youth and police set aside their stereotypes of one another, built relationships based on trust, and learned more about the issues each groups faces and how societal issues create unnecessary conflict between them
- A Core Group of 15 youth and 9 officers who meet regularly work to plan initiatives and increase participation in YPUP activities
- Youth organizers trained new police recruits to understand the issues faced by youth in the communities they work in and to more effectively communicate with teens in the course of their work. Written evaluations completed by youth and police participants in the dialogue/training sessions yielded an average rating of 9.6 from officers and 9.4 from youth on a scale from 1-10 with 10 being the highest score. Some evaluative quotes from police officers involved were; *"Rapport was built between youth and police . . . make class longer"* and *"Awesome, definitely needs to happen again. Great in theory and actuality. This needs to continue so that the communication can grow. Very educational and informative"*
- A "Youth Agenda for Youth" was created through a series of youth dialogue sessions and large events, this agenda presents resolutions of hope and community involvement for teens by teens. Through these events, more than 1,000 Rochester youth have agreed to uphold these principles.
- A "Youth Agenda for Change" was developed by TE YOs and staff with input from over 1500 youth and adults who participated in TE initiatives, including YPUP, and addresses the societal issues that are often the root causes behind animosity between youth and police. YOs presented the Youth Agenda at a City Council hearing broadcast live on television and at meetings with mayoral candidates.
- Annual Youth Conference and SpeakOut: This citywide TE initiative has brought together more than 1,100 youth and adults, including police, over the past three years. Last year's conference featured skits and speeches presented by youth and police Core Group members. Participants then engaged in a candle-lighting healing ceremony to acknowledge our community's losses and commit to positive change.
- Summer of Opportunity and other policy initiatives: As a result of participation in YPUP dialogue sessions in his former role of RPD Police Chief, Mayor Bob Duffy initiated the "Summer of Opportunity" program providing more than 500 youth with summer jobs. Moreover, RPD has increased foot patrols and minority recruitment, and officers give job outreach flyers to youth they see on the streets for TE's current hiring process, shifting the typical dynamic in a positive, helpful direction.

In a short time, YPUP is proving how policing, gang prevention and community safety do not happen in isolation from building relationships and developing vibrant communities through collaborative efforts. Worse, they can even work against one another as stressors increase for all parties as communities struggle with escalating violence. Insofar as the project aims directly at police-youth relations and how the two groups could become allies in making changes that benefit the community, YPUP facilitates change on all sides. With YPUP, Rochester is well-positioned to turn the tides on disconnection, hopelessness, and violence among youth.

Mayor's Youth Advisory Council (MYAC)

The Rochester Mayor's Youth Advisory Council will consist of a group of 20 young people between the ages of 14-19. The Council will be made up of two types of Youth Advisors:

1. 10-15 teen representatives from local youth service agencies. Each agency will select one youth and will also provide some adult staff time in-kind to support the work of the MYAC.
2. 5-10 "at-large" teens to represent unaffiliated youth chosen through a process of recruitment, interviews and selection based on the Teen Empowerment Hiring Process. MYAC staff will perform targeted school and neighborhood outreach, and will seek referrals from the Office of Probation, Pathways to Peace, St. Joseph's Villa and other agencies who work with "at-risk" youth or teens involved with the juvenile justice system. All applicants will participate in a two-hour interactive group interview followed by a ten-minute individual interview.

Representation of the diversity of youth living in Rochester on the MYAC is crucial, including equal representation of males and females, all ages in range (14-19 years), diverse racial, cultural, and socio-economic backgrounds, different neighborhood and schools, and youth no longer in school, as well as a range of social/emotional development, including youth considered "at risk." Coordinating staff will select a group that achieves these diverse representational goals and consists of individuals who are prepared to represent their peers to the Mayor.

Following formation, the MYAC will participate in a one-week orientation (2-3 hours/day) to build relationships among members and guide them though a process of understanding their purpose and role as Youth Advisors. Orientation will include an introduction to how government and city hall work, and the youth will gain leadership skills and have time to begin exploring the issues that Rochester youth face.

After the orientation period, the Youth Advisory Council will meet one afternoon/evening each month for three hours using Teen Empowerment's interactive group meeting format to discuss issues facing youth and their communities in Rochester and to advise the Mayor on his policy priorities. The MYAC will offer concrete analyses, strategies and feedback with the goal of playing an integral role among the Mayor's advisors. In addition to monthly meetings, special gatherings will be scheduled to garner youth voice in addressing "immediate" concerns or in response to a particular community situation.

Prior to each meeting, the Mayor will provide MYAC leadership with topics of interest and/or policy issues currently being discussed at City Hall to provide discussion content for the MYAC. Adult staff from Teen Empowerment will design and coordinate all MYAC sessions and activities, and report key points of the conversations and solutions offered by the youth monthly with the Mayor's office. The Mayor will meet quarterly with the MYAC to share the City's progress on various issues and discuss further ideas for change.

Members will commit to one full year of membership on the council and will receive a stipend for their service. Similar to their adult counterparts, youth council members will be paid a stipend for their time and consistency of commitment. The Mayor's office will provide funding for Youth Advisor stipends, TE staff hours for coordination and miscellaneous expenses, including supplies and refreshments

Established

Youth-Police Unity Project (YPUP)

In 2005, Rochester Mayor Robert Duffy, then Chief of Police, partnered with youth development organization, the Center for Teen Empowerment (TE), to inaugurate the Youth-Police Unity Project. The goal of the YPUP is to build trust and understanding between Rochester youth and police, and to engage them in collaborative change efforts that increase civic engagement by youth toward improved quality of life in neighborhoods throughout the city. YPUP is designed to increase social capital among youth, adult community members and police by bringing these stakeholders together in cooperative efforts to build community, improve public policies, and prevent and intervene in difficult youth-related problems.

In cities across the U.S., communities confronting resurgence in gang-related violence experience a common tragic paradox: police deployed *en masse* to address the problem meet resistance and silence from the people they are supposed to be helping, and youth with few resources or outlets report feeling besieged and violated by officers who are deployed to protect them. Meanwhile, root factors contributing to mistrust and hopelessness, and to escalating dropout rates, youth violence, and gang proliferation remain virtually invisible to the people most affected. According to the Rochester Area Community Foundation Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey, only 19% of Black residents and 34% of Hispanic residents say that they trust police a lot; only 27% of residents between the ages of 18 and 34 trust the police. The Rochester City Council approved a curfew policy for youth beginning last fall, increasing their contact with police officers as the curfew is enforced.

Mayor's Youth Advisory Council (MYAC)

The City of Rochester and The Center for Teen Empowerment are currently establishing the Mayor's Youth Advisory Council made up of 20 Rochester youth. The purpose of the MYAC will be to represent the concerns and ideas of Rochester youth to the Mayor and to create a more formal structure to intentionally and meaningfully include youth voice in policy decisions that affect their lives.

In the summer of 2005, TE YOs and staff developed a "Youth Agenda for Change" with input from over 1500 youth and adults who participated in TE initiatives over the past two years. YOs presented and discussed the Youth Agenda in separate meetings with Rochester mayoral candidates Wade Norwood and Bob Duffy. The interactive meetings allowed youth and candidates for mayor to build bridges with one another and further connected young people to the election campaigns and the city's political process. From that experience, Bob Duffy asked Teen Empowerment staff and youth to participate on his transition team after winning the election.

TE held a Citywide Youth Forum on November 16, 2005 at City Hall that was facilitated by Teen Empowerment Youth Organizers and staff. 50 youth and 100 adults were in attendance. City Councilmember Adam McFadden hosted the forum in Council Chambers and other representatives of the Rochester City Council were present to listen to solutions from our youth. TE Youth Organizers presented the Youth Agenda for Change and numerous other young people spoke out about solutions they would like to see in the city to help address public safety, opportunities for youth, and other youth issues. Local Rochester cable news station, RNews, provided a rare live broadcast from the forum and has continued to make the event available to cable subscribers through their Rochester On-Demand television channel 111.

Upon evaluating the details of the Youth Agenda for Change, last year Mayor Duffy proposed the creation of the Mayor's Youth Advisory Council in response to young people's call for more voice in policy making.

Impact on Dropout/Graduation Rates

Teen Empowerment has significant success in their programming with not only dropout prevention, but with sparking interest and engagement with education, including higher education. While the individual path of development and growth for each TE Youth Organizer is unique, the vast majority gain sophisticated analytical, leadership, communication, and organizational skills. The results of TE's Youth Organizer Impact Survey, given since 1999, show that over 97% of TE Youth Organizers report increased self-esteem and learning skills that prepared them for the future. Similarly high ratings were reported for a range of other areas of personal growth and skill development. In addition, 98% of TE Youth Organizers graduate from high school.

Meanwhile, the messages that Teen Empowerment youth impart to their peers influence thousands of other young people to persevere and seek meaning and opportunity in their schools and communities.

