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## SAN JOSE MENTORS BUDDING PRODUCERS

by Carrie Nathans

## MEMPHIS FAITH LEADERS ATTEND POLICE ACADEMY TRAINING

by Alison Lake Benadada

On Sept. 26 in Memphis, Tenn., a violent juvenile flash mob erupted after a high school football game—the city's second incident of youth violence that month. In response, Memphis Police Department Director Toney Armstrong called for more law enforcement at school events, noting, "It is also imperative that parents and guardians become more engaged in their children's day-to-day activities." These events underscore the ongoing need to maintain and nurture community partnerships to curb youth violence in Memphis, despite progress reducing gang activity and other violence.<sup>1</sup>

Faith communities have had a visible role in this citywide effort for years. Since 2012, the Memphis Police Department has engaged in a valuable partnership with the city's clergy and faith-based leaders through its Clergy Police Academy (CLPA). During the 5-week program, clergy and faith leaders receive 15 hours of training from law enforcement staff. The program has produced 172 graduates.



Born talent is a gift. But with a good teacher, the tools and time to practice, and an open stage, talent can become art.

As lucky as it is to have a natural skill, honing one's craft still takes resources. This concept is religion to the media mentors of the City of San Jose, Calif., Digital Arts Underserved and Gifted (U&G) program, who are linking youths with the space, equipment, and guidance they need to truly be stars.

Intercept, engage, ignite ... words you don't typically hear when it comes to college and career prep. But this is U&G's mission, and seeing it through are audio engineers, deejays, graphic designers, and songwriters. Four community centers—Mayfair DJ Academy, Roosevelt Digital Arts Troupe Academy, and Alma and Seven Trees Music Studios—have opened their doors to San Jose's diamonds in the rough. These kids are budding digital artists from underprivileged neighborhoods. When crime and gang activity are at their peak, the centers offer more than a safe alternative. They are a haven for self-expression—an interactive classroom teaching the



Clergy Police Academy Graduation Class  
Session 3  
April 11, 2013



### **2013 CLPA Graduating Class**

Sgt. Julius Beasley of the department's crime prevention unit hopes participating clergy will bring the lessons learned in training to their communities, achieving "more collaborative involvement and a stronger, active presence that is visible to community residents." Beasley said this includes "creative partnerships with law enforcement to combat crime and environmental factors that often breed crime, such as poverty, neighborhood blight, gang culture, truancy, and inadequate parental supervision."

### **Clergy and Police Strengthen Ties**

Launched by Memphis police and faith leaders, CLPA is an educational awareness program intended to support and strengthen collaboration between faith-based communities and law enforcement. The curriculum consists of classroom instruction and group discussion, emphasizing common law enforcement and crime-related issues that affect clergy and their congregations.

Faith communities often provide families and youth with information, counseling, and support. Through coordination with local police departments, they are better equipped to enhance the capacity of communities to respond to criminal violence with effective networks of victim assistance and faith-based support.

### **Diverse Trainings Promote Safety**

According to its mission, CLPA "aims to help consolidate the efforts of both law enforcement and faith-based leaders to create a stronger, safer city for all citizens." The initiative helps clergy understand how police deal with crime professionally and personally. Participants receive classes on domestic abuse and violence, sex crimes and human trafficking, gangs and juvenile crimes, and homicides and suicides. A graduation ceremony recognizes those who complete academy classes.

The justice departments, organizations, and professionals who lead CLPA trainings include U.S. Attorney Edward Stanton; FBI Special Agent Tracey Harris-Branch (human trafficking); County District Attorney General Amy Weirich (criminal justice

best possible lessons.

What happens here is professional training. Hip-hop artists and industry pros in photography, film, writing, and production help young people cultivate their skills. Media mentors are city staff and volunteers with extensive experience. Some are even former U&G students, keeping the wheels of a virtuous system in motion.

