

CNE Youth Violence Reduction Program Launched in Chicago

The Center for Neighborhood Enterprise is taking the Violence-Free Zone to Chicago, a city that made national headlines in the past year for its high level of youth violence and killings including the videotaped beating death of 16-year-old Derrion Albert at the hands of other youths. In 2009, Chicago lost 63 young people between nine and 18 to violence. By comparison, New York City, with three times the population, had 46 youth killings.

CNE, working with its Chicago community partner organization the K.L.E.O. (Keep Loving Each Other) Community Family Life Center, has received a contract from Chicago Public Schools to bring the VFZ youth violence reduction program to the city. K.L.E.O. will implement the program in Chicago's Englewood Community and provide mentoring and advocacy services to approximately 100 young people assigned to the program by the school system. The youths are or have been enrolled in Paul Robeson High School.

The K.L.E.O. Center is a natural fit for CNE, and Executive Director Torrey Barrett is a strong leader motivated by his faith to help youths at risk. His organization has a proven track record of reaching and transforming these young people."

— Robert L. Woodson, Sr.

As per the CPS contract, the goal of the program will be to "(A) reduce the likelihood that the student will engage in aggressive behavior or criminal activity and (B) to decrease the frequency of the student's truancies, suspensions, and expulsions. The VFZ program also seeks to improve student's academic performance and increase his or her involvement in extra-curricular activities, as well as increase the involvement of

students' parents or guardians in their academic and social development. Working with parents/guardians, teachers, principals, and counselors, the VFZ team will develop individualized academic and behavioral goals for each youth and help him or her attain those goals.

With direction and training by the Center for Neighborhood Enterprise, the K.L.E.O. center will recruit, screen, hire, and manage Youth Advisors from the community to act as mentors to the young people. K.L.E.O. is directed by Torrey Barrett, who founded the organization in 2007

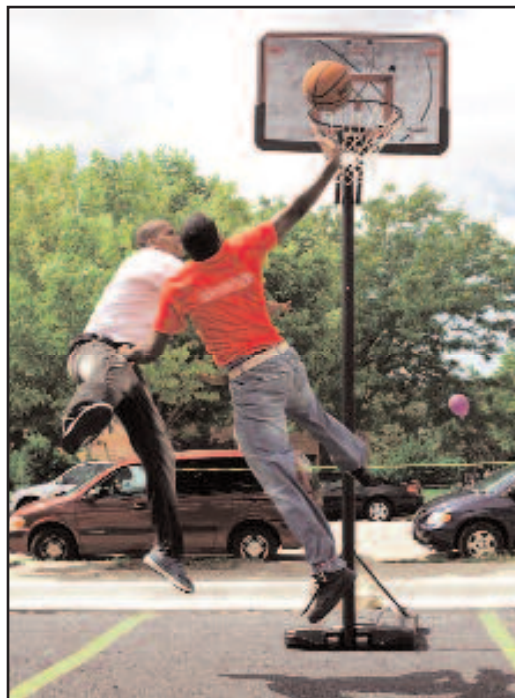


K.L.E.O. Founder
Torrey Barrett.

after a sister was killed in domestic violence. This will mark the first CNE Violence-Free Zone program site in Chicago, although CNE has provided training and technical assistance to leaders of other community-based organizations there.

"The K.L.E.O. Center is a natural fit for CNE," said Center President Robert L. Woodson, Sr. Founder and Executive Director Torrey Barrett is a strong leader motivated by his faith to help youths at risk. His organization has a proven track record of reaching and transforming these young people."

CNE's new community partner is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and facility dedicated to strengthening families and providing a safe haven through education, training, support, and fun for people of all ages in the Washington



Basketball at the K.L.E.O. Peace Fest.

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CNE Gives a Boost to an Exceptional Organization

Byte Back Offers First Rate Services to Those Needing It Most



Less than a year ago, Byte Back was facing some major problems. With only a small staff, a small budget, and volunteer instructors, the Washington, DC non-profit was serving hundreds of low-income students each year with job preparation training and a wide range of computer courses. But the equipment and software it was using was rapidly becoming completely outdated and a major upgrade was badly needed.