Research shows relation between student civic engagement and success in school. In 2005, the Forum for Youth Investment with input from Schools for a New Society, conducted a study entitled *Youth Engagement in Educational Change*. The study found that, "young people who are engaged emotionally, cognitively and behaviorally in their education are less likely to show signs of alienation, and that such engagement increases their connectedness to school. Increased school connectedness is related to educational motivation, classroom engagement and better attendance, which are all linked to higher academic achievement.[1]"

Effectiveness

At the beginning of each initiative and project, the group (including youth and adult staff) sets goals. After each initiative, the group meets to discuss and evaluate the program in light of those goals. In addition, TE uses a number of evaluative instruments and methods to assess the program effectiveness:

- Verbal and written evaluations from youth-police dialogue sessions, events and meetings
- Year-end Impact Surveys to assess YPUP and MYAC impact on youth, police and/or policymakers
- Year-end reports and initiative documentation that capture quantitative information
- Meeting minutes, youth payroll records, and anecdotal information
- Staff assessment of initiatives and meetings

Finally, TE Staff work with RPD, Rochester City School District and the Mayor's office to gather information on incidents of youth crime, drop-out rates, and other indicators in targeted communities

Funding

Public funding streams:

- City of Rochester contract with the Center for Teen Empowerment (TE) for MYAC
- Rochester Police Department contract with TE for YPUP

Local/Regional funding sources:

- Rochester Area Community Foundation's Civic Engagement/Social Capital fund
- Lesser Eber Fund
- Helen L. Morris Foundation at the First Unitarian Church
- Wilson Foundation
- W.T. Grant Foundation

National funding sources:

- Andrus Family Fund
- Cricket Island Foundation
- Germeshausen Foundation

Other Involvement

We have worked hard to cultivate partnerships with agencies and organizations across the city of Rochester to build upon efforts that are currently taking place. Some of the collaborations to be utilized in the process of planning and implementing both YPUP and MYAC are:

Rochester Police Department, David Moore, Chief of Police.
The Rochester Police Department works with Teen Empowerment as the coordinating partner in the Youth- Police Unity Project to help enhance their youth crime and violence prevention efforts through improved relations with young people. RPD provides officer participation and support in YPUP organizing strategies, initiatives, and events. TE trains police recruits and current RPD staff at all levels.

Bureau of Youth Services, City of Rochester, Jackie Campbell, Director.
The Bureau of Youth Services works with Teen Empowerment to develop the vision and coordinate communications and logistics for the Mayor's Youth Advisory Council, as well as liaison with the Mayor.

Pathways to Peace, City of Rochester, Victor Saunders, Director.
Teen Empowerment works with Pathways to Peace street workers, a City of Rochester youth outreach initiative, to identify at-risk youth in the community for the initial hiring process and recruiting participants for youth-police and other initiatives. Pathways staff also collaborate with TE and RPD to identify potential conflicts between and among young people and develop strategies to prevent or resolve them.

Monroe County Office of Probation, Robert J. Burns, Probation Administrator.
Teen Empowerment works with the Office of Probation to identify at-risk youth and involve them in YPUP initiatives, including dialogue sessions between youth and between police and youth, and for the MYAC selection process particularly for the "at-large" seats. In addition, TE facilitates group sessions between youth and probation staff to foster communication and healthy problem-solving strategies designed to enhance their prevention efforts.

*The Center for Youth**,** Elaine Spaull, Executive Director.*
Center for Youth staff help identify youth for the YPUP MYAC hiring processes and as participants in local and citywide initiatives through their work in the Rochester City Schools. TE works directly with the staff to coordinate youth dialogue sessions and other prevention/intervention strategies in specific

Center for Dispute Settlement, Peter Bibby, Police-Community Relations Program Director, Annette McMillan-Hutchinson, School-Based Program Director.
CDS refers young people to MYAC selection process and YPUP dialogue sessions. Doug Ackley, TE Project Director, served on the CDS School-Based Program Advisory Board. TE will continue to provide youth leadership and input into community-police initiatives held by CDS and activities organized by their school-based program or RASA.

City of Rochester, Dept. of Recreation & Youth Services, Nancy Johns-Price, Program Development Specialist.
Youth Voice One Vision is the Recreation Centers' city-wide Youth Council that holds monthly meetings and periodic forums about recreation center activities. YVOV teens are involved in TE initiatives related to YPUP and will join other agencies in nominating youth to enter the selection process for the MYAC. The city's Recreation Centers are providing space for MYAC recruitment efforts and events.

Lessons Learned
In the process of integrating the Youth-Police Unity Project and Mayor's Youth Advisory Council into the City of Rochester's efforts to address issues of at-risk youth and dropout prevention, we have benefited from lessons about involving youth in decision-making that affects them, using Teen Empowerment's youth organizing approach to youth development and community change, engaging high risk youth in positions of leadership, and building relationships and promoting authentic dialogue among youth and adults.

Involving Youth in Policy Decision-making

We cannot solve issues related to youth, including dropout rates and other high risk behaviors, without involving youth in the process of analyzing and strategizing root causes and solutions to those problems. Youth are uniquely positioned to both comprehend the issues directly and to influence their peers, as well as adults in decision-making roles, to do the right thing. Youth must feel they have a meaningful role to play and buy into any solutions our city government puts forth. The mayor included youth on his transition team as he took office. This influence has already been formative in several policies, from including youth in the training of new and in-service police officers, to the creation of the mayor's Summer of Opportunity youth jobs program, and the creation of the Mayor's Youth Advisory Council, *(discussed herein).*

An Organizing Approach

Teenagers are largely influenced by their peers. To see other young people like themselves operating effectively in seats of government and affecting decisions on real policies with tangible results, youth begin to see those spaces as positions they could fill. Moreover, young people tend to be more open to messages communicated by their peers in language with which they identify. Teen Empowerment's fundamental approach to hiring groups that are representative of different kinds of young people—across gender, age, neighborhood and personality/style—is key to accessing different spheres of influence among youth. The work that we do to develop the skills, voice, and sense of efficacy in a smaller number of strategically positioned youth to experience the real impact they can have on their communities and city will ripple out to influence the experience of other young people by creating a culture where civic engagement and positive social change become both possible and popular.

Engaging High Risk Youth

Central to this concept is the recruitment and inclusion not only of young people who are already civically-minded and connected to programs, but of youth who display leadership in other spheres that are considered more negative or destructive to the community. These youth, who tend to be disconnected from programs and/or supportive communities or families, have influence and credibility with other youth like themselves, as well as perspectives that need to be understood by policymakers in order for our youth policy decisions to be effective. The first tenet of Teen Empowerment's basic beliefs is that the sense of powerlessness over one's own circumstances can lead to dysfunctional behavior as people try to assert power in other ways. When youth have access to legitimate and constructive power, they are more likely to seek positive avenues to success, see purpose in education, and feel a commitment to improving their communities. Thus, it is vital that these young leaders are included in these meaningful community change efforts.

Advice for Mayors
Mayors who seek to replicate either a YPUP or MYAC program should identify local partner agencies with expertise in engaging youth in solutions to youth-related problems rather than attempting to recreate the wheel. Meanwhile, the Center for Teen Empowerment (www.teenempowerment.org) utilizes a unique set of systems crucial to the success of these programs, particularly in involving a diverse group of youth that includes high-risk youth in civic engagement that is authentic and meaningful. Indispensable elements of the program include an intensive hiring/selection process for youth, interactive group work methodology, and behavior management system integrating ongoing feedback and behavior contract sessions.

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Seattle Team for Youth Program — Mayor Greg Nickels

Seattle, WA

The Seattle Team for Youth (STFY) Program is a multi-agency community-based case management consortium that focuses on keeping youth in school and increasing academic achievement. The program provides case management services to Seattle low- income youth ages 11-21 years who face a variety of issues including school suspension, expulsion, discipline referrals, and low school attendance.

Case management services are provided at no charge, and help youth navigate the school and court systems while accessing services such as tutoring, housing, health, mental health, employment and drug treatment. The case managers provide outreach and advocacy as well as culturally and linguistically appropriate support services. In addition, they link high-risk youth and their families to needed services, maintain regular contact with the youth, and monitor youth progress towards reaching individual service goals.

Established

In 1989 the United States Department of Health and Human Services issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for gang prevention/intervention strategies. The Seattle Human Services Department and Seattle Police Department saw the RFP as an opportunity to confront the emergence of gangs and gang-related drug activity throughout the city.

The original goal of STFY was youth violence prevention and gang intervention; however, over the years, the intention of the program has shifted towards reaching students before they become chronically truant, engage with violence and/or gang activity, or find themselves involved with the juvenile justice system. With this shift in focus, STFY has become a dropout prevention, academic success program.

Effectiveness

Program effectiveness is measured through a variety of indicators that measure the number of high-risk youth that:

- Progress to the next grade level or graduate from high school
- Re-enroll and stay in school for 90 days
- Increase their semester Core GPA by 0.25
- Complete summer school successfully
- Improve semester attendance by 15%
- Complete the GED
- Pass the 10th Grade Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL)
  - Pass a section of the April 2007 10th Grade WASL
  - Pass all sections of the April 2007 10th Grade WASL

Funding

The program is funded by the City of Seattle Families and Education Levy and is coordinated by the Seattle Human Services Department Youth Development and Achievement Division.

Other Involvement

The collaborative effort includes a variety of Seattle agencies, ranging from law enforcement to community-based organizations. The City of Seattle has partnered with the Seattle School District, Public Health Seattle-King County School-Based Health Centers, the Seattle Police Department, and King County Superior Court. In addition, the City also partners with several community-based agencies including the Atlantic Street Center, the Center for Career Alternatives, Consejo Counseling and Referral Service, El Centro de la Raza, the Metrocenter YMCA, Powerful Voices, Safe Futures Youth Center, Southwest Youth and Family Services, and the United Indians of All Tribes Foundation/I Wa Sil Boys and Girls Club.

Lessons Learned

Programs utilizing a case management approach similar to that of STFY should try to specifically define their program's geographic and demographic scope. This will help prevent resources from being spread too thin and will help ensure that high-risk youth get the individualized attention they need to help them be successful. Building partnerships with community contacts that can provide both culturally and linguistically appropriate services to specific ethnic populations is another way of providing high-risk youth with specialized attention.

Another helpful factor for implementing this program successfully is the ability to directly access student records, which will help with tracking students' progress while enrolled in the program. When doing outreach both within the school system and the community in general, there is a need to specify and emphasize the eligibility requirements for the program. For example, STFY is not designed to serve students with severe mental health issues or youth who are missing. By being clear about who the program serves will help minimize inappropriate referrals, saving time and preventing frustration.

