



One Vision One Life

Program Update

2007-2008

**One Hope Square
Suite 302
Pittsburgh, PA 15219**

About One Vision One Life

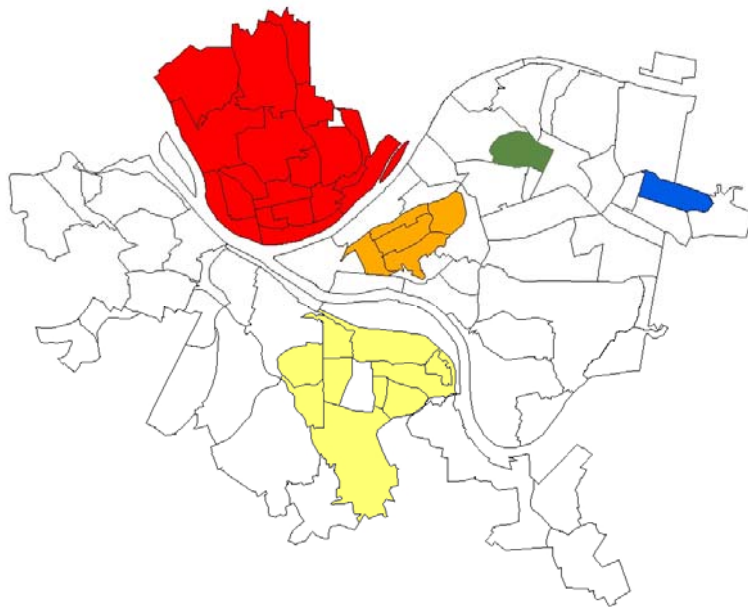
Executive Director: Richard Garland

Sponsoring Agency: Allegheny County Department of Human Services; Marc Cherna, Director

Vision: To reduce violence by reaching out and providing opportunities for a better way of life

History and Goals: In 2003, Allegheny County broke its homicide record. It was at this time community leaders came together to initiate the Allegheny County Violence Prevention Initiative, later named One Vision One Life. The goal of One Vision One Life is to prevent targeted violence. This is accomplished by: (1) identifying, training and developing a team of Community Coordinators who are active in, and informed about their communities; (2) systematically collecting and utilizing street-level intelligence to intervene in disputes, turf battles and gang / group incidents before they become shootings and homicides; (3) reaching out to those at risk for violence with services, jobs and assistance – so they are no longer at risk for violence; and, (4) intensively documenting and evaluating all efforts.

Target Neighborhoods: In 2004, One Vision One Life, Inc. began its programming in the neighborhoods of the Northside, Hill District, and Southside. In 2007, One Vision One Life, Inc. expanded programming to include the Homewood North, Garfield Heights and Lawrenceville neighborhoods on Pittsburgh's East End. One Vision One Life, Inc. has also been contracted to provide violence prevention services in the Pleasant Ridge community (Sto-Rox). Additionally, One Vision One Life, Inc. has introduced the Sisterhood Initiative, which provides services to girls and women.



Statement of the Problem

Key Research

- Violence is learned and is largely driven by expectations and norms (Akers, 1985). Changing thinking is the necessary step to changing behavior. In particular, it is necessary to change the thinking about (a) what is normal; (b) what is acceptable; (c) what actual consequences will occur; and (d) what alternatives there are to the behavior.
- Violence is a national problem with multiple causes including poverty, racism, social disorganization, and lack of opportunities (Spergel, *The Youth Gang Problem*, 1995).
- Research conducted by the Study Group on Serious and Violent Juvenile Offenders, commissioned by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention found the most successful community-based programs for delinquent juveniles were those that focused on interpersonal skills, provided individual counseling and encouraged a commitment to changing behavior (US OJJDP 1999, 6).
- Upon being released from detention or out-of-home placement, youth are often released to disorganized communities where it is easy to slip back into the habits that resulted in arrest in the first place, any gains made by juvenile offenders in correctional facilities may quickly evaporate following their release (Deschenes and Greenwood).
- The fragmented nature of community-based services for high-risk youth has resulted in a lack of public accountability for young people, which in turn has contributed to high levels of violent juvenile crime (Block & Block, *Street Gang Crime in Chicago*, 1993). The results of this study indicated that the prevalence of violent activity is decreased if there is intervention with education, employment training, and job linking.
- Research shows that in order for community-based intervention programming to be effective, staff and offenders must make frequent contact (US OJJDP 2003).

Key Data

- In a meta-analysis of the most serious juvenile offenders, it was found that the best programs for institutionalized youth reduced recidivism by 30-35 percent, whereas the best programs for noninstitutionalized youth reduced recidivism by about 40 percent (Lipsey).
- In 2004 (most recent year with completed statistics), OJJDP reports juveniles were involved in 12% of all violent crimes (OJJDP 2006).
- Between 1980 and 2004, the juvenile arrest rate for simple assault increased 106% for males and 290% for females (OJJDP 2006).
- Homicide victims (using 2003/2004 City of Pittsburgh Police data) are most likely young (over 50% were 24 years old or younger), black (87%), men (87%) concentrated in distressed neighborhoods (half of all 2003 homicides occurred in just 13% or 11 Pittsburgh neighborhoods).
- For this population, violence is most likely to occur in the early afternoon and late evening/early morning hours, is more common on weekends, and during the summer months.
- Violence in these neighborhoods has been linked to gangs, drugs, and lack of opportunity for youth.

Developing a Program Based on the Data

The violence problem cannot be ignored. The challenge lies in deciding how to approach the problem. An analysis of the data in light of the research suggests a successful approach to addressing violence should directly focus efforts on young people who are most at risk of initiating or being the victim of violence. Furthermore, efforts should be concentrated in those areas of the city/county experiencing the highest levels of violence, during the times, both annually and daily, when violence is most likely to occur. Research and analysis has determined that in order to have long-term, lasting effects for at-risk clients, opportunities to pursue positive achievements (education, training and recreation) must be available. Finally, all successful interventions must work closely with residents of affected areas and community leadership to develop and implement approaches that make violence in any form acceptable.

One Vision One Life 6 Point Plan to Stop the Shooting

- 1. Intervene in and mediate conflicts**
 - Acquire knowledge of potential community and school conflicts
 - Intervene in conflicts
 - Provide mediation services
 - Provide and promote hotline availability to facilitate interventions

- 2. Outreach to and provide alternatives for most at-risk persons**
 - Person-to-person outreach to most at-risk persons
 - Present No Shooting message
 - Link high-risk persons (including ex-offenders) with job training, employment, housing, substance abuse treatment, recreation, etc.
 - Intensive case management for selected at-risk individuals

- 3. Strong community coalitions**
 - Community based violence prevention coalition in each target area
 - