



JUVENILE JUSTICE COUNCIL

Summer 2016 Report

*How might we improve outcomes for youth transitioning
from system-involvement to community?*



Mikva
Challenge



AUTHORS: **Juvenile Justice Council**

Miguel Barrera
 Rondell Christmas
 Kaylin Davis
 Giltonio Flowers
 Khala Foster
 Diamond Freeman
 Dessire Gonzalez
 Devonte Green
 Tracy Henry
 Robert (Earl) Holloway
 LizaMarie Jimenez-Ojeda
 Ariana Johnson
 Lesley Lopez
 Jasreail Milner
 Marcellino Morales
 Jordan Pute
 Vicky Romero
 Eli Rosenfeld
 Major Smith
 Montreal Solomon
 Ashton Taylor
 Julio Valdez
 Joel Vargas
 Estefania Villasenor



Mass Incarceration***By Ashton Taylor***

smoke Dope
To cope
For my lack of hope
I see my death in repetition
A sorrowful depiction
That's why my vision
Is my decision
To use ammunition
I'm on a mission
My nigga
My niggas
Pull the trigga
I'm thinkin bigga
Revolutionary
Is quite scary
But on the contrary
I'm quite legendary
Food for thought
I need to stay strong
I'm drinkin milk for my mind
So I can live long
The black Kennedy
They envy me
Me, myself and I
The holy trinity
Even the quietest
Can't find true serenity
To infinity and beyond
I'm beyond
All the peons
I'm always right
So I can't be wrong
But, My complexion
Doesn't get protection
Not even a black winning a election
Can take me out this social section

I'm a God
And it's time for my resurrection
Gods in chains
Family in pain
Freedom doesn't even Reign
The Minorities incarcerated is the Majority All shades of blacks and brown

300 years ago we were sacked and bound Dogged like a Hound.
Closing Cells is the sound
If we was white

we would have a fight.
More rights
Less Sleepless nights
A Lawyer helping with all his might. Mass incarceration of our people

If this was a movie, it would have too many remakes, too many sequels This is Modern day
Slavery
Society gave to me
a Slow Genocide

A life of forced laboring You don't decide When its your time
To stay alive

A Slave inside and out the Bars
Paying Job, Nice house, 2 Cars
Its all fictitious
Now that you've been stamped as a felon
the work force now scarce and visicious
So, Mass Incarceration is in and out your life, repetitious. Man, the Bible is all i got.

So I Decode his philosophy, be a Gods prodigy, spit some technology So I Won't be a product of
the system
so never again i won't be "This Dumb"
So I can Spread some Wisdom.

INTRODUCTION: Summer Overview

Our framing question for the summer of 2016 was: *how might we improve outcomes for youth transitioning from system-involvement to community?* In trying to develop answers to our framing question, we focused on the following aspects that seek to make their transition smooth:

- ❑ Probation/Aftercare: services that monitor the youth's behavior post-release
- ❑ Education: CPS schools and alternative schools
- ❑ Employment: youth entering into the workforce prior to and after their release

Throughout the summer, we went through a rigorous research process that enabled us to acquire insight regarding the juvenile justice systems' methods to help youth make a smooth transition from system-involvement back into their communities. Our main sources of knowledge came from the youth who have experienced the system firsthand. We talked with young people who are employed by the County's Juvenile Advisory Council, who informed us of their experiences with the probation system and their current employment situations. We also met with youth in the Saura Center, who shared their experiences regarding alternatives to detention. Most importantly, members of our team drove our work and the report you are about to read.

In addition to speaking with young people, we also gathered knowledge through an extensive network of guest speakers. We met with Julie Biehl, Director of Northwestern University School of Law's Bluhm Legal Clinic, who spoke with us about barriers to expungement and Derrick Franke, an academic specialist in the School of Criminal Justice at Michigan State University, who spoke with us about restorative justice practices in detention centers and restorative justice re-entry conferences. We also met with Jacqueline Raguay and Robert Vickery from Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice, who talked to the council about the state of Illinois' aftercare program. Along with those and other guest speakers and youth interviews, we also did extensive research on our own. We read articles, analyzed data, watched videos, and engaged in group discussions that enabled us to think critically about the situations that the county's youth were in.

The Juvenile Justice Council completed six weeks of interviews, meetings, and visits -- the product of which is this report. Our research enabled us to gather knowledge that would help us answer our framing question, while also remaining open minded and mindful of the impact our research would hopefully have on the lives of young people who are transitioning from system-involvement to community. They fit into four different categories: employment, education, restorative justice, and aftercare/probation. We discussed deeply how, if implemented, our report would affect Cook County youth, thus these recommendations are especially tailored for their situation. We hope our partnership yields only the best and most positive results for the youth.

*Note: all references found at conclusion of report

EDUCATION: Recommendation 1 & 2

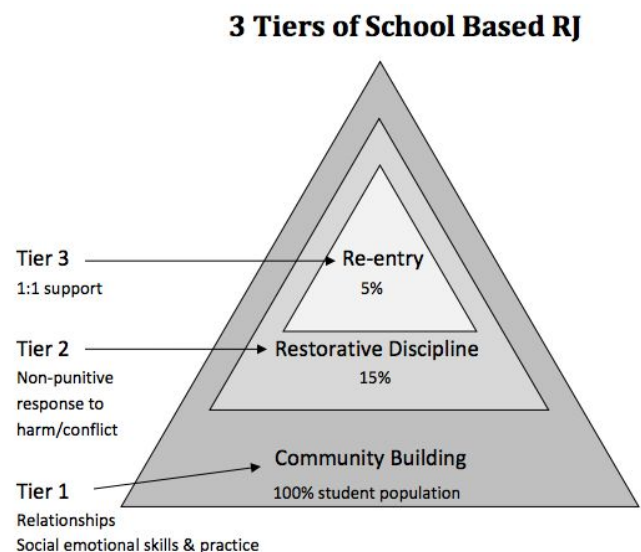
Every CPS and alternative school should have a full-time restorative justice specialist who executes programming on 3 levels: community-building, restorative discipline and re-entry/welcome circles. The welcome circle should include community members, i.e. administrators, family, peers, teachers, counselors, security guards (not in uniform), and should include a follow-up accountability plan.

Supporting Evidence

1. **"...95% of students are unfairly suspended or expelled"** for minimal misconduct
2. **"...a WSRJ program was first implemented in 2005...serving over 386 youth. Key program activities included: 9 hours of group service on average per student (3,272 hours total), 430 peacemaking circles, and 82 trainings or community events. The program cost \$420 per client compared to \$2,168 for youth comprehensive services overall. Suspension rates among 75% of participants dropped."**
3. **"More than 88% of the teachers reported that restorative practices were very or somewhat helpful in managing difficult student behaviors in classroom... 53% said it [RJ] helped reduce disciplinary referrals for African American students. Over 63% of staff surveyed believed that RJ has improved the way students resolved conflicts with adults and with other students. Almost 76% of the students in harm circles successfully repaired harm/resolved conflict."**
4. Research confirms that **restorative justice is an evidence-based practice that reduces criminal recidivism** (Sherman & Strang, 2007), and there is a growing movement to use restorative practices in reentry for incarcerated people returning to the community (Bazemore & Manina, 2009).

Possible Partners: CPS and alternative schools, restorative justice training facilities, RJ Hubs

Desired Impact Youth would have a community of people to support them in being successful in their reentry. RJ will also decrease the amount of conflict youth face between peers, administration and within themselves.