"I believe that just because it's free, it doesn't mean that it shouldn't be the best," Byte Back Executive Director Kelley Ellsworth says. She is committed to the goal that the services the organization provides to clients – most of whom are unemployed and 70% are homeless or temporarily living with family or friends – should be exceptional.

"Companies tend to upgrade their computers and software every two years, and Byte Back students, if they are to succeed in the job market, need to develop skills in using state-of-the-art equipment and software."

The organization faced other challenges as well. Founded in 1997, Byte Back needed a formal, structured planning process and the leadership wanted to diversify its revenue streams and enhance its fundraising efforts. The group submitted a proposal to the Center for Neighborhood Enterprise for its Compassion Capacity Development Fund program, and CNE began providing technical assistance (TA) and awarded Byte Back a \$10,000 sub-award to purchase new software.

Strategic Planning: After conducting an organizational assessment, CNE's Technical Assistance Manager Geanie Kase assigned Ruth Tillett, one of the Center's TA consultant faculty members, to work with Byte Back's executive director to develop all the preparatory work which the group would need to develop a strategic plan. This included a community "environmental scan," analogous to a market study, as well as intensive interviews with staff, volunteers, students, and funders.

With Tillett's help, a report was prepared, and the CNE TA provider was asked to come to a Byte Back board retreat to help

ABOVE: Office track graduates learned basic office skills as well as job readiness; RIGHT: A Byte Back hardware student prepares to be a computer technician.

present the information, after which the board would go through a strategic planning process. However, the facilitator who was scheduled to lead the strategic planning process had an emergency and failed to show up.



"The workshops were excellent. Various staff members attended different ones. They increased their professional development and now all the staff is able to network in the community."

– Byte Back Executive Director
Kelley Ellsworth

"Ruth jumped in and facilitated the whole day," Ellsworth reports. "It was just amazing!"

Linking to the Community: The Byte Back group became part of CNE's Hands-Across DC network and attended monthly workshops dealing with such areas as human resource management, financial management, data management and evaluation.

"The workshops were excellent. Various staff members attended different ones," Ellsworth says. "They increased their professional development and now all the staff is able to network in the community."

Byte Back offers programs that span the range of computer skills from complete, non-typing beginner to individuals working for certification as a computer support technician or networking professional. Basic courses prepare students for entry level occupations in administrative and secretarial positions, and offer job readiness training as well as computer training. Coursework consists of classroom learning and lab work, with the advanced courses involving independent lab and independent project work.

Volunteers Step Up: The organization has some 100 volunteers, including all of its teachers. Some are IT professionals at the highest level. "We would never be able to afford what they are worth," the executive director says.

Continued on facing page

A Message from Bob Woodson

Americans are tired of the constant debate between liberals and conservatives, the growing polarization between Democrats and Republicans, and the failure to produce solutions to the problems facing our society.

Liberals insist that the scale of the problems facing our country requires massive government intervention. This intervention has resulted in the expenditure of trillions of dollars, but the problems have worsened. Conservatives charge that these failures call for reduced social spending, more limited government, and approaches based on traditional values. When conservatives achieve power, the focus tends to be on cutting programs and reducing taxes. Neither approach has yielded success, particularly in addressing the urgent problems that confront our society today.

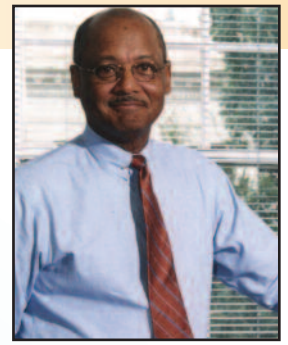
For the past 29 years, the Center for Neighborhood Enterprise has been engaged in programmatic efforts that have demonstrated how it is possible to expand services to the poor while reducing the reach and cost of government involvement. CNE has also shown that it can bring together individuals with divergent political positions to solve problems.

What the Center does is go into a low-income community and identify the social entrepreneurs, the indigenous leaders that have demonstrated their ability to positively influence the behavior of others. Like a venture capitalist we help them with managerial direction and link them to resources. Then we measure the results to assess the validity of our approach.