The centers give teens a taste of theory, composition, directing, acting, and graphic design. There's so much inspiration pulsing in the studios that students want more—more learning, more education, more opportunity. And that's the conduit to a major in music or a career in digital arts.

Funded by San Jose's Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services (PRNS) and site startup grants from Adobe, the high-quality equipment is another boon. When a singer comes in to lay down tracks, she is getting the real experience—the instrumental accompaniment, the mixing and mastering ... even the recording.

To raise more money, PRNS launched the Indiegogo Underserved and Gifted campaign. With perks like CDs, T-shirts, studio time, and photo shoots, local businesses, digital media companies, and individual supporters chipped in, netting about \$5,000 last summer. The campaign's success softened the blow of a stagnant budget.

The U&G initiative simply works, and participants have received national and international praise. "So many students go on to pursue [postsecondary] education after they complete high school," said Phillip Du, a U&G volunteer media mentor and assistant.

Marlo Custodio, academy director for the Roosevelt Digital Arts Troupe, is one of the best examples. Now a documentary filmmaker and community organizer, he graduated from the University of California, Santa Cruz, with a degree in film and digital media studies. Although Custodio's loyalty runs deep for his community and neighborhood youth, his creative abilities know no bounds. He has produced for Google, Intel, and ASUS, and his work has even played at the White House.

For the kids whose school and job obligations leave little free time, there's always summer camp. At the Roosevelt Community Center, teens learn how to bring their movie ideas to fruition. It's a crash course in filmmaking that has students dreaming big.

"Countless types of projects are created at our studios," said Du. "One notable one was a music

system); judges from the juvenile court system; police supervisors and officers from department bureaus such as homicide, domestic violence, child abuse and child sexual abuse, gangs, and organized crime (undercover operations); and other agencies that provide family services, youth intervention, and victims assistance.

When addressing youth and youth violence, CLPA discusses gang awareness and intervention, identifies mentoring opportunities through the juvenile justice system, and reviews community outreach initiatives emphasizing youth violence prevention and support.

During the session, clergy also accompany officers on neighborhood patrols. This optional "ride along" component is part of the curriculum. Participants have reported that this was the most meaningful part of the training. "I would safely say over 90 percent of the clergy participated in the ride-along," Sgt. Beasley said. "Most have expressed a greater appreciation and respect for law enforcement officers, as well as a greater awareness of the serious social, economic, and criminal challenges existing in our communities."

### **Building Mutual Understanding**

The program is also intended to change clergy perceptions of the police. "We conduct an end-of-training survey assessment that inquires about the 'before and after' perception of the police," said Sgt. Beasley. "An overwhelming majority reported their perception about the police improved, while the rest reported that it remained the same, which was generally positive."

The clergy academy is open to leaders from all faith traditions and religious denominations. For example, several clergy from the Muslim community have graduated from the training.

Sgt. Beasley shared another prominent example of police–clergy cooperation to reduce youth violence in Memphis: "The Breaking the Cycle BOYS Symposium was a very successful collaboration earlier this year between local law enforcement, clergy leaders from the academy, and other community leaders. Over 400 teenage males throughout the Memphis school system attended the symposium. The impact was visible and meaningful."

### **Focusing on Positive Gains**

Pastor Keith Norman of First Baptist Church on Broad Avenue in Memphis has participated in the National Forum and clergy academy since its inception several years ago. "I thought clergy needed to know more about what the police force is doing," he said. "We are on the ground in a lot of urban communities. It is important as community stakeholders to present the information about law enforcement in a

video recorded at Seven Trees Music Studio and filmed by Roosevelt Digital Arts. The video was entered in an international media contest [hosted] by Adobe, and won first place (beating 1,300 submissions worldwide) in the Music Video category.

"Receiving first place meant so much to this youth," said Custodio. "Ever since, he has been in this momentum of success." This month, three new short films were chosen to be in the San Jose International Short Film Festival [to address] violence and crime prevention.