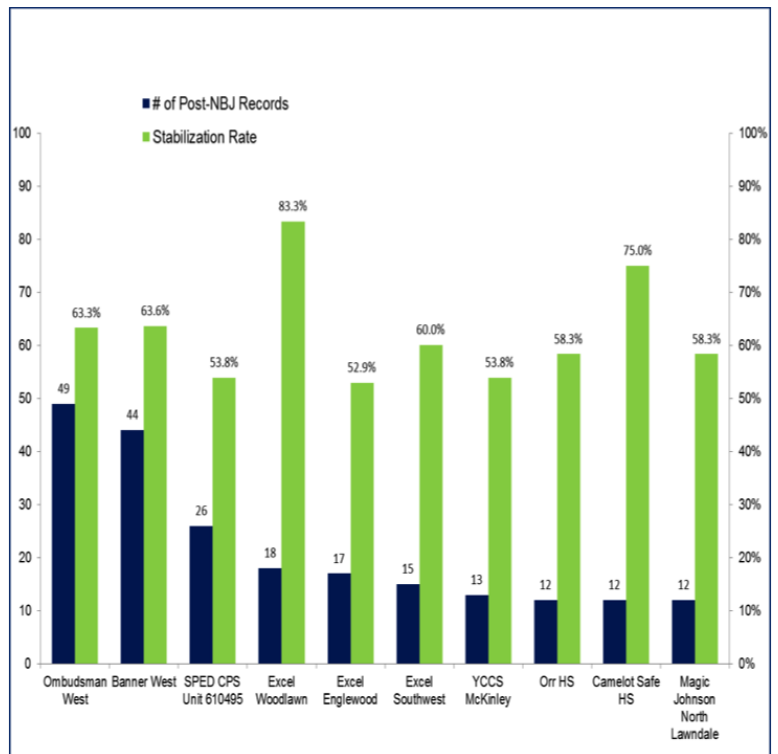


EDUCATION: Recommendation 3

CPS administration should build partnerships with community organizations in order to support formerly incarcerated youth both when they are in and outside of school by utilizing the partnerships to provide employment, job training skills, safe places to do homework, etc. These organizations should be asked to continue to support young people throughout college and/or their first jobs.

Supporting Evidence

1. "Community Schools Initiative...has launched more than 200 schools, in partnership with nearly 50 lead non-profit organizations, that serve as **hubs of their communities to meet students' and families' academic and non-academic needs**...CSI currently provides the following: job training courses for parents; access to medical and dental care; opportunity to take music/art lessons, etc." **CSI is a model that should be used at schools receiving the most court-involved youth (see chart).**
2. *"I've seen the change, I've seen the work. I've seen the community become a better place."* - MiguelAngel Barrera (JJC)



Possible Partners: CPS, Safe Haven Foundation, Build, Jane Addams Resource Corporation, Chicago Urban League, Community Schools Initiative

Desired Impact: This would not only contribute to schools and communities but also youth who have come out of the system and back into the streets with few high school credits or job experience. Connecting the schools with community organizations also would lower the violence in the streets by having the youth do positive work in the communities with their peers after school instead of fooling around and committing crimes.

EDUCATION: Recommendation 4

CPS administration should provide social and emotional, trauma-informed counseling and more programs around Social & Emotional learning to system-involved young people.

Supporting Evidence

1. Mental illness is a serious issue among youth who are released: “among a random sample of 1,829 young people taken into custody in Cook County from 1995 to 1998, **66% of boys and 74% of girls were diagnosed with at least one mental health disorder**, and most of these youth had two or more disorders.” Though this data is several years old,, it highlights a serious issue with our system.
2. If social services are unavailable, students may suffer in silence, keeping them from functioning effectively in the classroom. **Economically disadvantaged children are least likely to have access to the resources** they need to deal with their challenges.
3. In 2013, after implementing SEL, CPS found that:
 - Over 27,000 fewer out of school suspensions – a 33% drop in out- of- school suspension rate
 - Nearly 1,300 fewer CPS students referred for expulsion – a 37% drop in referral for expulsion rate
 - Over 1,000 fewer in-school arrests of CPS students – a 35% drop in the in-school arrest rate

Possible Partners: Chicago Public Schools; CASEL

Desired Impact

By focusing on the social-emotional state of a student’s education, the youth will have a support system at school causing them to feel welcomed, safe and helping them face challenges. Not addressing the real challenges youth face to engaging in school does not set them up for success.



EDUCATION: Recommendation 5

Students with disruptions in their education should not be referred immediately to alternative schools and instead should have a fair chance at a CPS school. To support this, CPS should provide an afterschool program that offers tutoring for students who have fallen behind due to involvement in the system.

Supporting Evidence

1. **"Students in these schools whose families can't afford an alternative are trapped in classrooms that, for the most part, aren't equipping them to succeed in the future."**
2. "Aizer and Doyle compared the imprisoned and non-imprisoned kids along two lines: high school graduation rates and adult incarceration. Unsurprisingly, going to jail as a kid has 'strong negative effects' on a child's chance to get an education: **youth that went to prison were 39 percentage points less likely to finish high school than other kids...**" so they need greater attention to their schooling than general population students.