We have done this with the Violence-Free Zone program, presently in five major urban centers, by identifying the social entrepreneurs that have the ability to transform disruptive and violent youth. We train them in the principles and procedures of the VFZ model and help them access resources. The results have been dramatic in reducing violence in some of the nation's worst high schools, and evaluators are even showing savings to the communities as crimes such as motor vehicle thefts around those schools are significantly reduced.

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Another example lies in the area of public housing. CNE assisted leaders of the fledgling resident management movement by providing training and technical assistance in financial and organizational management. We also commissioned a cost/benefit study by Coopers & Lybrand that showed tremendous savings that would go to the government if residents were empowered to manage their own properties. But to make this a reality, we found that there were seven legislative policy barriers that would have to be addressed. Rep. Jack Kemp, then a young Republican Congressman from New York, promised to champion them if the Center could find a Democrat to co-sponsor the legislation. I recruited Democratic



Bob Woodson

Congressman Walter Fauntroy from Washington, DC, who agreed to be that sponsor. We also were able to get Colorado Republican Senator Bill Armstrong and Illinois Democrat Senator Alan Dixon to come together to sponsor the bill in the Senate. The legislation passed unanimously in the

House and had only one dissent in the Senate, and President Ronald Reagan signed the bill flanked by our six public housing leaders. The result has been considerable savings to taxpayers as crime and vandalism have been reduced and the public housing developments have been better managed.

We believe that today it is still possible to bring together divergent political views if the problems are urgent and the benefits of solving them are easily understood. CNE has demonstrated that by solving problems that have resisted solution by traditional approaches, we can reduce the need for government services, reduce the strain on municipal budgets, and most importantly, improve and even save lives.



Robert L. Woodson, Sr.

Byte Back, continued from page 2

The current economic downturn has impacted Byte Back in two ways – bringing more students, but also more volunteer teachers.

“Some professionals who were laid off just wanted to do something, so they came and volunteered. It has been heartwarming,” she says. Many graduates come back to give back to the program by teaching or assisting. Other volunteers mentor students at various levels.

“The volunteers are incredible,” Ellsworth declares. “They make a serious commitment to teach, with classes two or three times a week.”

The organization has provided training to more than 1,000 students in 2010. In a recent six month period, Byte Back served almost 500 senior citizens, most of whom had never used a computer before. Many of them returned as teaching assistants in the next class. “They had so enjoyed the class that they wanted a way to stay involved,” she says.

Byte Back is one of more than 40 groups that are part of CNE's Hands-Across Network. CNE has provided technical assistance to more than 70 organizations that serve Washington, D.C.'s low-income areas of Wards 5, 7, and 8.

Another Year Another Success Story

School, Police, and VFZ Teamwork is Producing Outstanding Results



LEFT: George Wythe High School Principal Willie Bell (on right) with CNE National VFZ Program Director Kwame Johnson; RIGHT: Khadeejah Billie, a VFZ participant and a senior at George Wythe High School, chats with Richmond Police Assistant Chief David McCoy. Khadeejah has made tremendous strides since joining VFZ as a sophomore. This summer she fulfilled a dream by completing an eight week internship with the Richmond Police Department.

Richmond, VA's George Wythe High School, where the Violence-Free Zone program has completed its second year, once again has enjoyed major reductions in all indices of negative student behaviors and increases in academic performance.

The Richmond VFZ is the product of close teamwork by Principal Willie Bell and the school staff, the Richmond Police

Department, The Richmond Outreach Center (The ROC), and the Center for Neighborhood Enterprise. The VFZ was first introduced into George Wythe in September, 2008.

"We operate as a family with the Violence-Free Zone a part of the family" Principal Bell told visitors in a recent meeting. "We have had excellent results. I see decreases in aggressive behaviors.

The program also has a lot of things outside the campus so the kids are successful in life."

"I am pleased to have such a magnificent organization working with us and they have been with us all the time. I'm the envy of my other colleagues in Richmond high schools," he said with a smile.

For the first year, he said, George Wythe high school had 90% of its students passing the SOLs (Standards of Learning tests) for the first time. "We met the AYP [Annual Yearly Progress standard set by the No Child Left Behind Act] for the first time in the school's history and our numbers ranked with other schools. Our truancy rate had been 33%, and it was down to 11%. We had the highest graduation rate in the city with 93% of our students graduating and we led the city in scholarship money."