Lastly, the use of red-flag indicators to identify the risk level of students early on helps to ensure that students get the support they need to succeed before they fall too far behind.

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Health Careers for Youth Project

Mayor Greg Nickels

Seattle, WA

The Health Careers for Youth (HCY) project in Seattle offers at-risk youth the inspiration and the path to stay in school, graduate and move on toward self-sufficiency by placing learning and training in the context of a health-care career. This innovated sector-specific program works closely with local hospitals and colleges to make education and employment in health care careers more accessible to underrepresented youth, including bilingual youth of color.

The program provides youth with both a comprehensive understanding of a wide range of nursing and health-care professions and vocational training they can use almost immediately for meaningful employment. The 20 enrolled students participate in career exploration, Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) training, pre-requisite coursework in health occupations, and work-based learning. CNA training and certification serve as a gateway to both employment and additional training for a broad array of health care careers which could include nursing, phlebotomy, medical assisting, pharmacy technician, radiologic technologist and more. The program includes multiple exit points to employment and enables students to complete college prerequisites while still in high school.

Established

In March 2001, the Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County (WDC) joined with the Washington State Hospital Association to launch the Seattle-King County Health Care Staffing Crisis Panel. The panel, composed of hospital, education and labor leaders, sought solutions for severe staffing shortages in health care, especially nursing. These solutions included expanding the capacity of the region's post-secondary health-care training programs and helping hospital employees move into in-demand occupations.

At the same time, the panel recognized the need to attract more youth - particularly youth of color - to nursing and other health professions. The WDC and WSHA's Health Work Force Institute received a grant from the state Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board to prepare a cohort of local youth for post-secondary training and employment in practical nursing. The Youth Nursing Careers for All project ran from 2004 to 2007. The Health Careers for Youth project, launched in early 2007, builds on lessons learned from this earlier youth nursing initiative.

Effectiveness

Performance goals for the HCY project include the following:

- 90% of participating youth will successfully complete the CNA didactic and clinical training components
- 85% of participating youth will take the national CNA certification exam
- 65% of participating youth will pass the national CNA certification exam
- 60% of youth will successfully complete at least two college-level nursing or allied health pre-requisite courses

In addition to the above goals, program effectiveness is measured by educational success, including high school graduation and enrollment in post-secondary education.

Industry partners also measure success in terms of promoting a greater understanding of the health care system among the diverse youth in this program, not just as students hoping to enter a health care career, but as consumers of health services.

Funding

The HCY project is supported by a grant from the Governor's Workforce Investment Act (WIA) discretionary funding and several leveraged funding resources, including local WIA formula dollars, state "Running Start" program funding for tuition, community college infrastructure and administrative support, and private industry support.

Other Involvement
The City of Seattle Human Services Department's Youth Employment Program (SYEP) is the WIA youth service provider and provides case management including assessment, tutoring and support services for the cohort of students enrolled in HCY. As mentioned above, the project is a public/private partnership including the city, the WDC, the Seattle Community College District, and an industry association on behalf of local hospitals.

Lessons Learned
The following is an overview of notable successes, challenges, and lessons learned in the predecessor youth practical nursing initiative and in the early stages of the HCY project.

Project Coordinator
The project coordinator position is key to project success. The coordinator fills a critical role in keeping the partners on the same page, troubleshooting challenges, and refining the project approach to meet the needs of both students and partners. The coordinator provides essential support to students on the educational pathway that includes high-school completion, college-level prerequisite coursework, and enrollment in post-secondary nursing and allied health programs. This pathway can otherwise be difficult to negotiate as protocols and policies within the educational systems can lead to costly repetition of courses, lack of sufficient academic support, and lack of access to complete information necessary for good education and career planning.

Case Management
Case management is also an essential project component, promoting student success through coaching, mentoring and guidance for each student as an individual.

Recruitment and Assessment
Sufficient time is needed for program recruitment, including adequate time for assessment to determine fit and identify needs, such as math and language tutoring.
Taking time to recruit thoughtfully and assess thoroughly ensures success both for recruitment and retention. Many students had low English skills that affected their academic success. Also, math grades did not prove to be a reliable indicator of skill level in many cases. Several students were earning B's in high school algebra classes, yet couldn't perform basic math functions—addition, subtraction, multiplication—when tested at the college. A thorough opening assessment of math and English skills again will identify these issues so they can be addressed from the start.

Broad Health Careers Focus
It became clear early on in the youth practical nursing initiative that a strict focus on nursing careers was too narrow. Students need multiple exit points due to interests (some students discovered that although they were interested in health care, they were not well-suited for the demands or conditions of nursing) and personal circumstances (see *family obligations* below).

Industry-Recognized Credential
The ability of students to achieve an industry-recognized credential as part of the project is a key element of success because it provides students with access to paid employment in the short run, and keeps students engaged by promoting confidence and interest.

Tutoring
Many students needed tutoring and extra support to manage rigorous coursework and the schedule demands of taking both high-school and college classes. It is also essential to make tutoring flexible and accessible to the students, meeting them at their high schools, at libraries, coffee shops, and other locations in the community.

Transportation
The project has been mindful of the challenges students face in traveling among their high schools, homes, college classes and clinical/work experience sites. These challenges can be both logistical and financial. Providing bus tokens and helping students troubleshoot ad-hoc transportation arrangements is often essential to their successful participation.

Family Obligations/Parent Involvement

Many students in this project face a variety of family obligations and circumstances that can pose challenges to their successful participation, including frequent relocation, custody deliberations, pressure to make money to contribute to family income, and limited or lack of support for academic pursuits at home.

Getting parents involved has proven to be an important element of success in many cases, and getting parents on board from the beginning is recommended. Early efforts to explain (with interpreters as needed) program requirements and expectations to parents and strategies such as a monthly parent/student support group greatly help student retention.

Language/Cultural Issues

Lack of English language skills has inhibited academic performance in some cases. In other cases, limited experience with the academic system led to lack of understanding of program requirements/expectations and how to ask for help when problems were encountered. In addition to tutoring, project partners addressed language and cultural issues by integrating basic skills into vocational training whenever possible so that language and problem-solving skills were contextualized.

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St. Louis, MO

Transitions to Work for Youth

St. Louis' program for this is the Transitions to Work for Youth program for out-of-school youth. This two year demonstration project is a unique, comprehensive youth employment program model that will effectively address the multiple barriers faced by St. Louis City youth between the ages of 16-21 who lack the skills and competencies necessary to secure and retain unsubsidized employment and long-term career advancement opportunities. The designated lead agency, Provident Counseling, Inc., is a community-based not-for-profit agency involved with youth development programs. Provident Counseling, Inc. oversees the project, provides clinical case management, job readiness training and mentoring, and coordinates consumer referrals to state of the art wraparound services and community resources, including emergency housing, legal services, substance abuse education/counseling/treatment, transportation, child care, vocational training, GED and remedial education and training. Services are provided by trained and qualified staff with experience working with urban youth and adults with multiple barriers to employment.

At the heart of the model are the wraparound case management services. All services are provided with the ultimate goal of long-term job retention. All services are family- oriented and flexible, responding to the needs of the individual youth. Caring and committed adults are a central component of the program, along with a commitment to high standards, standardized programming, effective recruitment strategies, and strong community partnerships.

The stages and components of the program are: recruitment, orientation, in-depth assessment, life skills and work readiness training. A key difference between this program and other youth training programs is the integrated and seamless delivery of the in-depth assessment, clinical case management, counseling, and substance abuse education and treatment as proven methods to help youth address key barriers to employment. This program expects to engage a pool of 320 youth to attain a final performance target of 80. Designed in the program is an incentive plan that is linked to milestone attainment. The purpose of the incentive plan is to motivate youth to complete education and work readiness activities and obtain and maintain employment.

This program is youth-driven and focused on youth development. The program is expected to help 80 youth achieve one or more of the following performance targets: Obtain employment and maintain it for 6 months; Re-enroll in high school and advance to the next grade; or, enroll in college and complete a semester. Each of these targets is considered of equal weight.

Established

The St. Louis Agency on Training and Employment (S.L.A.T.E.) and the St. Louis Mental Health Board partnered to develop the Transitions to Work youth program. The initial meetings between the St. Louis Agency on Training and Employment and the St. Louis Mental Health Board, and various other youth agencies interested in this demonstration project began in October, 2005. The program began operation in November 2006.

The program was created as young adults desire a job that will provide them with a stable income, however many urban inner-city youth face barriers to employment including both lower levels and rates of school completion, poverty, homelessness, and mental illness including substance abuse.

For the period 10/1/05 to 9/30/06 the unemployment rate for St. Louis City was 7.1% (MERIC). In addition, according to a Center for Applied Research and Technical Assistance report, about 15% of youth age 16-19 in St. Louis were not enrolled in school, over 25% were unemployed and 44% were neither employed nor actively seeking employment. For the school year 2006, St. Louis had a high school drop-out rate of 22.26%. Thus, there is a sizable portion of youth who are unemployed and lack the education and training necessary for gainful employment.

Substance abuse further diminishes chances of obtaining and maintaining employment. In fact, substance abuse – particularly marijuana use – is the most important barrier to overcome for young adults seeking employment and maintaining that employment. The 2004 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (SAMHSA) found a lifetime prevalence rate of any illegal drug use to be 59% for young adults aged 18-25; more than half of Americans in that age group used marijuana. The Missouri Department of Mental Health estimates that 378,000 Missouri adults age 18 and older, and 114,000 youth aged 12-17, need treatment (Missouri Department of Mental Health 2005).

For youth accessing St. Louis employment services, the most significant barrier to successful job placement is failure of employer administered drug tests. Given the fact youth want to improve their skills and maintain stable employment we felt it was imperative that abuse of substances – in particular, marijuana – be addressed and thus we made substance abuse education/counseling/ treatment a major component of this program.