Possible Partners: Chicago Public Schools, Alternative School Network

Desired Impact: By giving system-involved youth the opportunity to finish school at a CPS high school, officials are enabling them to have better chances of success. Some alternative schools are not equipped with the necessary resources that would help youth succeed. By allowing youth to have a chance at finishing high school through their Chicago Public School, they will have access to the academic support from CPS staff and will have a better chance at completing school. **Allowing them to return to the school they left will also help school be an anchor in an environment where so much has already been disrupted and has already changed for the young person.**

When I went to a typical CPS high school, I was behind due to an illness in my family. The CPS schools didn't give me any type of support and they recommended me to an alternative school. The alternative school was understaffed, the students were out of control and the credits did not amount to anything when it came to them transferring back to high school. This has happened at two separate alternative high schools. -JJC student

EDUCATION: Recommendation 6

All court-involved youth should receive extensive academic support through a graduation strategy plan that ensures and emphasizes a high school diploma, and maximizes credit transfer across all schools (i.e. credits earned at Nancy B. Jefferson should transfer to all CPS schools.)

Supporting Evidence

1. "Too often, a lack of coordination with educational transcripts and records prevents youth from receiving credit for courses they completed in juvenile facilities."

Characteristics of GED and High School Diploma Holders Among the Population 18 Years and Over: 2009
(Earnings in dollars)

	GED		High school diploma	
	Percent	Mean monthly earnings	Percent	Mean monthly earnings
Total	100.0	3,149	100.0	4,690
Highest Degree Level				
High school graduate	57.3	2,922	27.2	3,222
Some college	38.0	3,192	39.6	3,794
Bachelor's degree or higher	4.8	4,852	33.2	6,305

United States
Census
Bureau
People, Places and
Our Economy

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2008 Panel

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Possible Partners:

Chicago Public Schools, Nancy B. Jefferson, Education subcommittee of transition team for Cook County Juvenile Court

Desired Impact

Enabling youth to have their credits transferred from alternative schools to Chicago Public Schools would ensure that youth are on track to graduate on time because the work that they have done will count towards their graduation requirements, and they would have more information and guidance about their credit transfer process.

EDUCATION: Recommendation 7

Court-involved youth who are low-income and trying to get back to school should receive 7-day passes so it is easier to get to school, among other places. The passes should be loaded to their school ID.

Supporting Evidence

1. **“Because students reared in poverty benefit the most from being in school, one of the most effective strategies for providing pathways out of poverty is to do what it takes to get these students in school every day.”**
2. Wells High school piloted the Transportation Incentive Program – “TIP participants had an average daily attendance of 85%, three percent higher than the school’s current average. TIP participants showed a 31% increase in their yearly attendance average, and they were 12% more likely to go to school every day. “
3. According to a survey by Mikva Challenge’s Mayoral Youth Commission Transportation Incentives Program, **44% of respondents answered “Can’t afford transportation” as the reason they don’t go to school.**

Possible Partners: CTA, Pace, Chicago Public Schools, Cook County Probation

Desired Impact:

By providing transportation, students will likely have better attendance to school which is critical. Removing barriers to attending school for system-involved youth is key to their success. This also means they will be provided transportation to other important happenings such as doctor visits, or religious events, etc.

EMPLOYMENT: Recommendation 8

City government should make it easier for youth to get a work permit by opening more facilities to process the request and more programs that enable court-involved young people to get a permit in a faster and more effective manner.

Supporting Evidence

1. Youth employment is extremely important and special steps should be taken for court-involved youth. "Through the YouthRules! initiative, the U.S. Department of Labor wants to ensure that all teens have positive work experiences that help prepare them for the demands of the workforce. After all, today's youth will be the workforce of tomorrow."
2. There are only 6 sites citywide that issue youth work permits.

It was extremely difficult for a young person to navigate getting a work permit because you have to go during school hours to acquire it. There are so few locations and none of them are geographically convenient. Parents must be present, so they must take off work to take their child which is unreasonable. This system is not set up to help young people access jobs. -Youth Program Director

Possible Partners: Illinois State Board of Education, Chicago Public Schools

Desired Impact

If the law allows youth as young as eight years old to be incarcerated than these children should also have the opportunity to request a work permit. Creating more facilities that make it possible for youth to pursue a career will not only push them to work harder, but it will also help decrease the recidivism rate by removing barriers for youth to focus on productive things rather than being on the streets.



EMPLOYMENT: Recommendation 9

Employers that employ court-involved youth should provide the option that youth can be paid either weekly or biweekly. Additionally, optional financial literacy/management classes should be provided to the youth.

