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PROMOTING SUCCESS THROUGH PREVENTION: MEMPHIS'S EARLY SUCCESS COALITION

by Martha Yeide



At the recent implementation science training held in Washington, D.C., I had the chance to sit with the Memphis, Tenn., team and hear about some of the exciting ways the city is working to fulfill the goals of the Forum. Our conversation focused on some of the

BOSTON RALLIES FOR PEACE

by Carrie Nathans

In Boston, Mass., the fight against youth violence rages on. But there are no picket signs or angry crowds. Instead, the city rallies with art, music, and poetry—a peaceful protest that flows with creativity.

April 7–11 was National Youth Violence Prevention Week—5 days when the country really listens up about the crime plaguing inner-city kids. In a whirlwind of lectures, conferences, workshops, and forums, city officials make their case about what's needed to stop the brutality.

Boston is no exception. The city has always taken an all-hands approach to keeping kids safe. This year, representatives from the Boston Police Department, Suffolk County District Attorney's Office, Boston Centers for Youth & Families, Suffolk County Sheriff's Department, and United States Attorney's Office were called on to start a new tradition.



Representatives from the U.S. Attorney's Office, Boston and Suffolk County law enforcement, and Boston Centers for Youth & Families came together during Youth Violence

prevention work the team is engaged in, specifically on the efforts of the **Early Success Coalition** (or ESC). The ESC has been tasked with helping carry out the prevention work envisioned in Memphis's Operation Safe Community, **the city's comprehensive public safety plan**.

Michelle Fowlkes (pictured at right, below), executive director of the Memphis Shelby Crime Commission, reflected that the prevention component of the plan is often more difficult to support and implement than, say, suppression efforts, because the community cannot see immediate results. And yet, she continued, prevention is the key to changing neighborhoods and making cities safer. By capturing and supporting youths at very young ages, the city improves its chances of making a greater dent in crime over time. Fowlkes noted how these efforts are part of a larger national movement to focus on prevention and to improve the well-being of youths before they get involved in the juvenile justice pipeline.



Michelle Fowlkes notes that it can be difficult to gain community support for prevention measures because the results are not always visible right away.

Keisha Walker (pictured, this paragraph), administrator of the Office of Early Childhood and Youth in the Shelby County Government, and Sandra Allen (pictured in the following paragraph), director of the Center for Children and Parents, Le Bonheur Children's Hospital, serve as co-chairs of the ESC. They explained that the coalition, launched in 2009, has three stated goals: improving healthy birth outcomes, reducing child abuse and neglect,



Keisha Walker heads the Office of Early Childhood and Youth in Shelby County, Tenn.

Prevention Week.

Knowing the benefit of a little good-natured competition, the coalition created three contests targeting kids in elementary, middle, and high school. Boston students were invited to express their frustration—and true talents—with posters, poetry, and rap music. "We had a brainstorming session and [decided to] push the arts angle to engage kids in a positive, productive way," said Jennifer Maconochie, director of Strategic Initiatives and Policies in Boston's Office of the Police Commissioner. "It wasn't the typical sports-based or afterschool program, and we did it on a shoestring budget, with people putting out time, space, and food." Maconochie thanked officials from Detroit, Mich. (a city that had hosted its own antiviolence rap contest), for sharing their experiences. "They gave us advice on outreach and provided their materials for [developing] the rules."

BOSTON'S
2014 National Youth Violence Prevention Week

PEACE RALLY
and announcement of
Anti-Violence Hip Hop
Video Contest Winners!

Youth Standing **STRONG** Against Violence

Thursday, April 10, 2014 - 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm
Doors open at 3:30 pm

Reggie Lewis Track & Athletic Center
at Roxbury Community College
1350 Tremont Street, Roxbury Crossing

Featuring on-air personalities from JAM'N 94.5!

FREE T-SHIRTS FOR THE FIRST 50 PEOPLE THROUGH THE DOORS!

Also featuring Boston's own Emmy Award-winning Hip-Hop Artist **Wyatt Jackson** and his **Dance Crew**

PLUS Cast Members from "Boston's Finest"

With support from the Youth Violence Prevention Funder Learning Collaborative, MacDougal, Target, Police Activities League, JAM'N 94.5, Longwood Security, Crystal Rock and the Reggie Lewis Track & Athletic Center at Roxbury Community College

FREE ADMISSION and Refreshments!

Presented in partnership with the National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention www.nationalforum.org

The highlight of Prevention Week was Thursday's public peace rally, well attended by the community.

"When it comes to preventing violence, Boston's youth are our most powerful allies," said Suffolk County District Attorney Daniel Conley, in a February 2014 press release. "These events aren't just engaging kids and teens in contests and creative pursuits: they're empowering young people at every level to make the world around them a better, safer place for all of us."

To young Boston advocates, the contest went far beyond a

and increasing school readiness. The Coalition was asked to begin work in Memphis's Frayser neighborhood, because Frayser was a community that had not only multiple risk factors but also assets in place that could be leveraged. ESC's early efforts focused on providing prenatal care and home visitation programs. Over time, though, it has expanded to include other kinds of programs and services, such as working with youths with developmental issues and connecting families to support services such as financial aid. The coalition has also organized professional development to support the organization's three goals. For instance, to support the goal of reducing child abuse and neglect, they have arranged for free training for providers who want to introduce parenting education to their clients. Thus far, through this one effort, they've trained more than a hundred parent educators. To support school readiness, the group has worked with childcare centers to introduce developmental assessments and to provide information on how to refer identified youths and families to needed services.



"Don't duplicate, but leverage," Sandra Allen says of collaborative efforts.

It became clear, as Allen and Walker described the multifaceted efforts of the ESC, that collaboration is the key to getting this work done. As Allen commented: "We take what is happening and leverage it with each other. Don't duplicate, but leverage." This approach explains how the more than 65 partners of the

coalition come together to make things happen. They collaborate through workgroups on issues that are related to their core missions. Sometimes, Allen noted, it's better to join with a partner that has already fielded an initiative than to form a new workgroup. Thus, when the coalition wanted to address infant mortality, it was able to identify an initiative already under way that was supported by the health department. The goal of the core leadership team is to determine how best to leverage resources and coordinate work.

desire to win. It was a chance to share their true passion about protecting their homes, families, schools, and friends—about preserving their city. Kashaye Everette–Charles, first-place winner of the poetry contest, eloquently asked the question on everyone's mind:

Why must our youth use guns?
When we have tongues
A mouth to speak
And words to advocate what it is we seek

On the posters were colorful pleas to "change the world and stop the violence" and "stand strong against violence," the theme of this year's Youth Violence Prevention Week. Sketches of friends holding hands next to a school depicted the kind of environment for which Boston kids yearn.

Winning entrants were recognized with gift cards and plaques presented during a school assembly. Acknowledging these posters and poems where students could see the value of speaking out against violence drove home the contest's goal to get kids invested in their communities. Each first-place winner also earned lunch with a VIP—a chance to talk one-on-one with a police chief, district attorney, or other city representative.

"It's critically important to send a message to our young people that they're a vital part of the community," said Massachusetts U.S. Attorney Carmen Ortiz. "We want them to know that they have real power to prevent violence and that there are people who care a great deal about their futures."



Elijah Joy, farthest left, took home first prize in the rap contest. Runners-up were (from second left) Karon Wilson and Lovell Duncan. The young man at far right (unidentified)

The success of this collaborative approach has led to work on a "no wrong door" approach. The members of the coalition realized they could not staff a "one-stop shop," where clients could find all the services they needed. Instead, they've cultivated a network so that, no matter which door is accessed by a youth or family, the client can be directed to additional or better suited services. To facilitate this approach, the group developed a toolkit for making referrals among ESC partners and other agencies in the community ([the toolkit can be downloaded](#)). Allen acknowledged the challenges of a collaborative approach, which cannot succeed without ongoing communication and relationship building. "And it's tough to keep up with what everyone is doing!" she said.

The Early Success Coalition is interested in tracking outcomes for both its evidence-based home visitation programs and other efforts. Allen talked about a new shared database, Shelby Connect, which will greatly help the partners share data and track outcomes. There were the usual security and data-sharing issues that had to be addressed to get the database up and running, but some agencies have already started entering data. A variety of information will be entered, such as the data generated by the home visitation programs (e.g., services being delivered to children; mothers employment/school status), scores related to school readiness, data on infant mortality, and such. The database will allow partners in the network to gather some basic information about what other services a client may be accessing to better address its needs.

The work sounds exciting, complicated, and maybe sometimes overwhelming. But both Allen and Walker agreed that the work is so much easier because, as Walker commented, "We like each other; our strengths complement each other." They both emphasized the importance of having public and private entities working together to address youth violence and well-being. And it's clear that the Early Success Coalition benefits from its synergistic energy and efforts.

acted in the second-place video.

Fourteen-year-old Elijah Joy, winner of the rap contest, sat down with local television station Fox 25 to share his inspiration for [the song](#). The Boston English High School freshman said he "could relate," he's "been through stuff," and that he put his heart into the lyrics. The hip-hop video, filmed over 4 days with help from Boston Centers for Youth & Families Mildred Avenue Community Center, echoed the sentiment of teens who bear the grief of senseless violence. "No more hurt, no more tears.... No more dying, no more crying.... Why be enemies when you can laugh, you can live?... I just want to stop the violence so this song is what I give."

Elijah's soulful words tell Boston's tale—one that has become a daily reality for thousands of youths across the country. Along with the second- and third-place winners of the rap contest, he was celebrated at an April 10 rally. "We had approximately 250 youth at the event, where we highlighted the top three winners from the video contest but also showcased the winning posters and poems," said Jennifer. "The ceremony was a huge success."

The night was full of music, dancing, and laughter, as DJs from JAM'N 94.5 revved up the crowd. But there was a serious moment when Ortiz, Massachusetts's first female and Latina U.S. Attorney, recalled rising above obstacles to get to where she is today.

"Having grown up in circumstances similar to many of them, I relate to the challenges that some of these kids face. If I can help them to realize, by standing before them as the first woman and the first Hispanic U.S. attorney in the district of Massachusetts, that they have the power to be anything they want to be, that's the message these events are designed to deliver."

District Attorney Conley, Sheriff Steven Tompkins, Boston Police Superintendent Randall Halstead, and Co-Leader of Mayor Martin Walsh's Youth Safety Initiative Dan Mulhern also talked about engaging youth to promote peace.

Boston is looking forward to the day when its children will live without fear. But until the violence stops once and for all, the city will continue to rally for peace with music, poetry, art, and camaraderie.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS
& UPCOMING EVENTS**

**NEWS &
VIEWS**

Reports

Funding Opportunities

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Seeks Proposals for High-Risk Mentoring Research

The federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) is seeking bidders for its [High-Risk Youth Mentoring Research](#) program, to support research and evaluations to further examine how certain characteristics, components, and practices of mentoring programs can best support youths who are at particularly high risk for delinquency. Applications for funding are due by 11:59 p.m. (EDT), May 12.

OJJDP Announces Funding for Second Chance Act Juvenile Reentry Reforms

OJJDP has released a funding opportunity for the [Second Chance Act Comprehensive Statewide Juvenile Reentry Systems Reform Planning Program](#). The program will fund 12-month planning grants during which time state or local juvenile justice agencies will convene a reentry task force and develop and finalize a comprehensive statewide juvenile reentry systems reform strategic plan. Applications are due by 11:59 p.m. (EDT), May 13.

OJJDP to Help Established Mentoring Organizations

OJJDP's [Multistate Mentoring Initiative](#) intends to fund qualified, established mentoring organizations as they strengthen or expand their existing mentoring activities within local chapters or subawardees. The mentoring activities include direct one-on-one, group, or peer mentoring services for at-risk and underserved youth populations. Successful applicants should carry out programs that will recognize and address the factors that can lead to or serve as a catalyst for delinquency or other problem behaviors in underserved youth. Applications for funding are due by 11:59 p.m. (EDT), May 12. OJJDP is supporting this same effort but for [National Mentoring Programs](#) under a separate solicitation. Applications from national mentoring programs for this second solicitation are due by 11:59 p.m. (EDT), May 13.

Center for Mental Health Services Accepting Applications for Minority Fellowship Program—Youth

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Center for Mental Health Services is accepting applications for

Education Department Releases Findings on Disparities in School Discipline

The U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights released "[Civil Rights Data Collection: Data Snapshot \(School Discipline\)](#)" earlier this month. The issue brief provides analysis of data from public schools nationwide that show disparities in how students—beginning in preschool—are disciplined based on their race/ethnicity, gender, and disability status. Data reveal that African American students (especially males), American Indian/Alaska Native students, and students with disabilities disproportionately face the most extreme forms of discipline. The data also show that excluding increasing numbers of these students from the classroom causes them to lose instructional time.

Aggression Learned in High School Sports May Spill Over to Teen Relationships

Males who play high school football, basketball, or both are about twice as likely as other boys to be abusing their girlfriends, according to a study from California published in *The Journal of Adolescent Health*. The authors say that "hypermasculine" attitudes encouraged in some sports may foster or compound aggression off the field.

The good news is that organized sports programs can also be a place to teach young men about healthy relationships and avoiding violence.

[Read an abstract of the article here.](#)

Survey Finds Youth Benefit From Violence Prevention Programs

Child Abuse & Neglect: The International Journal has published "[Youth Exposure to Violence Prevention Programs in a National Sample](#)," a paper based on research from the [National Survey of Children's Exposure to Violence \(NatSCEV\)](#). The survey findings show that two of every three children in the United States ages 5–9 and three of every four Americans ages 10–17 have benefited from formal bullying- or violence-prevention programs. NatSCEV, funded by the U.S. Department of Justice, consisted of a national sample of 4,500 children and youths ages 1 month to 17 years in 2011.

Domestic Violence Accounted for One in Five Violent Victimitizations Over Decade Study Period

The Bureau of Justice Statistics has released [Nonfatal Domestic Violence, 2003–12](#). Authors Rachel Morgan and Jennifer Truman present estimates on nonfatal domestic violence from 2003 to 2012. Data are from the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), which collects information on nonfatal crimes reported and not reported to police. The NCVS is a self-report survey administered every 6 months to persons 12 or older from a nationally representative sample of U.S. households.

Some highlights: In 2003–12, domestic violence accounted for 21 percent of all violent crime. A greater percentage of domestic violence was committed by intimate partners (15

fiscal year 2014 for the [NowIs the Time: Minority Fellowship Program—Youth \(NITT–MFP –Y\) grant program](#). The NITT–MFP –Y is part of President Obama's Now Is the Time Plan, to increase access to mental health services for American youth. This program expands the concentration of the current MFP program to support master's-level trained behavioral health providers in psychology, social work, professional counseling, marriage and family therapy, and nursing. The purpose of this grant program is to reduce health disparities and improve behavioral health care outcomes for racially and ethnically diverse populations by increasing the number of culturally competent master's-level behavioral health professionals serving children, adolescents, and populations in transition to adulthood (ages 16–25) in an effort to increase access to, and quality of, behavioral health care for this age group. Applications are due May 14.

National Institute of Justice Announces Availability of \$15 Million to Address School Safety

The [National Institute of Justice \(NIJ\)](#) is seeking applications for funding for research and evaluation on safety in schools nationwide. Under the Comprehensive School Safety Initiative, NIJ will make about \$15 million available for multiple grants that will address school safety issues directly. Each research effort funded must contribute to the base of knowledge and evidence building about school safety. Applicants must register with [Grants.gov](#) before submitting an application. Applications are due May 20, 2014. To access the solicitation, [click here](#).

OJJDP Seeks Talent for Mentoring Children of Incarcerated Parents

OJJDP is seeking bidders for its [Practitioner–Researcher Partnership Mentoring Children of Incarcerated Parents Demonstration Program](#). This demonstration program will support a practitioner–researcher partnership to develop and evaluate new mentoring practices to serve the needs of youth whose parents are incarcerated. Incarcerated parents and their children are a heterogeneous group, and associations between parental incarceration and developmental outcomes are complicated. However, research has shown that having an incarcerated parent can present individual and environmental risks for the child and increase the likelihood of negative outcomes. While mentoring has been shown to be an effective

percent) than by immediate family members (4 percent) or other relatives (2 percent). Current or former boyfriends or girlfriends committed most domestic violence.

LGBTQ Youth Twice as Likely as Others to Be Sent to Detention Facilities for Committing Status Offenses
[LGBTQ Youth and Status Offenses: Improving System Responses and Reducing Disproportionality](#), published this year by the Coalition for Juvenile Justice, finds that lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youths are twice as likely as other youths to be sent to juvenile detention facilities for committing status offenses such as truancy or running away from home. This is so, even though the National Standards for the Care of Youth Charged with Status Offenses specifically call for all LGBTQ youths to "receive fair treatment, equal access to services, and respect and sensitivity from all professionals and other youth in court, agency, service, school and placement."

National Institute of Corrections Reports on How School Climate Can Push LGBT Youth Out of School and Into the Justice System

The National Institute of Corrections just released [Beyond Bullying: How Hostile School Climate Perpetuates the School-to-Prison Pipeline for LGBT Youth](#). The report explains how "school climate has a profound impact on the mental, physical, and emotional health of LGBT students and is a crucial factor in pushing these students out of school and into the juvenile justice system."

News

***FindYouthInfo.gov* Holds Contest for Best Young Ideas on Influencing Others**

The federal Web site *FindYouthInfo.gov* is holding a contest open to 16- to 24-year-olds seeking poster or photography submissions demonstrating the most effective way of making a positive difference in the lives of others. You can read more about the contest and [enter here](#).

OJJDP Administrator Listenbee Seeks Identification of and Appropriate Treatment for Tribal Children Exposed to Violence

The charge of the Advisory Committee of the Attorney General's Task Force on American Indian and Alaska Native Children Exposed to Violence is to "improve identification of and appropriate treatment and services for children who have been exposed to violence in Indian country" and "involve American Indian and Alaska Native youth in the solution," said OJJDP Administrator Robert Listenbee, April 3, during an interview on Native America Calling, an online call-in program for Native communities.

Detroit and Wayne State Police Discuss Causes of Youth Violence on Local Radio Show

Detroit (Mich.) Police Department Captain Harold Rochon and Wayne State University Police Chief Tony Holt went on WDET's Craig Fahle Show April 14 to discuss what causes youth violence and how to respond to it. [Listen to their](#)

intervention for youth, more research is needed to understand how the unique needs of youth who have incarcerated parents are best supported through mentoring. All applications are due by 11:59 p.m. (EDT), May 27.

National Institute of Justice Seeking Proposals for Research and Evaluation on Trafficking in Persons

The [National Institute of Justice](#) is seeking applications for funding for research and evaluation projects that support federal, state, local, and tribal criminal justice agencies in combating trafficking in persons. NIJ is particularly interested in studies that develop methods to effectively measure the cost of trafficking in persons as well as evaluation studies of countertrafficking programs and tools. NIJ anticipates that up to \$2 million total may become available for awards under this solicitation. From the total amount, NIJ anticipates that it will make one to four awards for a 36-month project period. Applicants must register with [Grants.gov](#) before submitting an application. Applications are due June 2, 2014. To access the solicitation, [click here](#).

SAMHSA Seeks Applications for Healthy Transitions Program to Help Youths With Serious Mental Health Conditions

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is announcing a new grant program, "[Now is the Time](#)" **Healthy Transitions: Improving Life Trajectories for Youth and Young Adults With, or at Risk for, Serious Mental Health Conditions**. The purpose of the program is to improve access to treatment and support services for youth and young adults ages 16–25 who either have, or are at risk of developing, a serious mental health condition. Applications are due June 13.

Center for Mental Health Services Accepting Applications for Now Is the Time AWARE Cooperative Agreements and Grants

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS) is accepting applications for fiscal year 2014 Now Is the Time Project AWARE (Advancing Wellness and Resilience in Education) [State Educational Agency Program \(NITT–AWARE–SEA\) cooperative agreements](#) and [Local Educational Agency \(NITT–AWARE–LEA\) grants](#).

[conversation](#).

Other Resources

Federal Victims of Crimes Office Releases Next Four Videos in Trauma Series

The U.S. Department of Justice's Office for Victims of Crime has released the next four videos (nos. 5 through 8) in its series [Through Our Eyes: Children, Violence, and Trauma](#). OVC urges all to watch the videos and read the associated resource guides for solutions to serving children affected by violence and trauma in their schools, homes, and communities.

The purpose of the NITT–AWARE–**SEA** Cooperative Agreement program is to build and expand the capacity of State Educational Agencies to increase awareness of mental health issues among school-aged youth, to provide training for school personnel and other adults who interact with school-aged youths to detect and respond to mental health issues in children and young adults, and to connect children, youths, and families who may have behavioral health issues with appropriate services. The NITT–AWARE–**LEA** program aims to help local educational agencies begin to support the training of school personnel and other adults who interact with youth in both school settings and communities to detect and respond to mental illness in children and youth, including how to encourage adolescents and their families experiencing these problems to seek treatment. Applications for both programs are due June 16.

Education Department Makes \$9.75M Available to Local Educational Agencies for Communities Affected by Pervasive Violence

The U.S. Department of Education is making an estimated \$9.75 million available in grants to Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) to increase their capacity to help schools in communities with pervasive violence better address the needs of affected students and break the cycle of violence. All LEAs—that is, public school districts including charter schools that are considered LEAs under state law—are eligible to apply. Applications are due June 30. [Read how to apply here.](#)

Training Opportunities

National District Attorneys Association Leads Webinar on Expert Testimony in Human Trafficking

Rami Badway of the National District Attorneys Association (NDDA) will lead a 2-hour Webinar offering a template for various types of expert witness testimony in human trafficking trials, May 14, beginning at 1 p.m. NDDA is the world's oldest and largest professional organization representing criminal prosecutors. The Webinar will be carried through an eLearning portal of the Midwest Regional Children's Advocacy Centers, which offers continuing education units for its Webinars. To participate, [register here.](#)

USC Chair in Law and Psychology to Discuss Research, Practice for Child Forensic Interviewers

Thomas D. Lyon, the Judge Edward J. and Ruey L. Guirado Chair in Law and Psychology at the University of Southern California, will lead a 2-hour Webinar on the most recent updates on current research and practice for child forensic interviewers in child abuse cases, May 15, starting at 1 p.m. To participate, [register here](#).

Coalition for Juvenile Justice Annual Conference

The Coalition for Juvenile Justice will hold its **2014 Annual Conference, "Looking Back, Planning Ahead: A Vision for the Next 40 Years in Juvenile Justice,"** during June 18–21, at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, D.C.

Contact Us

Send questions or feedback about the newsletter to NFYVP@dsgonline.com or [subscribe](#).

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