Effectiveness
A level of judging effectiveness of the program is the extent to which youth are able to overcome barriers. We will measure consumer progress towards achieving goals on their individual service strategies through self report, observation, assessments, and questionnaires. We will track consumer participation and milestone attainment through the data base management systems of Provident Counseling, Inc., the St. Louis Mental Health Board and the St. Louis Agency on Training and Employment.

The St. Louis Agency on Training and Employment also contracted with the University of Missouri – St. Louis, Public Policy and Research Center, to do an evaluation of the Transitions to Work program. The research and evaluation will be an outcomes and process evaluation. With this evaluation there is a component for quarterly reporting as to the effectiveness of the program and will include any recommendations that are warranted for program change or revisions.

Funding
The St. Louis Agency on Training and Employment with Workforce Investment Funds and the St. Louis Mental Health Board contribute equally to underwrite the project and provide contract management and oversight.

Other Involvement
Other key partners are: the City of St. Louis Workforce Investment Board, the St. Louis Mental Heath Board, Provident Counseling Inc., the St. Louis Housing Authority (housing), St. Louis Public Schools (GED) (drop-out prevention), Youth Awareness Program (mentoring), Legal Services of Eastern Missouri (legal issues), Northside Community Center (life skills education, recruitment), Preferred Family Healthcare (Substance Abuse Education, Counseling, Treatment), City Juvenile Court (referrals), University of Missouri – St. Louis (program recommendations and evaluation). There also is a monthly stakeholders community partnership meeting where there is an exchange of information and youth resources are further developed.

Lessons Learned
Creating such program involves a commitment of funds, personnel, and time. Key components are gathering partners with experience in youth programming and that have creativity to develop a successful youth program. Key elements are a spirit of cooperation, good communication, and adaptability.

Advice for Mayors
My recommendation would be to make contact with those who have created successful youth programs. I would recommend that representatives who would be directly involved visit cities that have successful programs so that in depth information could be attained and observation occur.

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Domus' Family Advocate Model

Mayor Dan Malloy

Stamford, CT

The family advocate model places trained social services professionals in schools to provide school-day and out-of-school-time support to students who experience non-academic barriers to learning. These barriers include anything that keeps a student from focusing on school work, such as family dysfunction or stressors, physical or mental health issues, or challenges related to poverty.

Through the creation of trusting relationships, the model focuses on the strengths of youth and families and addresses the root cause of any behavior that is a barrier to success using a street outreach approach. Each family advocate (FA) is assigned a caseload of ideally 15 students and their families. The FA typically engages in the following activities:

- Connects to community resources for housing, health care, etc.
- Conducts monthly home visits for each family.
- Facilitates in-school counseling meetings and addresses situations as they arise to take advantage of teachable moments.
- Attends in-school meetings (PPTs, group counseling sessions, etc.).
- Attends out-of-school meetings (court dates, medical appointments, college interviews, housing appointments, counseling meetings, etc.).
- Plans holiday and birthday celebrations and community service projects.
- Meets daily with teachers to discuss the progress of each assigned student.
- Monitors attendance and tardiness of each assigned student and addresses any issues and root problems.
- Conducts action plan meetings with each assigned student.
- Does anything the family needs to achieve success.

The FA's are extensively trained in Cornell University's Therapeutic Crisis Intervention and other techniques to enable them to effectively support families and students in stressful situations.

The model was expanded into the City's educational program for suspended and expelled youth in February 2005 and to Stamford's two large comprehensive high schools in March 2007.

Established

The model was rolled out the year Domus, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization in Stamford, opened its first charter school in 1999. Domus based the model on outreach workers who were part of our juvenile justice center, another Domus/City of Stamford partnership that began in 1996. Domus' experiences with homeless, abused, and neglected youth taught them that academic failure often occurs not because of a lack of intelligence but because of environmental factors. It became apparent that students would need extra support to experience success in school because they were targeting the most struggling youth and families. Students were facing situations like incest, rape, eviction, death, violence, and a wide variety of social ills, so it was no surprise they could not focus on math or science while in school. These young people were on the path to dropping out or being passed on from grade to grade without academic progress - a sure recipe for increased behavioral challenges.

Effectiveness

The model measures success by tracking student behavioral incidents, family interactions with FAs and other school personnel, student academic progress, and student and family attendance at school and school functions. Family advocates also review with outside entities - police, community center staff, etc. - any information about the students to determine what is going on in their lives outside of school. The educators in all settings have had positive feedback about the model. Previously, they said they spent approximately 90 percent of their time on 10 percent of their students. With the creation of charter schools and FAs in schools, educators now know these students are being supported by trained professionals and freeing them up to focus on broader school issues. Educators can now teach to the entire class instead of dealing with students who's academic or life stress causes them to act out their frustrations in class.

FAs are responsible for dramatic attendance increases for students at the charter high school, Stamford Academy, which opened in 2004. Prior to attending Stamford Academy, students' average attendance was around 50 percent; at Stamford Academy, the average attendance exceeds 90 percent. Stamford Academy had a student graduate in June 2007 who had previously missed well over a year of school because he'd been living on the streets to survive.

Funding
Funding for the two charter schools comes primarily from the State of Connecticut's per-pupil funding allotment given to all Connecticut's charter schools and an annual Stamford Board of Education grant. The schools also court private investors such as family foundations, corporations, the local United Way, and individuals which account for approximately 10 percent of each school's budget.

Other Involvement
The Stamford Board of Education is the primary city partner in this project. Staff members and supervisors have ongoing communication with school building staff and central administration staff regarding the progress of the model and individual students. Family advocates also meet regularly with the Chief of Police and other police representatives to share information In addition, they work with community members and other Domus staff members, who work in outreach capacities and are connected with wide segments of the community, to develop a comprehensive picture of each child and family. FAs from across Domus programs meet monthly to share best practices and disseminate information about specific children and families in a confidential setting. Often families and students are involved with multiple Domus programs, and staff from across these programs can talk about approaches that have been successful in the past for each child.

Lessons Learned
School system acceptance at the top level is critical to the success of the family advocate model. Private investors who seek systemic change should be approached about investing as it's one of the most cost-effective ways to support youth in challenging situations. In addition, hiring the right people is crucial to the program's success. The FAs must be capable of building trusting relationships with students and their families and should be aware of the types of children they will be supporting. Training is also important.

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Peacekeepers Program — Mayor Edward J. Chavez

Stockton, CA

The Mission of Stockton's Peacekeepers program is to utilize Youth Outreach Workers and collaborations of government, community and faith based organizations to: 1) reduce gang related violence in Stockton and San Joaquin County; 2) reach out to gang related youth ages 13 to 18 years; and 3) provide the resources necessary for youth to abstain from a gang lifestyle and become productive members of society.

The Peacekeeper program comprehensively addresses the prevention, intervention and suppression of gang activity/violence. Weekly meetings are held with a core team to quickly assess and handle trends of gang violence, followed by monthly advisory meetings to address policies. Monthly forums are held for selected at-risk youth (gang members) and those integrating into society after being incarcerated. The carrot and stick approach is used at these forums, with law enforcement as the stick where they explain consequences, and the Youth Outreach Workers as the carrot offering services.

The Peacekeeper Youth Outreach Workers are street-wise young men. Currently four outreach workers are all male ex-gang members, representing diverse cultures in Stockton. With Stockton's population of 289,789, the goal is to rebuild the comprehensive program to where it was in the 1990's by adding more outreach workers, including females. On a daily basis, an Outreach Worker, Police School Resource Officer and Probation Officer On Campus are assigned to work with the Assistant Principal of each High School. Intervention of at-risk youth prevents fights and stops retaliation. Certain gang members on campuses are not able to relate to the officers but communicate very openly with the Outreach Workers who become mentors.

Interventions occur when the Outreach Workers obtain referrals and clients from the collaborating organizations. For instance when a homicide occurs the Outreach Workers respond to the hospital and victim's family homes. They are able to establish a rapport due to their past experiences and talk with family members to prevent the retaliation which is the norm in the gang life style. The trust that is gained prompts gang members or their families to call Outreach Workers day or night when intervention is most needed. The Outreach Workers are then able to guide the gang members in avoiding a brewing conflict without resorting to violence. These contacts then lead to helping the gang member leave the gang lifestyle.

The Outreach Workers also act as a liaison for the youth to the community and faith-based organizations. The outreach workers are trained in conflict resolution, mediation, community organizing, mentoring, and case management. They work in neighborhood settings wherever young people at risk of violence are found; including schools, parks, street corners, and apartment complexes.

Established

Stockton's Peacekeeper Program was modeled after Boston's Ceasefire Program and has been in place since 1998. It has played a key role in local efforts to reduce gang homicides from a high in 1997 of twenty-two, to just two in 1998 (a 91 percent decrease). The next five years resulted in five or less homicides each year. With the positive results came complacency and a loss of funding, similar to what occurred in Boston, which reduced the outreach workers to one position and no coordinator. Suppression efforts continued but without the comprehensive program.

In 2006, crime had risen and Mayor Chavez Blue Ribbon Crime Prevention Task Force recommended the reinvigoration of the program. By March 2007, the City of Stockton experienced seven gang related homicides out of eleven total homicides (64 percent).

With funding from the City's General Fund and grants, the Mayor and City Council decided to employ four youth outreach workers and add the program management to the duties of a Police Lieutenant who was working directly for Stockton's Mayor and City Manager. Previously the program had been under the direction of the City's Parks and Recreation Department, and prior to that, by the coordinator working out of the San Joaquin County Executive Offices.

Since the reinvigoration of the program in March 2007, no gang related homicides have occurred, bringing the gang related homicide rate from 64 percent to 39 percent for the year.