Supporting Evidence

1. "In the most recent statistics provided by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), one-third of people in jail reported they were unemployed prior to arrest in 2002. In comparison, 4.6 percent of the general population reported unemployment in July 2007."
2. "The need for financial education for children and youth is clear and compelling. It is not disputed, but neither is it championed. A plan of action is required for integrating financial education into state standards, training teachers, implementing curriculum, verifying behavioral impacts, widening disciplinary expertise and input, and resolving areas of professional disagreement. "

Possible Partners

All employers of court-involved youth (i.e. Mikva Challenge, Bridges to Pathways); One Summer Chicago, Department of Family and Support Services; Cook County Justice Advisory Council

Desired Impact

This would be beneficial for both employers and employees because employees would have more frequent access to legal money which creates sustainability and reliability among their staff. It will reduce recidivism because youth will therefore not seek out alternate means of getting money.

I believe getting paid weekly gives me a motive to continue working because when I was in school it was really hard to not quit my job because I was super stressed. When I was getting paid weekly, I always had money in my pocket, I was able to pay for my bus fare, and I gained more independence. -Vicky Romero, JJC Student

EDUCATION: Recommendation 10

One Summer Chicago should extend its application deadlines until the middle of June for summer jobs for court-involved young people who have recommendations/referrals from an adult ally like PO, after-care specialists, social worker, etc.

Supporting Evidence

1. "This year, 52% of young people were employed in July, little changed from a year earlier. **Unemployment among youth rose by 654,000 from April to July 2015, compared with an increase of 913,000 for the same period in 2014.**"
2. "We wanted to sign students up for One Summer Chicago at Farragut High School but discovered that we were already **passed the deadline. This could have gave someone the opportunity to grow, meet new people and learn new skills.**" - Steve Zemelman, Illinois Writing Project



Possible Partners: One Summer Chicago; Department of Family and Support Services; Cook County Probation; IL DOJ aftercare

Desired Impact: As a result of extending the application deadline, more youth will be able to apply for summer jobs. This will give young people a means of legal income as well as having them be involved in constructive pastimes.

Juveniles get out the system every month and when they do want to apply for a job they can't apply to certain jobs because either a deadline passed or because of their juvenile records. Most juveniles also aren't informed about opportunities like these, so most of the youth end up back in the system.

-Miguel Angel Barrera, JJC

The deadline being so early before summer program begins directly prohibits many court-involved young people from having access to city-funded summer jobs. Young people that could not fill out the OSC application by the May deadline by no fault of their own are then not eligible for employment in June, July and August. **-Emma Kornfeld, Mikva Challenge**

PROBATION/AFTERCARE:

Recommendation 11

Restorative Justice should be utilized by providing circles and practices within detention facilities for youth. Also, it should be required for Probation Officers and Aftercare Specialists to partake in Reentry/Welcoming circles, whether in school, the community or at the detention center.

Supporting Evidence

1. There are many great organizations that use RJ practices, such as BUILD, “which is committed to serving Chicago’s youth who are facing the greatest risks...By offering both individualized as well as community-based programming, BUILD **opens doors for youth who many have given up on, empowering them to take charge of their lives, futures, and communities.**” This type of practice should be expanded.
2. “A recent meta-analysis published in 2013 has found that **programs that include offender/victim dialogues had a significant decrease in post-release recidivism and was cost-effective—up to 14 times more so—**when compared to the costs of the crimes prevented. Victim satisfaction with the handling of their cases was also uniformly positive.”

Possible Partners: IL Dept of Juvenile Justice Aftercare, Cook County Department of Probation, Illinois Youth Centers, Juvenile Temporary Detention Center, RJ practitioners (RJ Hubs)

Desired Impact:

Building relationships with mentors/advisors in the youth’s life before they are released from detention enables the youth to understand that they have a support system even before they reenter the community. It would increase their comfort level with people around them and they will feel as though they have a strong foundation of support to start with, even before they start their transitions back into their communities.

PROBATION/AFTERCARE:

Recommendation 12

When on probation or aftercare, young people should have access to a mental health professional, who is not associated with the court or law system, with whom they can share their feelings and problems. Probation and aftercare should also provide youth with mentors who have similar backgrounds as they do and who can expose them to new opportunities.

