
Six Month Action Plan

Early Steps in the Plan to help Stop the Violence and Close the Gap

By: The PACT (People Advocating Change Together)

For: The Council of 100 & The PACT of 1000

Circulated: July 20, 2007

Dear Reader:

This document presents YOUR ideas for kick-starting a collective action plan to 'stop the violence' and 'close the achievement and health gaps' among black youth and families in Pinellas County, beginning in South St. Petersburg.

It presents objectives and action steps.

Some of the work has begun. Hundreds of you have taken part in:

- street-by-street outreach
- advocacy to save youth funding
- recruiting parents and youth to become part of our leadership, and
- organizing new entities such as the high-powered Independent Taskforce intended to aid the School Board in shepherding a new approach to closing the achievement gap.

If you have questions, and feedback OR to volunteer, please call or e-mail.

WE WILL SUCCEED BECAUSE WE ARE WORKING TOGETHER.

Yours in Service,

Gypsy C. Gallardo

Co-Chair

727-866-0873

reachout@powerbroker magazine.com

Gwendolyn Reese

Co-Chair

727-896-2677

gwenreese@tampabay.rr.com

Eugene Givens, Ph.D. (727-865-8943), Winnie Foster (727-867-8994), Sharon Joy Kleitsch (727-550-9660), Carol McNamee (727-244-6417), Marie Nelson, Ed.D. (727-712-3612)

Results Plan – Six Months

(July 1, 2007 to December 31, 2007)

Priority Projects

Mentors Now! Eliminate the waiting lists of black children, approximately 180, awaiting mentors from groups like Big Brothers Big Sisters, Eckerd Youth Alternatives, Gulfcoast Community and others. Our goal is to recruit 180 mentors by Dec 31 2007.

Service Connection In partnership with the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, Circuit 6, involve 200 young ex-offenders – charged, arrested or detained - in community service, volunteerism and leadership for projects and events by PACT members.

Collective Advocacy Engage 200 advocates to positively impact decisions about money and policy that affect our youth. Use our presence and voice at upcoming budget hearings and workshops by the County, City, School Board, and Legislature. Use petitions as a tool to engage and educate citizens. Support special needs such help with recruiting a new plaintiff for the Crowley case.

Special Purpose Action Groups

After School Workgroup This group will assist in identifying and leveraging funding, provide technical assistance and recruit partners needed to increase the number of after school slots available to school-aged youth in Midtown by the 2008-09 school year.

Youth & Parents This group of parents and young leaders will identify and involve other parents and youth who can become a major force in reclaiming the future of our children. Organizers plan to involve 50 parents and youth by year-end.

Independent Education Taskforce A powerhouse group of experts, leaders and parents will offer the School Board an innovative partnership. They are committed to serve as a special advisory group offering on-going support, advice, and technical assistance to the School Board as it moves on the policies, programs, and budget decisions that can help close the black achievement gap.

Neighbors Work In partnership with CONA the PACT will convene a group of community leaders to create a neighborhood-level strategy for reducing and preventing juvenile crime (for release Jan 2008).

Health Equality This group will develop and implement strategies to address the health disparities that disproportionately impact the black community. PACT will join forces with the African American Health Forum to expand outreach efforts for the event.

'Results' is the Word

So many of you have said it in so many words; "It is imperative that we produce results and avoid the booby trap of meeting for the sake of meeting." Everyone agrees – people will commit when they see that we are serious about achieving real results for our children.

Council Quotes

"It is vital that you show people that their time is producing results. If you do, you will keep them on board. If you don't, they will drop off."

- Theresa Jones, Director of Community Affairs, City of St. Petersburg

"We must be prepared to take on short-term achievable goals that can make a measurable difference."

- Cliff Burney, Education Chair, St. Petersburg Branch NAACP

"We cannot subject this movement to the paralysis of analysis."

- Roger Clendening, Father Services

"This plan will succeed because individuals take action steps that make a difference."

- Larry Newsome, CEO of Urban Development Solutions, Inc.

Why Target These Results

180 New Mentors

Black children are two times more likely than white children to be wait-listed for a match to a mentor in Pinellas County. When a single mom reaches out to request a mentor and role model for her child, more often than not, they will drop off the list before being matched.

200 Young Offenders in Service (to start)

Zip codes 33712, 33711 and 33705 make up 49% of all youth referred to the juvenile justice system in the city, making them 4.7 times more likely to be referred than white children and resulting in realities like the fact that black men are 4 times more likely to be imprisoned in their lifetimes than white men.

200 Policy Advocates

The community suffers a shortage of advocates watch-dogging and safeguarding public policy decisions that affect our youth. This includes widespread budget cuts to youth and family support programs in the wake of state property tax reform.

More After-School Slots by 2008-09

Research shows that at risk boys not enrolled in after-school programs are 6 times more likely to commit a crime and girls are 2 times more likely to become pregnant, while youth in after-school are 2.5 times more likely to enroll in higher education. After school programs in Midtown serve only 21% of its school-aged youth, while 78% are left idle after school.

50 Parent, Family and Youth Activists by Year-End

Beyond the fact that they are the key to our future, the youth and parents recruited by The PACT will serve in an indispensable leadership role. They are able to contribute a real-life perspective to the question of how to reclaim the future of our youth.