Effectiveness

It is based on the ability to keep gang related homicides from rising which is the best standardized method to calculate gang activity.

Funding
Three Outreach workers and one part-time Program Manager are funded by the City's General Fund Budget and three Outreach Workers are funded through grants. Funding is received through the US Department of Justice's (formerly Local Law Enforcement Block Grant - LLEBG) Justice Assistant Grant, California Wellness Foundation, the California Juvenile Accountability Block Grant, and the Federal Project Safe Neighborhoods Grant.

Other Involvement
The Peacekeeper program involves a collaboration of over 50 agencies and over 175 individuals from criminal justice agencies, government providers, community and faith based organizations that meet monthly. The Stockton Police, Stockton Unified School District Police, San Joaquin County Sheriff's Department, San Joaquin County Probation Department, State Youth Parole, FBI, ATF, US Attorney, local District Attorney and City Attorney attend a monthly forum to demonstrate a unified voice to warn pre-selected gang members that they have one of two choices: 1) continue their lifestyle as a gang member and be arrested; or 2) choose to obtain the intervention and prevention services offered through the Outreach Workers.

The Outreach Workers then connect the gang members to various programs operated by city, county, community and faith based organizations offered for recreation, job training and jobs, counseling, education, tattoo removal, etc.

On a weekly basis the Peacekeeper Core Team consisting of School District Police Officers, the Stockton Police School Resource Officers, the Probations Officers on Campus and the Outreach Workers meet to discuss issues, especially gang members, school sites or locations in the City where suppression and intervention efforts should be deployed. When complaints come in, or a gang related violent crime occurs in a neighborhood, the police step up suppression efforts in that area and the Outreach Workers contact gang member victims, their families and the neighborhood to offer their services.

The Peacekeeper Program supports programs like El Joven Noble offered at Stagg High School, which provides a specialized training class for the top 25 Latino gang members and their associates. This program taught by ex-gang members is able to keep the students interested and attending school as it shows these students they have a chance in life as long as they don't drop out of school.

Another program supported is an anti-bullying program of a faith-based organization called Point Break which utilizes the "Challenge Day" concept (featured on Oprah Winfrey) where counselors go into a school and through the four hour program are able to engage students to open up to one another and see things from the other's perspective. Teachers have noted a change in attitude of participants and decrease in conflicts.

Advice for Mayors
One challenge is having the support from the top administrators (Mayor, City Manager, Police Chief, County Administrator, and Board of Supervisors). The Program Manager's biggest challenge is building strong relationships, especially between law enforcement and Outreach Workers. Therefore, it is strongly suggested that someone be selected with a law enforcement background who can easily relate. Otherwise the normal barriers that occur between law enforcement and others are hard to break down. By putting the program under the Mayor and City Manager's offices, the priority of the program was heightened. Experience has shown the Outreach Worker component should not be under the direct management of the Police Department as gang members are naturally apprehensive that anyone working directly for the Police would only be concerned with arresting gang members. However, with the program under someone with police experience yet assigned to the Mayor and/or City Manager, most people including police personnel, school officials and gang members are more apt to accept the Outreach Workers and not be as skeptical of them.

A good tool is to formally hold an introductory meeting of the core Peacekeeper team with the school Principal and Assistant Principal to introduce the team and especially the Outreach Workers to the staff so they can explain their backgrounds. This breaks the ice and the team can develop their working relationship from there. This coupled with monthly Advisory meetings and weekly e-mail updates promoting the successes slowly develops the support of the majority. Similar meetings need to occur with all law enforcement personnel. Over time the proven effectiveness of maintaining calm in the community combined with relationships built, overshadows the normal initial skepticism experienced throughout the nation with similar type of programs.

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Helping Youth Pursue Excellence

Mayor Joseph McElveen

Sumter, SC

The City of Sumter is partnering with Jehovah Baptist Church (M.H. Newton Family Life Center), Trinity Baptist Church, and Sumter School District #17 to open two new after school programs. The City of Sumter will be working with the faith-based community to expand their existing after-school programs. The City is working with these churches by allowing them to expand their programs into the city's Harvesting Opportunity to Promote Empowerment (HOPE) Centers. Sumter School District #17 is the city school district in a county of over 110,000 people with a high population of low income and below poverty level families. Sumter is designated by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control as medically underserved due to a health professional shortage, high teen pregnancy area, and fast growing area of HIV positive clients. Sumter has a high rate of alcohol and drug abuse problems. Sumter County has had a 21 percent increase in violent or serious juvenile cases from 2004-2005. The City of Sumter in partnering with the faith-based community, the city school district, and the Sumter/Lee Career Readiness System plans to reverse this trend through a broad array of services. The program will be known as "Helping Youth Pursue Excellence", or HYPE. The motto of the program is "Determined to make a difference", and together we will.

Established

HYPE began in August 2002. It was started at the M.H. Newton Family Enrichment Center with a mission to improve student academic performance and reduce the risk-taking behaviors.

Effectiveness

HYPE tracks students' report card scores, remediation teacher ratings, pre and post test data from software-generated reports by the director and teachers, and from information provided by parents.

Funding

The programs are funded by a 21st Century Learning Century Grant, from the South Carolina Department of Education, dinner food is provided by the Harvest Hope Food Bank, and support of The Sumter Packaging Company, The Orr Group, Pilgrims Pride Corp, and the Jones Chevrolet Dealership, as well as support from sponsoring churches, Jehovah and Trinity Missionary Baptist Churches.

Other Involvement

The Sumter Police Department is involved by providing crime prevention and gang prevention workshops. The program is successful because it involves all areas of the community; Government, Faith, Business, and the Private Sector.

Lessons Learned

All parties have to come together and work as one body to address the needs of young people. If everyone does just a little, a lot can be done. "A whole lot of hands make the load light".

Advice for Mayors

Get out into the community and see what's being done and bring all parties that are working towards the same goal together and see how each can make the other better.

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Truancy Abatement Program

Mayor Otto Lee

Sunnyvale, CA

The Truancy Abatement Program was established as a collaborative effort between the Sunnyvale Department of Public Safety, the Fremont Union High School District, the Santa Clara County Juvenile Probation Department, and the Santa Clara County District Attorney's office.

The program provides students who are not attending school regularly the resources they need to get back on track. It demonstrates to students that these agencies are there to help and should be used as a resource; not just a mechanism to punish them. It also provides an opportunity to meet with the parents of these youth and provide them with resources that will keep them informed on the child's education and attendance at school.

Established

The program was created in 2005 to combat the growing number of truants and high school dropouts at Fremont High School in Sunnyvale, California. The program was also an opportunity for the agencies involved to form an alliance dedicated and committed to the education of the youth in the city.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness is based upon statistics from previous years analyzing unexcused absences, tardiness to class, cutting of class, and gradation percentages. Another measurement is the overall tone and atmosphere on the campus while class is in session.

Funding

Monthly meetings are held at the Sunnyvale Department of Public Safety at no cost to any of the stakeholders. The officer assigned to this meeting is a Neighborhood Resource Officer which is a budgeted position and attends as part of his/her normal assignment on regular work hours. The Juvenile Probation Officer is also a regularly staffed position and is assigned as part of his/her normal work hours, budgeted through the Santa Clara County Probation Department. The Deputy District Attorney is a Santa Clara County employee and is budgeted through the County, and attends as part of their regular work assignment. The Fremont High School employees (Assistant Principal, Family Liaison Officer, Counselor, and District Registered Nurse) are budgeted through the Fremont Union High School District and attend as part of their regular work assignment.

Other Involvement

The program works in conjunction with the Columbia Neighborhood Center. This center is a collaboration between the Sunnyvale School District and the city of Sunnyvale as wells as non-profit organizations, businesses, community members and others. The Center coordinates all of these entities to provide a connected network of services and programs in the area of: Community Education, Mental Health Services, Health Care, Recreation, and Youth and Neighborhood Safety. A significant portion of the population served is Spanish speaking.

Lessons Learned

The key is to have an open flow of communication between all of the stakeholders and a consistent support of the agreed upon goals and outcomes. The stakeholders must be passionate about their mission.

Advice for Mayors

The implementation and support of any program is heavily determined by the level of interest within the School District administration. The commitment for the creation, replacement, or modification of a program must be from the top down and fully supported by all parties involved.

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Toledo Truancy Drop-off Center

Mayor Carleton S. Finkbeiner

Toledo, OH

A collaboration of the Toledo Police Department, Toledo Public Schools, and two local agencies - The Connecting Point and Parents Helping Parents - worked together as partners to develop a Toledo Lucas County Truancy Drop-off Center to assist the Toledo Police Department with the multitude of truancy cases that occur on a daily basis. The Truancy Drop-off Center, which provided a linkage with the schools, offered the city's police officers a service to take students to a location alternative to Juvenile Court where their violations would be processed and their parents would be consulted concerning the unruly behavior and truancy of their children. The guardian was responsible for picking up the child and working with a Parents Helping Parents social worker to assess the problem and find the right referrals.

Established

The Truancy Drop-off Center first opened its doors February 2005 with the intention of reducing the rate of truancy in the City of Toledo. Before the center's creation, truants were either taken home to their guardian or, in the case of the guardian working they were taken to detention at the Lucas County Juvenile Court to wait for the guardian to pick them up. Parents and truants were not counseled or referred by local family supporting agencies unless personally sought.

Effectiveness

During its existence, the Drop-off Center processed more than 700 cases, initiated citywide truancy sweeps, and played a major role in the fight against truancy. Withdrawal (non drop out) rates significantly declined.

Funding

The Truancy Drop-off Center was financed $90,000 from a $2.7 million Safe Schools/Healthy Students federal grant awarded to Toledo Public Schools in 2000. Matching funds were also received from the City of Toledo's Youth Commission, the Juvenile Center, the University of Toledo, and the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council.