Supporting Evidence

1. As many as 70 percent of youth in the system are affected with a mental disorder, and one in five suffer from a mental illness so severe as to impair their ability to function as a young person and grow into a responsible adult.
2. A method used in Ohio is the “‘sequential intercept model,’ which encourages law enforcement and other service providers to **link individuals with mental illnesses to treatment and supports, when appropriate, in order to prevent their further criminal justice system involvement.**”
3. *“It would've been way better because you can't tell them certain stuff because if you say something it comes up in court and you'd get in even more trouble because they have to add it on to your thing. You can't really talk to them, you treat them like the police: you tell them stuff, you get in trouble. If you had that person, you could open up and talk to them like a friend and they wouldn't snitch on you.” - JJC Student*

Possible Partners: Department of Probation, IL Department of Juvenile Justice Aftercare

Desired Impact: Enabling youth to have access to trained professionals who specialize in mental health and who partner with law enforcement, but do not also have the role of a justice official would enable them to build a positive relationship with individuals who are not involved directly with the law, creating an environment that the youth can feel comfortable in that has nothing to do with their legal situation. Providing youth with mentors who have similar backgrounds also gives them someone they can relate to and who can afford them opportunities and help them build networks of people who are understanding of their current situations and who can relate to them.

PROBATION/AFTERCARE:

Recommendation 13

Youth who are in JTDC or in Illinois Youth Centers should have access to programs within the facilities that offer career-building skills and knowledge. Once released, youth that did well in these programs should have an opportunity and support to shadow and/or an internship/job (i.e. JAC, JJC) as well as career related field trips.

Supporting Evidence

1. **“Overcoming barriers to the employment of juvenile offenders through practical and effective programmatic strategies has become increasingly important** as studies continue to find promising outcomes associated with employment for high-risk and court-involved youth. **Yet, a particular component of workforce development for young offenders has remained a stubborn challenge: securing, maintaining, and advancing employment opportunities for court involved youth.”**
2. “Completion of a structured employer-based paid internship can be a valuable adjunct to curriculum that facilitates the effective transition into positive post-school engagement, at least in the short run.”
3. “Successful programs recognize that job retention and launching a career are the vital program outcomes, more so than mere job placement. **Once a young person is employed, frequent follow-up contact with both the youth and the employer is one of the most critical elements to promoting job retention.”**

Possible Partners: Department of Family and Support Services (Juvenile Justice initiatives); Bridges to pathways, JTDC, and Illinois Youth Centers

Desired Impact: Providing career building workshops while in the JTDC or an IYC will not only give the youth a sense of hope, but it will also allow them to continuously think about their future. Also, it will allow them to build a professional identity and help them stay focused. This will also show law enforcement that the youth are trying to change in a difficult setting. Also, having a connection between skills/knowledge acquired inside a facility should have a next step connection outside the facility to help reduce recidivism.

PROBATION/AFTERCARE:

Recommendation 14

The court should extend house arrest to the area around the house to include areas like lawns, porches, driveways, etc. so that young people can breathe fresh air and be supportive to their families.

Supporting Evidence

1. "As research scholar James Kilgore notes, for those being monitored, "the default position in most instances is house arrest" and therefore they're often more restricted than their counterparts in jails and prisons. Incarcerated people have daily quotas for calories and are usually granted a certain amount of outdoor exercise time (however miserable the food or outdoor facilities may be). Under house arrest, neither of those protections apply." Youth are set up to violate.
2. **"I always violated [house arrest] because I had to charge the band and I got tired of staying in the house. Most kids get tired of staying in the house so they leave. How am I gonna get a job if I'm stuck in the house and can't go apply for a job?" - JJC youth**

Possible Partners: Cook County Probation

Desired Impact: Youth will be able to move freely around the area that is part of their home, such as their yard or the porch. They can do simple activities such as taking out the trash. This will help the youth feel a little less enclosed, as well as allow them to take care of home responsibilities.



"When I was on house arrest I was not allowed to leave the gate of my house, I could not do work, I could not walk my dog and if my dad needed help outside, like if he fell, I could not help. Everything was a lot harder. If I wanted to go to the store I had to wait for someone to go get it for me. It sucked. If house arrest was extended I could help out, I would feel more comfortable. It would have been better I would have felt less detained in the little bubble they give you. "

- JJC Council Member

PROBATION/AFTERCARE:

Recommendation 15

Improve the hiring and training processes of probation officers and aftercare specialists to identify and build a staff who have a youth development and trauma-informed/restorative lens versus punitive.