Independent Education Taskforce for 2007-08 School Year

Only 24% of black boys graduate from Pinellas County high schools with a standard diploma. The black achievement gap stands at double digits in reading and math compared with white children. Meanwhile, the Pinellas County School Board is embroiled in two court cases being heard simultaneously in federal and state court.

Grassroots Neighborhood Strategy by 2008

Several neighborhoods in South St. Pete suffer high rates of juvenile crime. These include Bartlett Park, 13th Street, Harbordale, which had two back-to-back murders in the Spring of 2007, and Child's Park, which spawned three back-to-back murders in the Spring of 2006. Neighborhood Associations have remained active in the formation of the PACT.

PACT Progress So Far

April 30th The PACT hosted Florida's new Deputy Director of the Department of Juvenile Justice and 30 practitioners and leaders to discuss the possibility of piloting a new approach to delinquency prevention in South St. Petersburg.

May 7th The PACT convened a meeting of 35+ faith leaders and asked them to serve as the heart of a new collective action plan. They unanimously agreed it is time for collective action.

May 19th "Resounding Step" – More than 350 leaders from 180+ organizations gathered at Mt Zion Progressive. They agreed and committed to collective action.

June 2nd "Rain or Shine, Baby" – More than 100 volunteers showed up in a tropical storm to outreach to Southside households. Rain curtailed most of the outreach but volunteers rescheduled, more determined than ever to get out door-to-door.

June 15th "Hope that something would actually happen" - 120 leaders convened at the Woodson African American History Museum for the inaugural meeting of the Council of 100 to discuss setting and reaching goals and shedding the baggage that has killed collective action before, including sabotage, nay saying, gate keeping, and ego. Tyna Middleton said afterwards "This was the first community meeting I've been to in a long time that gave me hope that something would actually happen."

June 16th - Outreach Round 2 "From Crisis to Care" An even larger group gathered for Round 2 of street outreach. They encountered 120 people who asked for PACT to stay in touch or help their family, including a mother of 5 facing threats of violence from her boyfriend. By 2 am the next day PACT Co-Chair Gwen Reese had delivered the family safely to a shelter in Tampa. Shelters in St. Pete didn't have enough space.

July 3rd - Independent Education Taskforce Meets - New Co-Chairs Dr. Henry Oliver and Dr. Mildred Brown met with PACT Co-Chair Gypsy Gallardo to shape the new mission and direction of the Taskforce.

July 10th "A lamb shall lead them" 30 youth helped save youth funding by showing up in force at a City Council budget workshop to discuss, among other cuts, the elimination of the Summer Youth Intern Program and Social Action Funding. The latest news – Council agreed to set aside \$500,000 for social and art programs.

Reports and pictures of select PACT events are available online at www.powerbrokermagazine.com.

Upcoming PACT Events Get Involved:

Call 727-420-2819 to tell us which Action Group or PACT Project you support.

Tuesday, Aug 21st @ 10A

The Education Taskforce will convene its full body for the first time to discuss a draft proposal to the School Board to serve as a special advisory group offering support, advice and technical assistance in the district's efforts to close the gap. FMI: Dr. Henry Oliver at 727-867-6953.

Thursday, August 23rd @ 6P

The Mentors Action Group will gather officers of sororities, fraternities, civic and social groups to launch the drive to eliminate wait lists of black children seeking mentors. FMI: Deborah Figgs-Sanders at 727-420-2819.

Saturday, August 25-10 AM to 12 PM

Parent, Family and Youth Action Group
FMI: Gwen Reese at 727-896-2677

Tuesday, Sept 18th @ 6-7:30P

The next meeting of the Council of 100 will introduce the new Co-Chairs. Members will also discuss the 6 Month Action Plan. FMI: Gwen Reese at 727-896-2677.

Friday, Oct 11th @ 11:30A

The After-School 08 workgroup will lunch with clergy, experts, practitioners and potential funders to plan a substantial increase in slots open to Midtown families in 2008-09. FMI: Thelma Davis at 727-894-2969.

Each One Reach One. To help with the drive to get adults involved in "every day" acts of mentoring and outreach to young people. FMI: David White, Bay City Kings at (**his number**).

Please note: All PACT members will receive bimonthly updates on PACT activities via e-mail. To request updates by phone updates call Carol McNamee at 727-244-6417. If you are not already receiving PACT updates via e-mail, send your e- address to us at reachout@powerbrokermagazine.com.

Your Feedback and Support

Your feedback and support are important. Please tell us what we should add or change about this Plan OR what we should factor into the longer-term vision that is being developed by the Council of 100. Please call on any of us to provide feedback.

Gypsy C. Gallardo, Co-Chair
727-866-0873
reachout@powerbrokermagazine.com

Gwendolyn Reese, Co-Chair
727-896-2677
gwenreese@tampabay.r.com

Eugene Givens, Ph.D.
727-865-8943
Egivens3@yahoo.com

Winnie Foster
727-867-8994
Wfoster26@hotmail.com

Sharon Joy Kleitsch
727-550-9660
kleitsch@verizon.net

Carol McNamee
727-244-6417
cmcnamee@tampabay.rr.com

Marie Nelson, Ed.D.
727-712-3612
mnelson@nl.edu

About the Council of 100 and the PACT of 1000. The Council of 100 and the PACT of 1000 now involves more than 700 individuals who have committed to work together to help stop the violence and close the achievement gap. While they are too numerous to list here, the PACT is working to make a full list and directory available on-line. For now, you can download a list of organizations who said “Count Me In!” at www.powerbrokermagazine.com.