Other Involvement

Toledo Public Schools, which is the primary agency to notice a student's absence, took care of record management, intervention, and follow-up procedures. The Toledo Police Department was called daily to investigate, apprehend, and arrest loitering youth and youth engaged in criminal activity during school hours. The Toledo Police Department also conducted routine truancy sweeps throughout the school year focusing mainly on places like malls, neighborhoods, and take-out restaurants. The Connecting Point, which is a non-profit community agency, coordinated the activities of the Truancy Drop-off Center. Parents Helping Parents, which is a non-profit community organization, addressed the needs of parents by offering forums and workshops; and meeting with them as they came to pick up their truant youth from the center. Officers from the schools rotated to the center, and volunteers from Connecting Point and Parents Helping Parents worked at the center during its daily hours.

Lessons Learned

An apparent observation made by local agency, Connecting Point, was that children were getting lost in the bureaucracy when they, as at-risk students, were not being addressed as truants in the system. With the number of children missing from school and no direct link between the schools and the juvenile court, it would take a lot of time to get them back where they belong. The police involvement and officer support helped significantly. Having a rotating officer from the schools monitor the center offers a familiarity for the juveniles, which in turn results in a more positive outlook on authority rather than negative. In addition, the officers also have familiarity with at-risk youth and are more experienced to communicate with them.

Advice for Mayors

Having the collaboration of the city's schools, the police department, the courts, and the public agencies makes a big difference with coordination and communication to solve the main problem: getting the kids back to school. Having a center where police officers can easily place truants into the hands of an agency, specifically for truants, not only keeps the children safe, but also gets the parents involved in the problem. The major problem with the Toledo Lucas County Truancy Center, besides lack of funding, was that more than one site was necessary. Officers from all districts were expected to drive out of their own districts to drop the children off ultimately cutting their patrol time short.

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Trenton, NJ

In November 2004, Mayor Douglas Palmer and Police Director Joseph Santiago identified a need for a position with the full authority of Mayor Palmer to coordinate and implement pro-active programs to benefit the at-risk youth population of the City of Trenton and partner with all State, County, and City resources to impact the future of such youth in a positive and sustainable manner and re-direct their lives for a successful future. Mayor Palmer then hired Barry J. Colicelli, a retired Captain of the Newark, N.J. Police Department to carry out his vision and develop proactive collaborations.

The Office encompasses law enforcement and restorative social service programs, including the Truancy Reduction and Prevention Program (TRAPP) and YouthStat initiative.

Established

YouthStat was established in February 2005, as a process to examine criminally adjudicated youth in the Greater Trenton Area, as well as city, county, state and private systems, programs and agencies tasked with the proper application of preventative programs and interventions for these young people.

Combating juvenile crime, street gang involvement, and providing direction for At-Risk Youth is a top priority for the City of Trenton. The Mayor and Police Director Santiago also recognized the fact that no single person or agency can address all the factors that contribute to juvenile crime and violence. Thus, such an effort must include the support and active participation of key stakeholders in the fields of Law Enforcement, education, social services, recreation, corrections, the family court, and faith based organizations.

The Youthstat study's 120 children were identified as either:

Level 1: Truant or Runaway
Level 2: No 1st or 2nd degree crime, no more than 2 status offenses
Level 3: Any 1st degree crime, 2 or more 2nd degree crimes
Level 4: Gang Membership, Firearms, 1st degree violent crime

This study is on-going and a Youthstat meeting takes place every Friday at 1:30pm in the Trenton Police Headquarters. All agencies and representatives attend and discuss various issues related to the At Risk Youth identified.

Truancy Reduction and Prevention Program (TRAPP) was implemented in March 2006 as a collaboration between the Mayors Office of Anti-Gang Initiatives, Trenton Police Department and Trenton School District to stem the tide of Truant and At Risk Youth at the lowest level. Mayor Palmer pointed out that "Children who are not in school when they should be have one foot in trouble and the other on a slippery slope".

TRAPP is unique in that it has created a separate and distinct program to not only locate and identify Truants and At-Risk Youth but to conduct extensive behavioral health and family assessments identifying the true cause for their absence and delinquent behavior.

Through the TRAPP program during its pilot period of March 2006 to June 2006, 937 Truants were picked up by the patrol vehicle and brought to the Truancy Center , where they were given a complete psycho-social evaluation to help identify root causes in their behavior . A tracking file was created for further monitoring during the remainder of the year and parents were mandated to respond to the center, where parents were evaluated with their children to determine any other causal factors in the student's home environment.

The result was 19 repeat truants out of the 637 who were brought to the center.

One of the most important measures of the impact of this truancy reduction model was a 33 percent reduction in index crime in the City of Trenton during the hours of operation. The full school year of September 2006 to June 2007 resulted in 930 students picked up and 105 students who repeated as truants. The crime analysis was not available at this writing.
The median age of the truant students was 15 and the median grade level was first year high school – a significant impact on the projected drop out rate.

The services received had a direct and significant impact on the students and families served and is considered a model program by the State Attorney General, and other school districts .

Funding
Another key characteristic of the TRAPP program, Youthstat, and other components of the Mayor's Office of Anti-Gang Initiatives and Youth Development, which is a common denominator for all the programs described, is that these were created and implemented with NO NEW APPROPRIATIONS OR FUNDING. They were formulated through the Mayor's leadership and re-direction of funds and personnel to have a positive impact on at - risk youth .

Advice for Mayors
Mayor Palmer's leadership and teamwork with Police Director Santiago, Trenton Schools Superintendent Lofton and Capt. Barry J. Colicelli (Ret.) translated into forging partnerships that are both in place on an ongoing basis and positioned to create a future of hope for those children considered at risk.

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Tuscan Human Services Plan

Mayor Robert Walkup

Tuscan, AZ

Human Service programs are essential to the growth and vitality of a community. The City of Tucson strongly believes that investing in the delivery of these services promotes a healthy and safe environment. The City's Human Services Plan articulates the city's strategies for this investment. The strategic plan groups human services into four categories, defines city initiatives, identifies projected funding that will be distributed to local agencies over a two-year period, includes community stakeholder input, and Mayor and Council adopted priorities for funding.

The Plan includes recommendations for funding from the Human Services Planning committee who reviews, rates and ranks proposals based on the effectiveness, community need, and projected outcomes. The chart shows projects funded for fiscal years 2007 and 2008 that provide services to at-risk youth and decrease high school drop out rates.

Agency Name	Project Name	2-Year Funding	Activity
Youth On Their Own	Special Needs	$80,000	• Increases graduation rates among homeless youth
Big Brothers Big Sisters	One-to-One Mentoring	$60,000	• Promotes high school retention • Increases graduation rates • Proactively prevents gang development
Pima Prevention Partnership	Teen Court	$60,000	• Promotes high school retention • Increases graduation rates • Improves Job Readiness • Proactively prevents gang development
Boys & Girls Club	SMART Moves	$60,000	• Provides safe leisure time choices • Develops increased resiliency & self esteem • Develops strategies for risky behaviors
Boys & Girls Club	Ultimate Journey	$60,000	• Develops increased resiliency & self esteem • Promotes a sense of belonging, competence & usefulness
Wingspan	Growing Up Proud and Strong	$62,000	• Develops increased resiliency & self esteem • Provides safe & secure environment for lesbian, gay, bisexual & transgender youth to socialize
Life Directions	Life Directions Peer Motivation	$65,000	• Promotes high school retention rates • Increases graduation rates • Proactively prevents gang development • Combats gang violence
Metropolitan Education Commission	Academy Without Walls	$60,000	• Promotes high school retention rates • Increases graduation rates • Improves job readiness
Pima Community College	GED Now!	$45,021	• Promotes high school retention rates • Increases graduation rates
Pima Prevention Partnership	Teen Court Youth Leaders	$71,896	• Promotes high school retention rates • Increases graduation rates • Improves job readiness • Proactively prevents gang development
Tucson Unified School District	Exploring Our Future	$130,000	• Provides successful experiences in Science for youth to explore as possible profession
Tucson Youth Development	School Plus Jobs	$647,956	• Provides job training & counseling to assist youth in obtaining & retaining employment • Prepares youth for the job market after high school
VOICES	After School Magazine Project	$146,000	• Promotes high school retention rates • Increases graduation rates • Improves job readiness
Wingspan	A Step Up	$66,000	• Promotes high school retention and graduation rates

Effectiveness

The effectiveness of each program is measured utilizing quarterly performance reports submitted to the City of Tucson by the agency that received the funding.

Funding

Tuscan's Human Services Plan is funded by entitlements to the City of Tucson from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and Emergency Shelter Grant Program (ESGP), combined with City General Fund. Funding from state and federal sources, private donations and foundations are leveraged to help implement the programs.

Youth Intervention Project

Mayor Kathy Taylor

Tulsa, OK

The Tulsa Youth Intervention Project (YIP) is a $400,000 gang intervention program that serves Tulsa's gang involved youth. The program focuses on three target areas in the city that are at-risk areas for gang involvement. The program has served 300 high or moderate intense cases in its first full year of operation. It features four experienced gang outreach workers, working around the clock to provide one on one intervention with gang involved youth and their families. YIP also has a group mentoring component for middle school children that attend at-risk schools located in one of the target areas. A team of mentoring professionals, alternative education experts, and members of the community work to provide mentoring and prevention services in the schools. Finally, the program has a job readiness component that addresses the issue of socioeconomics, matched with a dropout recovery program that will allow youth in YIP a chance to receive their GED or high school diploma.