Police Department Support:

The Richmond Police Department was instrumental in getting the VFZ to Richmond, with Chief Byran Norwood

Annual Comparisons 2009/2010 to Baseline Pre-VFZ Year

Measures	2007-2008 Pre-VFZ	2009-2010 Post-VFZ	Percent Change
Richmond Public Schools Data			
Unexcused Absences	14,177	8,075	Down 43%
Truancy Rate	34%	11%	Down 68%
Drop Outs	68	25	Down 63%
Expulsion	20	6	Down 70%
Battery/Student No Weapon	45	22	Down 55%
Classroom/Campus Disruption	258	237	Down 8%
Fighting: No/Minor Injuries	106	81	Down 26%
Gang Activity	32	6	Down 81%
Minor Physical Altercation	47	21	Down 55%
Threatening Staff Member	42	23	Down 45%
Threatening Student	10	4	Down 60%
Richmond Police Department Data			
Calls for Service	120	115	Down 4%
Arrests	107	66	Down 38%
School Resources Officer Reported Incidents	100	79	Down 21%

and former Chief Rodney Monroe providing strong support. The Richmond Police Foundation has raised funding from the corporate community to support the program.

“We targeted George Wythe because of the gangs, violence, fire alarms. It was the worst high school in Richmond,” said RPD Assistant Chief David McCoy. “We brought Bob [Woodson] and his staff in and they have developed a tremendous program in Richmond.”

“The turn-around in Wythe High School has been incredible. We are hardly needing to respond. We have had a huge reduction in multi-car responses to the school. Also, counselors bring problems to our attention, and they are more quietly and more efficiently handled.”

“Richmond is small enough to see the impact of the program citywide, since 20% of the high school population is covered,” Chief McCoy added. “We are very proud to assist in the development of it.”



Sonny Hoge (right), VFZ Site Supervisor at George Wythe, with student P.J. Haskins.

Results Tell the Story: An overview (see table p. 4) of the reports from the Richmond Public Schools and the Richmond Police Department compares the results of this past school year (September 2009-June 2010) to the year before the VFZ was introduced (September 2007-June 2008).

Individual students who were enrolled in the Violence-Free Zone for at least two quarters of the year also evidenced significant behavior improvements as well as increased academic success.

Data on Participants Enrolled in the VFZ for at Least Two Quarters

Reduced Absences and Tardiness	64%
Reduced Negative Incidents	60%
<i>*Those students who Reduced Negative Incidents, also Reduced Days of Suspensions by:</i>	
	79%
Improved GPA.....	51%

In addition to in-school VFZ activities of mediations, supportive conversations, and other mentoring, The ROC implemented a number of innovative approaches, including the Choice Positive (for boys) and Wythe Royalty (for girls) afterschool pro-

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– Richmond Police Department Assistant Chief, David McCoy

grams. Meeting each week, the groups focused on such subjects as self-worth, the importance of education, job readiness, character development, and life skills. Guest speakers, including players from the Richmond Raiders professional indoor football team, came to share their life experiences.

VFZ supporters, staff members, and other volunteers mounted a highly successful drive to collect donated prom dresses, shoes, jewelry, and accessories to give to VFZ participants who did not have the means to purchase a dress for the George Wythe Senior Prom – a big event in any high school girls’ life. Thirty girls enjoyed a gala try-on event, and one young lady won the grand prize – transportation and a police escort to the prom.

The ROC reached out to pregnant girls in the VFZ with a series of parenting classes and a baby shower. Other major activities included incentive trips to sports events and an end-of-the-year celebration cookout with games and prizes held at The ROC.

CNE Meets New Challenge – Use Social Media for Financial Literacy Training

The Center is taking its financial literacy training to a new level with the use of social media, using popular platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and GoToMeeting both for outreach and to deliver information.

With the goal of reaching of low and moderate income adults (\$40,000 annual income or less), a big question before launching the effort had to do with determining the level of technology proficiency and computer accessibility among members of the target audience. Is the “digital divide” still a major barrier?

