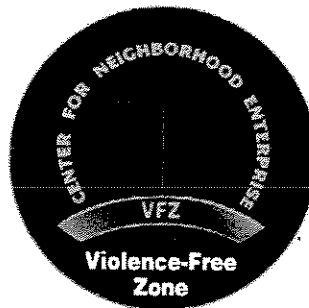


Center for Neighborhood Enterprise



Reducing Youth Violence The Violence-Free Zone Initiative

Center for Neighborhood Enterprise

The Center for Neighborhood Enterprise was founded in 1981 by Robert L. Woodson, Sr., to help residents of low-income neighborhoods address the problems of their communities. CNE's Mission is to empower neighborhood leaders to promote solutions that reduce crime and violence, restore families, revitalize low-income communities, and create economic enterprise.



CNE staff and community partners in the Violence-Free Zone initiative.

How CNE Reduces Youth Violence:

- Identifies local leaders that have the trust and confidence of young people in their communities.
- Provides guidance, technical assistance, and linkages to sources of support to these leaders, helping them build strong community-based organizations that with CNE's assistance can implement the Violence-Free Zone initiative in their areas.
- These local leaders are able to transform young adults from the neighborhoods who want to become ambassadors of peace in their communities. They are screened and trained to become Youth Advisors.
- The Youth Advisors act as hall monitors, mentors, and counselors in the schools and in after-school programs, building strong relationships with the young people in the community. Because they have faced and overcome the same challenges, these committed young adults have a special rapport and influence with the youth.
- CNE continues to provide program guidance, technical assistance, and maintains quality control. The Center also documents their activities and impact, and reports them to the larger public.
- CNE takes the best practices from each site and shares them with the other sites as well as with other locales that want to have a Violence-Free Zone implemented in their areas.

The Violence-Free Zone

A Model for Stopping Violence in the Schools & Creating Peace in the Community

HISTORY

The CNE Violence-Free Zone program had its roots in January, 1997, when a 12-year-old boy was shot and killed in violence between rival youth factions in a crime-ridden Washington, DC public housing development. CNE coached and supported a local grassroots group as they brought the leaders of the two warring factions to CNE's offices to negotiate a truce. Once peace was achieved, the youths were provided with life skills counseling and jobs as an alternative to the drug and crime-filled lifestyle they had agreed to leave. At the end of nine years, there have been no crew-related homicides in the area. This model was adapted in other parts of DC and cities where similar successes have been realized.



Above: Baltimore VFZ executive director Rev. Billy Stanfield (center) with students.
Below left: the Washington, DC Violence-Free Zone began with the 1997 Benning Terrace truce. Below right: VFZ Atlanta youth.



SITES & LEAD ORGANIZATIONS

Atlanta, GA — Visions Unlimited

Baltimore, MD — New Vision Youth Services

Dallas, TX — Vision/Regeneration, Inc.

Milwaukee, WI — The Latino Community Center

**Washington, DC and Prince Georges County, MD
— East Capitol Center for Change**



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Violence-Free Zone Highlighted Results

Atlanta, GA

School	2004-2005	2005-2006	% Reduction
Harper Archer Middle School			
Suspensions	479	367	24%
Attendance Violations	406	240	41%
Class Disruptions	254	139	45%
Bus Misconduct	32	4	88%
Ben Carson Middle School			
Suspensions	353	337	1%
Attendance Violations	119	75	37%
Class Disruptions	295	122	59%
Bus Misconduct	28	9	67%

Source: Atlanta Public School District Request #1569

Baltimore, MD

School	2004-2005	2005-2006	% Reduction
South Western High School			
Suspensions	33	25	24%
Expulsions	11	8	27%
Violent Incidents	44	33	25%

Source: Baltimore Public School District

Dallas, TX

School	2001-2002	2004-2005	% Reduction
Lincoln High School			
Gang Violence	34	1	97%
Code of Conduct Violations	220	9	96%
Madison High School			
Gang Violence	113	0	100%
Fighting/Mutual Combat	14	3	79%
Code of Conduct Violations	171	9	95%
Anderson Middle School			
Fighting/Mutual Combat	41	8	80%
Code of Conduct Violations	220	60	73%

Source: Dallas Independent School District, Public Information Request #4566

Washington, DC

School	2003-2004	2004-2005	% Reduction
H.D. Woodson High School			
Absenteeism	3598	3009	16%
Truancy	71	15	78%
Suspensions	30	14	47%
Violent Incidents	15	9	60%

Source: Woodson SHS District Wide Membership Report 04/05

Milwaukee, WI

Survey Questions	2004-2005	2005-2006	Positive Change
I feel my school promotes a drug free environment	51%	89%	38%
I feel my school makes sure that classrooms are safe and orderly	63%	88%	25%
I feel my school makes sure that students are safe and orderly while outside on school grounds	50%	79%	29%
I feel the halls, bathrooms, cafeteria and other common areas in my school are safe and orderly	54%	85%	31%

Source: <http://mpsportal.milwaukee.k12.wi.us>