Established

The program was created in April 2006 in response to rising gang related homicides- the equivalent of 20 percent of all Tulsa homicides. The program was designed to primarily address the issue of deep gang involvement, but extended to include dropout prevention and job readiness. Through data collection, YIP found that social isolation and poverty are key factors contributing to gang involvement. These data found that 50 percent of the youth in the program were dropouts and 30 percent were fathers or mothers.

Effectiveness

The program has monthly statistical reviews and quarterly in-depth evaluations. Measurements include surveys to families, teachers, counselors, and outreach workers. The program also measures success by school attendance, GED completion and job placement, employment retention rates, and most importantly, the level of gang involvement. The service team meets weekly and reports to the Gang Coordination Committee monthly. They report to a Steering Committee chaired by the Mayor and U.S. Attorney quarterly.

Funding

The program is funded through the Oklahoma Office of Juvenile Affairs and Workforce Tulsa. The City of Tulsa provides in-kind contributions and technical support through the Mayor's Office and the Police Department.

Other Involvement

The Mayor's Office has played a central role in the expansion of YIP in conjunction with the Community Service Council, United States Attorney's Office, Tulsa County Juvenile Bureau, Tulsa Police Department, and the Office of Juvenile Affairs. This multi-agency system has contributed to the overall success of the project bringing together different agencies that play a role in Tulsa's youth. The role of the community has been vital as gang violence continues to threaten the vitality neighborhoods. YIP has sponsored a number of community events in the target areas, allowing active community engagement through the referral and planning processes. Other groups, such as the North Tulsa Community Coalition, have emerged from YIP creating community-based projects that support the overall program.

Lessons Learned

The most crucial lesson learned is the importance of building a coalition of support to execute a program of this magnitude. Mayors must use the Office of the Mayor to convene a coalition that should include agencies both inside and outside the scope of city government to ensure long term sustainability. In other words, workforce professionals, social service providers, alternative education/juvenile justice experts, and perhaps most importantly, the community should collaborate from the beginning. A small to medium sized, well-funded program that shows results, and can be expanded is preferable to a large, under-funded, and difficult to manage program.

Advice for Mayors

The most important part of the equation is the collaborative partnerships between all stakeholders. Municipal budgets are always limited and resources are subjective, so it is important to share the financial support of this kind of program. Always engage the community at large in the planning process and target a specific population. Use specific criteria including poverty statistics, number of juvenile offenders residing in certain areas, number of serious/violent offenders, and number of single female headed households to guide your research. A program like this is designed to absorb the most difficult youth, the gang involved young offender, thereby making the greatest impact on juvenile crime.

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Northwood Youth Empowerment Center — Mayor Lois Frankel

West Palm Beach, FL

West Palm Beach, like many urban cities nationwide, is experiencing an escalation of youth gun violence. The City of West Palm Beach realized that youth violence must be addressed in a comprehensive and systematic way and developed a county-wide effort recommended by the Palm Beach County Criminal Justice Commission's Youth Violence Prevention Project Steering Committee. Their three-pronged approach recommended comprehensive law-enforcement efforts that could respond to crime using a multi-agency task force, opening centers designed to provide re-entry programs to convicted felons and providing Youth Empowerment Centers that offer area youth, ages 12-19 years, a safe place for their exclusive use.

The first Youth Empowerment Center in West Palm Beach opened in the heart of the area designated by the Criminal Justice Commission as the home neighborhood of a high percentage of teens who have been involved in escalating violence The Northwood Youth Empowerment Center (YEC) is a facility designed to offer area youth ages 12-19 years a safe place to learn life skills, job preparedness, career development, mentoring, technical skills development and recreation. The programs are developed or endorsed by a teen council which gives input in the programs and suggestions for increasing participation. Recreational activities offer opportunities for organized team play which is overseen by a coach and recreation staff. Other "rewards" for participation in the various personal development and career/job readiness programs include trips to area attractions, Friday barbecues, pizza parties and movie tickets.

Established

The Palm Beach County Criminal Justice Commission (CJC) conducted a study to identify areas where the community could creatively combat increasing youth violent crime. In June 2006, the CJC proposed The Youth Violent Prevention Project, recommending the West Palm Beach and four neighboring cities create empowerment programs specific to meet the needs of their area youth as one of three components to address violent crime. The Northwood YEC opened in February 2007.

Effectiveness

Teens register for the program with parent or guardian approval. The program monitors grades and progress in school, comprehensive achievement test scores, school attendance and participation in activities. Providers are required to report monthly on various performance measures identified at the start of the contract term. Performance measures include target number of participants, attendance, program completion, demographic data, grades in school, graduation numbers and job training and placement data. Additionally, recreation staff provides monthly reports on daily attendance, recreation program participation and educational program enrollment. The ideal benchmark is an 80 percent grade advancement success rate but will not be measured until the end of the upcoming school year. Other success indicators include number of job placements and job retention data on those teens placed in jobs.

Funding

Palm Beach County provides grants to the five cities participating in the program. They have committed $2 million per year for three years. West Palm Beach received a first year grant of $660,000. The county-grant funds general operating expenses, equipment, a 40-passenger bus and driver, contracts to independent program providers and a full time police officer. West Palm Beach contributed an additional $1 million to teen programs throughout the city with approximately $800,000 going to youth empowerment centers. A second center is expected to be fully operational during the 2007- 2008 school year.

Other Involvement

The Parks and Recreation Department serves as lead department, with recreation professionals operating the center. Working with the West Palm Beach Police Department and WPB Police Athletic League, the centers have incorporated elements related to crime prevention and deterrence to address the scope of work requested by the CJC. Additionally, the formation of a Northwood Youth Empowerment Center Teen Council has helped define the needs and wants of the teens in the community. The Council meets bi-monthly for input into facility operations and teen chats in order to keep the dialog open and continue to address the changing needs of the teen community.

Other city departments include MIS, TV Production, PIOs and the Mayor's Office, which all provide support to Parks and Recreation to operate the YEC. Police offer gang prevention and crime awareness programs as well as mentoring and youth support. The other city departments provide both volunteer support and technical assistance to operate the facility. Aside from the county, a variety of private and non-profit program providers, including the area Boys and Girls Club, offer programs at the center in the area of job readiness, computer skills development, audio/video production, community outreach, substance abuse and violence prevention.

Lessons Learned

A center like this is an effective strategy to helping at-risk youth. In less than 6 months the center had more than 165 registered members and an average daily summer attendance of 55-65 teens. Traditional recreation programs tend to be geared toward elementary school aged children and leave middle and high school students to fend for themselves if they have working parents. This program works as a combined diversionary, crime-prevention and education program that increases job readiness in teens and helps keep them off the street. The center is open until 9 p.m. weekdays and 11 p.m. weekends.

Advice for Mayors

It is important to start with a teen council for program development. The program must be embraced and supported by the youth who use it. Teens are creative, resourceful and appreciate when their opinions are valued. It's also important to have a police presence in a programmatic role, rather than enforcement role - it results in greater trust of law enforcement. In addition, be sure to add a recreation component and rewards like trips to area attractions, movies, etc and focus on job placement and training, use existing community resources. A majority of the teens said they wanted jobs that paid a "good" wage, not minimum wage.

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Wichita Police "Camp Awareness" For Kids

Mayor Carl Brewer

Wichita, KS

The Wichita Police Department has successfully partnered with the Boy Scouts of America in a unique mentorship program that matches at-risk youth boys, ages 6-11 years, who are not currently involved in any scouting programs in a day camp program. The officers and military personnel, who serve as staff, spend the first three days together participating in activities such as swimming, fishing, shooting range, field games, etc. During this time, the officers and military personnel are dressed in civilian clothes. This time together builds relationships among the officers and campers. The final event of the four-day camp is to reveal the professional identities of the staff. When the young boys see the officers and military personnel in uniform drive into camp with lights and sirens, they realize that the men and women they have built a relationship with during the past four days are police officers and military personnel. They also realize that the negative outlook they may have had or apprehension towards police officers or soldiers is no longer valid.

Established

In the early 1990's Camp Awareness was created to reach at-risk youth boys who were not currently involved in a positive program. Camp Awareness has two main objectives: 1) match at-risk youth boys, ages 6-11 years, who are not currently involved in any Boy Scout programs in a day camp setting with police officers to build relationships and break down barriers**;** and 2) encourage boys to join a neighborhood Boy Scout troop to continue the positive activities that began at camp.

Effectiveness

The effectiveness of Camp Awareness is measured in two ways: 1) the percentage of boys who join Boy Scouts after camp has completed (this program has retained over 60 percent for at least one year following camp); and 2) families complete a survey to evaluate program goals.

Funding

The United Way of the Plains provides all funding for Camp Awareness. This funding allows for each boy to attend camp, which includes transportation, food and activities. There are no costs to the families. Once camp is completed, the United Way covers the first year of expenses required for a boy to be involved in a scout troop.

Lessons Learned

It is important to maintain the commitment to the program in order to serve future generations.

Advice for Mayors

Staff and volunteer planning is critical including resource management when developing a community partner for the project.

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Safe and Secure Seminar

Mayor Carl Brewer

Wichita, KS

On June 5, 2007, the first of a series of meetings were held with three churches. After a few meetings, two additional churches were added. The goal of Faith-Based Initiative was to partner with churches in the community as another way to address violence, to help citizen's effect change in their neighborhoods, and to educate citizens on the various ways that crime or suspicious activities can be reported. The churches that partnered in seminars included: St. Mark United Methodist Church, Tabernacle Baptist Church, Dellrose United Methodist Church, Greater New Testament Baptist Church and Fairmount United Church of Christ. The churches allowed law enforcement into their services on Sunday mornings to give gang education presentations. This evolved into the Safe and Secure Seminar: A Faith-Based Response to Community Violence in which the churches involved were reinforced as an important way to reach citizens.

