

Community Mentoring Program Proposal

To: Community Leaders

From: Cedric Dean # 11907-058

At the direction of President Obama, the U.S. Department of Justice and Education officially launched in 2010 the National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention (the forum) along with participating localities and other federal agencies. The administration created the forum as a context for participating localities to share challenges and promising strategies with each other and to explore how federal agencies can better support local efforts.

At the working session in October 2010 teams from the cities of Boston, Chicago, Detroit, Memphis, Tennessee, Salinas, California and San Jose, California met with federal agencies and each other to share information and experience about what works in preventing youth and gang violence. Participating cities have pledged to develop or enhance comprehensive plans to prevent youth and gang violence in that city, using multi-disciplinary partnerships, balanced approaches, and data-driven strategies. The cities' comprehensive plans will be presented at a Youth Violence Summit to be held in Washington in spring 2011. These plans will aim to reduce violence, improve opportunities for youth, and encourage innovation at the local and federal levels.

At the urging of Kevin Jennings, Assistant Deputy Secretary of Education, Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools (OSDFS) I am seeking to work with local officials in your area to find ways to make our communities safer and to foster positive relationships with our youth. As he said to me in his recent letter, "If we are to succeed, we must involve everyone." Mr. Jennings linked me with Samantha Greenwald who also works in the (OSDFS) and she encouraged me to work with the Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs which provides information, strategies, tools and resources for youth, families, schools and community organizations related to a variety of cross-cutting topics that affect youth. Lastly, I've been in contact with Governor David Patterson of New York who connected me to Gina L. Bianchi, Deputy Commissioner and Counsel for the State of New York. Furthermore, I have been in touch with Governor Joe Manchin III of West Virginia who is in the process of linking me to the appropriate division in the Office of the Governor.

This proposal is for a mentoring program that will provide mentoring via telephone and letters to the students and principals of at risk schools in America. The late Stanley Tookie Williams, co-founder of the infamous Crip Gang, saved the lives of over 150,000 youth who were either preparing to join a gang or got out of a gang. Specifically, he provided live mentoring from San Quentin's Death Row via telephone to the principals of the 23 most at risk elementary schools in the Chicago public schools during an in-service training session about Williams' work. The session was so successful that the Chicago Public schools decided to create a curriculum around Williams' work. That curriculum was launched in September 2005 within those 23 schools, and it has garnered so much success that there is a waiting list to become a participant.

Since Williams' death, in Chicago, thirty-one school kids were killed and 218 were shot during the 2009-2010 school year. This year, in Chicago alone, there have been more than 132 young people murdered. As many as 200,000 youth under age 18 are prosecuted in adult criminal courts across the United States yearly. Our youth are on a trajectory that leads to marginalized lives and premature death. Over 600,000 teens dropped out of High School during the 2007-2008 school year (more than seventy percent of State prisoners are school dropouts, and fifty-nine percent of

Federal offenders). Also in 2008 juveniles accounted for 16% of all violent crime arrests and 11% (1,740) of all homicide victims were under the age 18.

Additionally, Williams provided live mentoring to at risk youth via the telephone by calling schools, a Bay Area juvenile correctional facility and community-based after-school programs serving troubled youth. He provided live mentoring to very high-risk youth who visited him at San Quentin State Prison. Lastly, he recorded anti-gang Public Service Announcements (PSAs) that have been played on radio stations throughout the U.S. and Canada.

Williams is dead, but the problem with our youth is still very much alive. I humbly request for your support of my aspirations to complete the mission that he started. U.S. Secretary Arne Duncan, who met with the National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention on October 2010 said, "We know that if children aren't safe, then they can't learn. We all have a stake in public safety and a responsibility to keep our children out of harm's way."

I am proposing that you assist me in my efforts to work with community and school leaders to identify core causes of crime and violence in and around our schools and build the most effective solutions. This mentoring program is an opportunity to allow inmates like me to give back to the communities we once destroyed with crime, drugs and violence.

I look forward to hearing your thoughts.

Yours for the cause of Love and Peace,

Cedric Dean

note: Please visit www.cedricdean.com for more information about my commitment to save America's misguided youth.

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