“When we first discussed the concept, I thought to myself that this might be tough, says CNE Financial Literacy program director Charles Perry. “But I was encouraged by the number of people that I saw on the train or walking on the streets using Blackberries, and hearing young people say how often they Tweet or go to YouTube.”

Perry convened a conference call and asked the community-organizations in CNE’s financial literacy network what they thought about delivering financial literacy training over the internet. He asked those who had expressed an interest to submit a proposal.

Organizations Have Tested: Five organizations have piloted workshops using social media. Buffalo Weed and Seed Program Executive Director Antwan Diggs, working with CNE and HSBC, created a Power Point presentation of one of the Your Money Counts workshops called “Borrowing Basics.” He then narrated it and videotaped it so that it could be uploaded in three segments to YouTube. He used Facebook to promote the event. Afterwards, participants located in strategic locations in Buffalo, went to the evaluation link and completed the online evaluation.

The Judah International Christian Center (JICC) of Brooklyn, New York, staged a live web stream, delivering the “Managing Your Money” topic. Presenters were Dr. Cheryl Anthony of JICC and HSBC Trainer, Kiona Peters. The session was delivered in front of a limited face-to-face audience in Brooklyn to support the trainers and the launch effort. One webcam was used to project the presentation while a second linked and delivered the live production on the web. Three groups participated in the training from remote locations – City College of New York’s investment group; Lopez Beauty Salon; and Public School #5.

Participants interested in session registered in advance by email

and were sent materials in advance of the session. The final 30 minutes of the event were reserved for question and answers. As participants asked questions using text, phone, and emails, live responses were given by the training team. They then were urged to go to the evaluation link to register their opinions of the sessions. The groups used e-blasts, individual emails, twitter, LinkedIn, and their websites to spread the word about the sessions.

Upperroom Christian Faith Center, serving Fort Lauderdale and Broward County, FL with educational and housing opportunities, also offered Managing Your Mortgage information by YouTube video, and downloadable documents on its website.



Buffalo Weed and Seed Program Executive Director Antwan Diggs

Two groups focused on Identity Theft and used social media to deliver the information. Realized Training Potential Institute, a non-profit in St. Petersburg, FL that offers human potential and self-renewing education to individuals, used UStream.tv to videostream its training and offered downloadable worksheets and a link to the survey. Greater New Jerusalem Family Life Center in Southern Nevada featured You Tube videos accessible from their websites as well.

A Variety of Media: Other new means of reaching the audience include the use of public television, both for outreach through community bulletin boards, and by putting the videotaped session on public education channels.

CNE convenes twice monthly meetings with the leaders of its grassroots network to provide training on the curriculum and logistics, and other information.

“We think this is just the tip of the iceberg for delivering information to low and middle income people,” Perry said. “I would assume from what we are finding that the digital divide is narrowing. The people we are trying to reach seem willing to benefit from the new methods to learn something important.”

Links to Financial Literacy Training on Social Media:

Buffalo Weed and Seed
(www.buffaloweedandseed.com)

Go to left side of intro page for Financial Literacy Link for the You Tube presentation of *Borrowing Basics*.

Greater New Jerusalem Family Life Center (www.gnjinc.org)
After entering the site, *Managing Your Mortgage* links are on right.

Judah International Christian Center
(www.judahinternational.com)

At bottom of page, link to *Financial Literacy* page gives information about the program.

Realized Training Potential Institute (www.rpti.org)
See left side of intro page and click on *Identity Theft*.

Upperroom Christian Faith Center
(www.upperroomchristianfaithcenter.org)

At bottom of intro page click on *What You Should Know about Identity Theft* for YouTube presentation.

News From the Sites



BALTIMORE:

Baltimore's New Vision Youth Services (NVYS), headed by Billy Stanfield, is in multiple Baltimore City Schools with the Violence-Free Zone. One of the schools, Forest Park, is noteworthy because some 90% of the students have no parents at home and live in group homes. The NVYS Violence-Free Zone mentoring program is the only outside program to be in this school. The Baltimore program is supported by Baltimore City Schools and the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation.