Since 2011, U&G has mentored some 600 San Jose youths. The next goal is ramping up operations and building a connection with tech companies in Silicon Valley. If they can swing it, this could mean more teens applying to (and graduating from) college, and more of those grads getting the jobs they really want. What U&G is really after, though, is *opportunity*. After all, how many people can take their passion all the way?

Learn more about the Underserved and Gifted initiative:

<https://www.facebook.com/underservedandgifted>

## NEWS & VIEWS

### **Reports**

#### **Collecting Recidivism Data**

Published by the Urban Institute, [\*Improving Recidivism as a Performance Measure\*](#) is a first step toward advancing knowledge on what works in sentencing and corrections policy. The report lays out a plan for better understanding reoffending indicators, comparing across groups and over time, and using the results to improve outcomes. According to the authors, recidivism would be a more meaningful performance measure if states employed a wide range of reoffending metrics.

#### **Some Bullying Declines With Age; Cyberbullying Increases**

*School Psychology Quarterly's* recent [report](#) suggests cyberbullying worsens with age. Based on victimization and perpetration data obtained from 1,180 fifth through eighth grade students, researchers found cyberbullying increases as students get older—particularly among girls. Girls are more likely to experience verbal and cyberbullying than boys, while

nonthreatening way."

When Norman attended CLPA's first session in 2012, he was pleased to learn about the police force's diverse work in communities. "We heard the positive news," he said. "So often when we hear police stories, we only hear the negative. Through the clergy academy, we are able to bring voice to the positive initiatives and bring them into the communities."

### Inviting Youth Participation

Norman's church hosts clergy academy graduations and receptions. The church "bridges understanding of critical issues" by working closely with Memphis police and participating on a community advisory board. First Baptist also invites youth to participate in these events and contribute their insights and opinions about reducing youth and community violence.

"By hosting the forums locally, we are able to provide a place for youth to have input on what they think problems are," Norman said. Young people have provided insights on factors contributing to violence, such as the need for a safe environment, positive family and home life dynamics, and health care. "As adults, we are removed and think we know the answers," said Norman, "but when we listen to children, we learn a lot more. We are able to build strategies linking to youth and their households, which gives [us] a better chance of solving problems."

When asked what role clergy can play in reducing youth violence, especially after receiving CLPA training, Sgt. Beasley responded: "Be a stronger voice and advocate for programs and initiatives to address youth violence. Provide facilities and resources to accommodate athletic programs, afterschool programs, tutoring programs, mentoring programs, and youth forums, symposiums, and seminars."

<sup>1</sup>Sue Badeau. 2012. "[Philanthropic Engagement With Community Youth Violence Prevention Initiatives.](#)" *Making the Link*, Issue 2.

## UPDATE

### National Forum Welcomes Five Cities

Five new cities have joined the National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention. With OJJDP's support, Long Beach, Calif.; Louisville, Ky.; Baltimore, Md.; Cleveland, Ohio; and Seattle, Wash., will continue their work to prevent and reduce youth and gang violence. The new grantees were announced at the Annie E. Casey Foundation's KIDS COUNT 25th

boys are likelier to be physically bullied. Although verbal and physical bullying decrease as students get older, the transition from elementary to middle school is often a time when the trend temporarily reverses.

### Improving Youth Justice Programs

The Federal Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice has published its [2013 Recommendations to the President, Congress, and OJJDP](#) for the study, dissemination, and implementation of youth justice–focused programs. The committee explains the need for evidence-based programs and practices, youth voice, school engagement, juvenile justice reform, and the reduction of disproportionate minority contact.

### Reducing Recidivism and Improving Youth Outcomes

This [paper](#) urges juvenile justice systems to use validated risk assessments in identifying youth who are least and most likely to reoffend. Objective criteria should be used to minimize juvenile justice system interventions for youths with a low risk of reoffending, focusing the most intensive interventions on those likely to reoffend.