Established

The initiative was developed in the second quarter of 2007 as a venue for the local churches to help members of the community understand the street gang lifestyle, and to demonstrate the various programs that are offered through the faith-based community. Another component of the program was to reach out to as many citizens as possible to educate on the importance of being involved in what happening in neighborhood, and to show that while law enforcement is dedicated to improving quality of life issues within neighborhoods, it takes involvement of citizens, and other agencies to work together to make permanent changes in neighborhoods.

Effectiveness

The program's success was based on the three presentations given to church congregations on Sunday mornings. Additionally, more than 200 people attended the Safe and Secure Seminar: A Faith-Based Response to Community Violence. These citizens were educated on various topics involving gangs and violence within the community, the resources that are available to them, and the things that can be done to make neighborhoods more secure. Citizens were challenged to becoming involved in forming Neighborhood Watches and participating in National Night Out (NNO) in August 2007; thirty-six citizens committed to participate. Since the seminar, requests have been made to give more presentations to citizen groups throughout the community about violence. The program involved collaboration with the YWCA and the Wichita Sedgwick County Weed and Seed project.

Funding

Minor printing costs and officers' salaries are absorbed into the departmental budget.

Other Involvement

None.

Lessons Learned

The faith-based organizations may not match the skills of a police department's ability to generate publicity for such an event. Plan early to get publicity using police resources.

Advice for Mayors

Those planning such an event or series of events should plan the series first rather than holding each individual event and allowing the rest to develop on an ad hoc basis.

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The Meth Kids Initiative Task Force is a collaboration of area agencies and private business that meet to discuss the impact of children exposed to methamphetamine clandestine labs. The project, while working together to successfully prosecute those involved with those labs while protecting children found in those environments. The group works closely with statewide partnership named the Kansas Alliance for Drug Endangered Children. The Wichita Police Department actively participates in both. Partners dedicated to the Meth Kids Initiative Task Force include Sedgwick County Sheriff Office, Sedgwick County Emergency Medical Services, Sedgwick County District Attorneys Office, Social and Rehabilitation Services, Wichita Children's Home, area hospitals, the Sedgwick County Regional Forensic Science Center, United States Department of Justice Drug Enforcement Administration, Kansas
Bureau of Investigation, & the Wichita and Sedgwick County Fire Departments who work closely together to protect children in the surrounding area by providing follow up care inclusive of:
1) Immediately removing the child by law enforcement from the dangerous environments found within methamphetamine, clandestine labs & placing them in the appropriate temporary state custody as Children in Need of Care;
2) Law enforcement immediately taking all exposed children living in those environments, to area hospital, who provide medical care while recovering physical evidence at no cost to those law enforcement agencies;
3) Analysis of the physical evidence obtained by the hospitals in these cases by the Sedgwick County Regional Forensic Science Center at no cost to those involved in the partnership ensuring successful criminal prosecution;
4) Assigning an experienced law enforcement investigator to follow up the initial reports and present their findings to the Sedgwick County District Attorneys Office for prosecution;
5) Law enforcement investigator & supervision working with SRS & the Sedgwick County District Attorneys Office to review the criminal & separate CINC case in order to successfully prosecute those involved while ensuring the child's best interest are accomplished; and
6) Ensuring appropriate follow up care for the child by SRS after they are removed from the clandestine lab. Written protocols will soon be formalized in a Memorandum of Understanding, signed by participating agencies, that details agency's responsibilities achieving the overall objectives mentioned above.

Established
The Sedgwick County Meth Kids Initiative Task Force was formed to successfully prosecute those involved with methamphetamine labs located in structures inhabited by children in addition to protecting the children who have been exposed. Members of the task force also ensure the child's best interest is the priority after they have been removed from the dangerous environment. The partnership is successful as partners communicate with one another to accomplish objectives stated above. The department is also a member of the Kansas Alliance for Drug Endangered Children, which is a statewide partnership.

Effectiveness
The programs effectiveness is measured by the number of children taken to participating hospitals for treatment under the agreed protocols.

Funding
Currently there is no funding stream dedicated to the Meth Kids Initiative Task Force. All participating agencies donate services to the overall objectives as directed in the draft Memorandum of Understanding yet to be ratified. Donations of services include law enforcement, medical personnel, analytical & scientific processing of evidence, CINC follow up, and any subsequent court actions either criminal or civil. The program is more partnerships and coordinated efforts from those involved in the successful prosecution of those responsible for methamphetamine clandestine labs while protecting children found in those environments.

Other Involvement
The other agencies involved are outlined in paragraph one above.

Lessons Learned
State laws regulating the sale of over-the-counter medications and other products used to make methamphetamine may reduce future need for the program. Nonetheless, if this program is implemented counseling services for the children are important.

Advice for Mayors
Careful planning and coordination with other agencies is essential. Ongoing communication with these agencies on a regular and sustained basis is crucial to overall success.

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Planeview Activities Camp for Kids

The Planeview Activity Camp for Kids (PACK) was created in 2002 as a way to reduce juvenile crime during the summer. Since then, juvenile crimes such as vandalism, larceny and graffiti in the Planeview area are down by 18-20%. The camp, which runs for 8 weeks each summer, is the result of a survey of residents in the area who felt the children in Planeview lacked positive things to do during summer break from school. In creating PACK, the Wichita Police Department teamed up with the Parks Department, the neighborhood education department in the City Manager's Office, neighborhood groups and businesses to develop the program.

Established
In late 2001 and early 2002, there were a series of shootings and homicides in the Planeview Neighborhood. This culminated in a shooting at two Park Department employees in January 2002 as they were removing graffiti in the local park. Because of this, the citizens in Planeview demanded the Police Department step up their efforts to curb this type of activity. The Police Department, realizing this was a neighborhood issue, specific to Planeview, surveyed 500 citizens in the area to learn more about their specific concerns. An overwhelming number of citizens felt the biggest problem was the lack of activities for juveniles. The Police Department met with representatives of the local schools and other city departments and decided to start the Planeview Activity Camp for Kids (P.A.C.K.), in 2002.

Since that first year when 78 young people attended PACK, it has blossomed into a very successful project to help children who are at risk for gang violence, and who come from families with limited means get involved in constructive and fun things each summer. PACK was instrumental in helping the International Association of Chiefs of Police to award the Wichita Police Department the Webber-Seavey award in 2003. In 2007, the Planeview Activity Camp for Kids had 135 neighborhood kids involved in the camp, with a waiting list for the rest of the kids who wanted to attend. There were also over sixty parents in attendance at the end-of-camp party. In addition, five past PACK kids, who are now too old to enroll, volunteered their time to help supervise the camp attendees.

Effectiveness
The effectiveness of the P.A.C.K. program is measured by the amount of burglaries, larcenies, vandalisms, and graffiti (common juvenile crimes) that occur within the Planeview neighborhood, during the 8-week program. Between 2002-2006, the program has resulted in a 20 percent decrease in the juvenile crime statistics.

Funding
The program was originally financed entirely by grants and community support. While the program now receives small grants from the City Park and Recreation Department,
PACK still relies heavily on grants and community support. The eight-week program costs approximately $50,000 - $53,000. Costs associated with time spent by the WPD officers is absorbed by the Wichita Police Department as a part of the departments mission under the community policing philosophy to work proactively with the community in dealing with crime.

Other Involvement
Wichita Parks Department; City Manager's Office; neighborhood associations; local businesses

Lessons Learned
Sustaining the program is best done through a planned interdepartmental budget stream. In addition, consideration should be given to using program graduates as volunteers in future years.

Advice for Mayors
Close coordination is essential between city departments. Staff and volunteer planning is very important. Plan ahead when soliciting business partners. And, when doing so, it is important to develop a business plan.

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Safe and Secure Seminar

Mayor Carl Brewer

Wichita, KS

In August, 2006 the Wichita Police Gang Section and the Dream Center co-hosted an event called "Leadership Camp." Twenty-five young people between the ages of 9 and 15 were invited to join the detectives for a day of education and fun activities designed to "deglamorize" gang life. Participants ate breakfast and lunch with the detectives. During the course of the day, members of the Wichita Police Gang Section, TOPS (Targeted Offender Unit), Dream Center and former gang members spoke to the participants on a variety of topics relevant to young people who are being courted by gangs, or who live in gang-pervasive neighborhoods. In addition to the speakers, special events for the day included a Christian rap singer, a tour of the Juvenile Intake and Assessment Center (JIAC), and two hours at All Star Sports, a local sports center.

Established

During 2006 the Gang Section made a series of community presentations to educate young people, their parents, and those who work with young people about the gang culture. This program came about as a result of the gang detective's belief that early education and positive contact with the police might help divert young people, particularly those considered "at risk", away from gang life. At risk were those young people who had older siblings or even parents who were documented gang members, or those already loosely associated with gangs.

Effectiveness

We recognize that quantifying the success of a program of this design is not something easily accomplished with numbers. We believe the camp was successful because it helped initiate relationships between at-risk young people and the police, and exposed them to the resources of Scott Dryden and the Dream Center. Our approach was to view the program as an investment in the future. At best, the speakers reached young people concerning the futility of gang life. At worst, we exposed a group of at-risk young people to police officers as persons, with the hope that, should they ever be at a crossroad in their lives, they would be able to count on these officers for advice or help.

Funding

Local merchants donated food and activities. The time of the detectives was absorbed by the Wichita Police Department as a part of our mission under the community policing philosophy to work proactively in the community.

Other Involvement

Juvenile assessment and intake centers; non-profit community-based organizations that deal with at-risk youth.

Lessons Learned

Growth of the program in the first two years will be slow. There will be considerable resistance from youth who will not easily see the value of the program

Advice for Mayors

Persistence and patience when dealing with the youth is crucial to success of the program. Close coordination with local merchants is important. The police department must adopt a philosophy of inclusion regarding the youth.

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