DALLAS:

Vision Regeneration, CNE's Dallas partner organization, plans to focus its efforts in 11 Dallas schools this year, a reduction from the 18 which it served last year. The reduced number of schools, Vision Executive Director Omar Jahwar said, will allow the staff to spend more time with students at each school in developing the long-term relationships that produce permanent changes in behavior. The list includes five high schools: A. Maceo Smith, Justin F. Kimball, David W. Carter, Lincoln, and South Oak Cliff; two middle schools: Sarah Zumwalt and Maynard Jackson; two elementary schools: Billy E. Dade and Pearl C. Anderson; and two alternative schools: Village Fair and Texans Can charter school.

MILWAUKEE:

CNE and its Milwaukee partner organizations, the Latino Community Center (LCC) and Running Rebels Community Organization (RRCO), started the fall semester in eight Milwaukee high schools. Seven of the schools had the VFZ last year, but one school, Hamilton, is new to the program and replaces the North Division multiplex. The Latino Community Center will implement the VFZ program in Bay View, Bradley Tech, Madison, and South Division high schools, and Running Rebels Community Organization will operate it in Custer, Hamilton, Vincent, and Washington high schools. All told, these schools account for a student population of well over 10,000 students.

The Center has signed a contract with Milwaukee Public Schools to provide the Violence-Free Zone with these goals: 1) decrease incidents of violence and disruption; 2) increase student attendance; 3) decrease suspensions due to disruptive behavior; and 4) increase the positive responses to questions in the Student and Teacher Climate Surveys. In addition to MPS funding, some 10 Milwaukee foundations support the program so that it can be carried out in the schools.

New Chicago VFZ, continued from page 1

Park and adjacent communities. The K.L.E.O. goal is "to create an enhanced ability to navigate the world by providing the necessary tools, skills, and support needed for community participants to become a productive part of society."

K.L.E.O. mounts computer classes, resume writing classes, GED programs, and after school tutoring and homework assistance for school age children. It also hosts a very popular Open Mic Night to allow youths age 15-22 to express themselves through the art of singing, rapping, poetry, or dance.

For more information about the K.L.E.O. Center, go to www.kleocenter.org.



Supporting peace.



The community is engaged in K.L.E.O. events.



K.L.E.O. serves residents of all ages.

From The Center is published by the Center for Neighborhood Enterprise,* a nonprofit, nonpartisan, 501(c)(3) organization founded in 1981 by Robert L. Woodson, Sr., to assist low-income Americans in solving the problems of their communities.

CNE identifies effective grassroots organizations and strengthens them by providing training and technical assistance, and links them to outside resources. It also measures their impact and recommends public policies to facilitate their efforts. CNE has trained more than 2600 leaders of grassroots organizations across the country. Since its founding in 1981, it has leveraged resources for grassroots organizations at a rate of more than 10 times what it has expended. Subject areas addressed by CNE's grassroots affiliates include substance abuse, teen pregnancy, homelessness, joblessness, poor education, and deteriorating neighborhoods. The Center has a major focus on programs addressing youth violence.

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Please visit CNE's website at www.cneonline.org for more information and the latest updates on our activities.

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*Formerly known as the National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise.

Center for Neighborhood Enterprise

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Three New Members Elected to CNE Board

The Center for Neighborhood Enterprise is pleased to announce the election of three new members to the Board of Directors. They are:

- John D. Loveland, Managing Director, PricewaterhouseCooper's U.S. Forensic Technology Solutions.
- Rev. DeForest B. Soaries, Jr., Senior Pastor, First Baptist Church of Lincoln Gardens in Somerset, NJ.
- Martin Wong, Executive Vice President, General Counsel, and Secretary, Western Union.

They join current board members: Clifford Ehrlich, Chair; Michael Barood; Baruch Fellner (Partner, Gibson Dunn & Crutcher); Ron Haskins (Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution); Melvin Jackson (CEO, Westside Community Ministries Inc.); Ado Machida (Vice-President Government Relations, BAE Systems); Gary Officer (President and CEO, Rebuilding Together); Myron Resnick; William A. Schambra (Senior Fellow and Director, Hudson Institute's Bradley Center for Philanthropy and Civic Renewal); and Robert L. Woodson, Sr. (President, Center for Neighborhood Enterprise).