## News

### School Justice Partnership Program Receives \$1.9 Million

The Office of Justice Programs has awarded a \$1.9 million grant to the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges to participate in the School Justice Partnership Program, [Keeping Kids in School and Out of Court](#). OJJDP is working with the Department of Education and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to implement the program, which proposes to reform schools' zero-tolerance discipline policies.

### Launch of Smart on Juvenile Justice Initiative

On Sept. 26, 2014, Atty. Gen. Eric Holder announced the launch of OJJDP's [Smart on Juvenile Justice Initiative](#) in Washington, D.C. The effort supports three grant programs that promote juvenile justice system reform, provide training and technical assistance to juvenile justice prosecutors, and address racial and ethnic disparities. OJJDP and the Pew Charitable Trusts will assist Georgia, Hawaii, and Kentucky in their plans to cut recidivism, decrease correctional spending, improve public safety, and reduce youth contact with the justice system.

### Justice Department Launches New Violence Reduction Network

Camden, N.J.; Chicago, Ill.; Detroit, Mich.; Oakland and Richmond, Va.; and Wilmington, Del., were the first cities to participate in a new, 3-day [Violence Reduction Network \(VRN\) summit](#) in Washington, D.C. Numerous agencies, including the Bureau of

Anniversary Reception Dinner on Oct. 1.

Each city will receive \$20,000 in planning grants. Once their plans are in place, they will be eligible for additional funding to coordinate resources, engage in community outreach, and increase involvement of key stakeholders.

To encourage their violence prevention work and transition to self-sustainability, OJJDP also awarded the existing 10 Forum cities \$2 million, including \$1 million from the Department of Education to fund the sites' school climate and safety improvement efforts. These cities have strived to curb violence through multidisciplinary approaches and evidence-based strategies, bringing youth, faith-based communities, and law enforcement together in a shared mission.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS & UPCOMING EVENTS

### Training Opportunities

#### Gang Resistance Education and Training

Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) Officer Training is a classroom certification course that teaches the fundamental aspects of G.R.E.A.T.—a school-based life-skills competency program led by police officers. G.R.E.A.T.'s goal is violence prevention, especially through resistance to gang activity. This sequential training, hosted by the Institute for Intergovernmental Research, presents an effective course of interaction with communities and schools and demonstrates how to implement elementary and middle school curricula for the school year and summer. [Apply](#) for upcoming trainings: Nov. 3–12 in New Orleans, La.; Nov. 10–19 in Newark, N.J.; and Dec. 1–10 in Gulfport, Mo.

#### Judicial Institute on Domestic Child Sex Trafficking

In collaboration with OJJDP, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges will host the [National Judicial Institute on Domestic Child Sex Trafficking](#), Nov. 3–5, in Reno, Nev. This training will provide juvenile and family court judges with tools to improve outcomes for domestic child sex trafficking victims. Attendees will learn how to better identify victims and children at risk of sex trafficking and explore prevention and intervention strategies addressing victims' needs.

#### Webinar on Alcohol and Evidentiary Issues

On Nov. 13 at 3 p.m., ["A Judicial Conversation on Emerging Evidentiary Issues and Alcohol"](#) will

Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; Drug Enforcement Administration; Federal Bureau of Investigation; and Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, convened Sept. 29–Oct. 1, 2014, in an effort to curb violent crime and promote public safety. The VRN aims to help localities access a broad spectrum of Justice Department resources and strengthen partnerships to end violent crime.

#### NIJ Awards \$63 Million for School Safety Research

The National Institute of Justice has [awarded nearly \\$63 million to school districts and research organizations](#) through the Comprehensive School Safety Initiative (CSSI). Launched in early 2014, CSSI targets school safety improvements with the provision of research-backed best practices for programs and policies. The initiative funds 24 research projects under two different solicitations: "Investigator-Initiated Research" and "Developing Knowledge About What Works to Make Schools Safe."

