
From: Gina Olson [<mailto:givethepeopleabreak@gmail.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, August 08, 2012 12:12 PM
To: Espindola, Maria
Subject: Neighborhood Recovery Initiative not working

Good Morning Ms. Espindola;

First let me begin by expressing my utter disbelief. That your agency would spend money trying to make scholars out of young adults who terrorize our neighborhoods daily. One of my neighbors sent me this link. We are court advocates with the Chicago Police Department. We are a huge committee of community advocates who go to court and monitor cases of people arrested for crimes committed in our communities. We collaborate with Judges, and the States Attorney. The South Shore Community have some fine outstanding young adults and youth who are not criminals. Why aren't these kind of people selected to represent the South Shore Chicago? This is preposterous, please do not give these South Shore organizations another penny of my tax money if these are the types of youth they are going to pay. Who are the adults responsible for hiring them? They should

be ashamed. So many youth going away to college this year could not find jobs for the summer. But some conglomerate of organizations in South Shore employ people like the guy in this link with our tax money. I'm furious about this. I understand that the Black United Fund Of Illinois, and ABJ Community Center got grants to hire thugs and criminals to do positive outreach in my community. Are you out of your minds? Find better organizations and better youth to issue grant money. Our community deserves better. At risk youth can be turned into productive citizens, I've seen it happen. But committing this kind of crime and being paid to smile at people on the street makes no sense at all. I am also going to contact Mr. Ivan J. Juzang of Mee Productions. You all need to rethink, and redo this program.

Mrs. Gina Olson
South Shore Resident

From: Ivan Juzang [mailto:meeprod@aol.com]

Sent: Wednesday, August 15, 2012 4:12 PM

To: Shaw, Barbara; Ajackson9@aol.com; aapalmur@yahoo.com

Cc: Jenkins, Lorri; pamwedd@aol.com; MEEPROD@aol.com

Subject: Re: Neighborhood Recovery Initiative Not Working (outside, academic evaluation is critical)

Barbara/Lorri:

The home invasion attempted robbery late last month involving a group of young men and leading to the death of one of them is a tragedy. We are concerned for all the families, the other M+J participants traumatized by the death of someone they knew, and residents of the community. That the victim and the alleged perpetrator have been part of NRI's Mentoring Plus Jobs program leads us to pause in reflection. Last week, I personally met with Dr. Alice Palmer, the Administrative Coordinator from South Shore, her youth and adults associated with the program and its sponsoring agency.

As regrettable as these events were, the call to dismantle prevention-focused programs such as the Neighborhood Recovery Initiative is unjustified. The conditions that feed into young people making uninformed and dangerous choices call for more support for such programs, not less.

MEE has a two-decade track record of working with the hardest to reach, low-income, at-risk youth and adults. There is a small but inherent risk in engaging and serving a youth population that many may already have given up on. In 15 years of running MEE's evidence-based Community Action Teams (CATs) Model in major cities throughout this country, we have never had one employee commit a violent crime, and all participants associated with the project undergo criminal background checks prior to being hired. Youth, whom Mrs. Olson calls "thugs," and adults who are on record as having committed violent crimes are not eligible to be hired.

In Chicago, which has a deeply ingrained youth violence problem in many areas of the city and suburbs, local youth have been engaged in positive, pro-social activities for the past two years. In that 2-year time period, NRI has hired, and MEE has trained, over 3,000 young people to conduct outreach in their neighborhoods, engaging peers, friends and community residents in conversations, offering them positive coping and action messages.