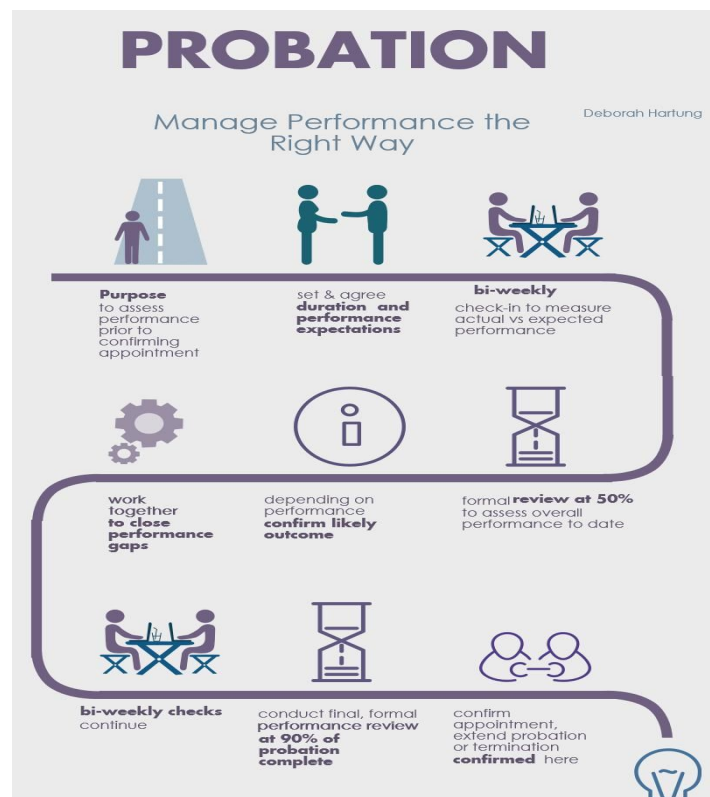
“It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men.” – Frederick Douglass

Supporting Evidence

1. One of our speakers was an aftercare specialist, they said that if a youth would not try to put in the effort to rehabilitate then she wouldn't either.
2. We envision a probation officer that is “persistent” and **encourages youth to counseling, education and pro-social relationships.**
3. A position similar to that of a probation officer is that of a security guard – a syllabus we found of a training for security guards states that they have a section that focuses on how to approach youth or how to handle issues like peer pressure or dysfunctional families. This should be applied for probation/aftercare.

Possible Partners: Cook County Probation;
Illinois Department of Justice

Desired Impact: Having staff trained in youth development would enable them to build productive relationships with the youth that focuses on problem solving, instead of having relationships that are focused on punitive consequences. Too many youth violate their probation or parole, and having staff who understand youth better would help with that.



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- Solanna Bell, Chicago Public Schools
- Martrice Manuel, Alternative Schools Network
- Derrick Franke, Michigan State University
- Lawrence Casazza
- Know Your Rights
- Mia Henry, Kalamazoo College

Where Do I End Up?*By Ashton Taylor*

Even after these cell doors open I remain broken
Hating the unknown
My own existence

I would disown
My own resistance
On this battlefield, I'm alone
Once these cell doors open
Where do I end up?
How do I get on my feet when nobody taught me how to stand up? But to man up,
Even though after I was born no man ran up.
I was tired of having my hand out for hands out.
Rather do a stick up than to stand out
When I ran up
I settled for some metal and told them to put their hands up.
Now look at where I end up
I did the crime
Now the time
So after that where do I end up
After you've said goodbye and good luck?
I'm stuck
Between a hope and a dream
A Nope and a scream.
I need help from a team.
Education is now my number one priority
Because as a minority
They constantly
Throw the book at me
I'm more than a number, look at me
Here i am in this cold world I call home
All Alone in a reality

that has fueled my insanity
Money equals Vanity
Understandably
Nobody taught how to be a man to me But I single handedly

Randomly
Made a way for me
To candidly
Speak my truth.
Speak for all the lost souls Speak for the youth

Who have no goals
Who's mental took a toll
To all the Boys and girls both black and brown Who forgot they were born with a crown
And a smile instead of a frown.

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