#### OJP Awards \$62 Million to Support Youth Mentoring

The Office of Justice Programs has awarded more than \$41 million to national organizations that will strengthen, expand, and implement [youth mentoring activities and development programs](#). An additional \$21 million was awarded to nonprofit mentoring organizations. The funding will support quality mentoring services for youth in high-risk environments, children of incarcerated parents, and tribal youth.

#### Advancing Juvenile Justice Reform

OJJDP and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation are providing \$2 million for [innovative youth treatment and system reforms](#). The funding will support four organizations: the Center for Children's Law and Policy; the National Youth Screening and Assessment Project at the University of Massachusetts Medical School; the National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice at Policy Research, Inc.; and the Robert F. Kennedy National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice. Together, OJJDP and the MacArthur Foundation will support training and technical assistance for states and local governments to meet the mental health needs of system-involved youth, reduce racial and ethnic disparities, and promote coordination and integration for youth involved in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

#### Holder Announces School Safety Grants in Baltimore

Atty. Gen. Eric Holder visited Baltimore, Md., in October, announcing [federal funding to study school safety](#). Baltimore County Public Schools and the University of Maryland will receive nearly \$2

discuss how different courts handle alcohol use as a risk factor for youth violence, focusing specifically on evidentiary issues related to underage drinking.

### **Juvenile Interview and Interrogation Techniques**

First responders, new school resource officers, patrol officers, and new juvenile detectives are invited to attend the **Introduction to Juvenile Interview and Interrogation Techniques**, Nov. 20–21, in Columbus, Ohio. The course will help officers develop fundamental investigative skills, tactics, and procedures to effectively interview adolescent suspects and witnesses.

### **National Mentoring Summit**

**"Expanding the Mentoring Effect"** is a summit designed for mentoring practitioners, researchers, corporate partners, government and civic leaders, and youth-serving organizations. More than 60 workshops will share successful program models, research, technologies, and resources that have advanced mentoring's positive effect on young people. The summit will be held Jan. 28–30, 2015, in Washington, D.C.

million to support research on students with emotional and behavioral health issues. Baltimore's study, "Promoting School Safety: A Comprehensive Emotional and Behavioral Health Model," will use a randomized sample of 44 schools to assess the effectiveness of a new crisis response and prevention system. The University of Maryland will examine a large-scale, multifaceted mental health–focused intervention.

### **Congressman Fattah Announces Justice Grants**

Last month, Philadelphia, Pa., Congressman Chaka Fattah announced **Department of Justice grants** for Temple University and the Philadelphia Youth Violence Prevention Collaborative (PYVPC). Temple University was awarded \$425,512 for a study that will gauge the effect of different police strategies on violence and property crime. The \$222,200 PYVPC grant will sustain Philadelphia's work as part of the National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention. Funds will support implementation of their strategic plan and provide technical assistance to the School District of Philadelphia.

### **Justice Department Announces National Trust-Building Effort**

When 18-year-old Michael Brown was fatally shot by Police Officer Darren Wilson in Ferguson, Mo., protests brought national attention to police–community relationships. The Justice Department's **National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice** will invest in training, evidence-based strategies, policy development, and research to reduce distrust and hostility between law enforcement and the communities they serve. A 3-year grant has been awarded to John Jay College of Criminal Justice, Yale Law School, the Urban Institute, and the Center for Policing Equity at the University of California, Los Angeles, to train officers and communities on procedural fairness and incorporate effective strategies at five pilot sites.

### **Monterey County Receives \$17.8 Million to Address Youth Development**

Monterey County, Calif., has received \$17.8 million in **federal grants for teacher preparation, youth development, and violence prevention**, including a comprehensive approach to address youth violence in Salinas. The news followed publication of a study showing Monterey County topped all of the state's counties in youth violence deaths. For 3 years, the Office of Education has been providing training on Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports, making it a natural recipient for this funding. The program's goals are to connect children, youth, and families to appropriate services and supports, and to improve conditions for learning and behavioral outcomes.

# Contact Us

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

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