



E-Update

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Honoring Young People Who Turn Away from Violence:

The Center for Neighborhood Enterprise's Violence-Free Zone program, currently operating in 36 schools in five cities, focuses on the approximately ten percent of youth that are the most disruptive and violent in their schools. For the most part, these are the young people that traditional programs fail to reach because they are unable to engage them or because they are considered too hard-core to change. The VFZ, because it harnesses the influence and talent of young adults from the same neighborhoods and backgrounds, has had a significant record of inspiring these high-risk youth to completely transform their attitudes and behavior and to become agents of change in their schools and communities. When these former predators change, the other 90% of youths around them also are affected, and that is why the VFZ has been able to transform the most violence-plagued schools into the most peaceful ones in each locale. CNE believes that the young people who have made this difficult journey from violence to peace deserve the highest honors, as do other students who succeed against incredible challenges in their personal situations or neighborhoods. To honor them, the Center has created the Staying True awards. Sixteen Milwaukee high school students—two each in the eight high schools that have the VFZ program—will be honored June 4 for Most Improved Behavior or Academic Achievement in Challenging Circumstances. They will receive trophies and medallions at a reception to which top education, business, foundation, and city leadership are invited. The Milwaukee Staying True awards are co-hosted by CNE, its Milwaukee community partners the Latino Community Center and Running Rebels Community Organization, and Milwaukee Public Schools. The award winners also are treated to a shopping spree to choose business-style outfits to wear to the ceremony, signifying their presentation as young adults to the larger Milwaukee community.

Generous Donors Rally to Help Volunteer Program Attacked by Vandals:

In early May, vandals spray painted and destroyed equipment, uniforms, a van, and even the little trophies in the small office used by the volunteer coaches who have been coming to help the children in Washington's Benning Terrace public housing neighborhood. But instead of seeking retaliation, the coaches—who 13 years ago were involved in Benning Terrace's violent history but who turned to peace—publicly resolved to keep going forward and rebuild to serve the kids. Their attitude inspired dozens of calls offering help—new uniforms, new equipment, and donations to the Benning Terrace Youth Opportunity group. A coach at Walt Whitman High School in nearby Bethesda, MD called to say the teams and booster club had already raised \$3,000 to help. A little league team in Pennsylvania said it was holding a fundraiser. And the University of Maryland athletic department offered to do some training for the coaches. CNE has assisted the Benning Terrace coaches over the past 13 years, as has the D.C. Housing Authority, the only public agency to help. DCHA is now making new office space that can be secured available to the group.

Woodson Honored by Colorado Christian University:

CNE President Bob Woodson delivered the commencement address to Colorado Christian University graduates May 8, and was presented with an honorary doctorate in humanities. His address focused on Why Get a Christian Education? He used the Apollo 13 story as an analogy, saying that it was faith and knowledge that rescued the astronauts from disaster—that knowledge would have told them it was impossible, and faith alone would have had them praying but dying. In today's world, he said, some

schools teach only faith and some that were founded as Christian colleges (Yale, Harvard, etc.) abandoned faith for science. The third element that made it possible to solve the crisis was humility, Woodson said. Just as Naaman in the Bible had to learn that God often sends messages through servants rather than royalty, the Apollo 13 mission director put trust in the opinion of the most junior staff member, and the mission was saved.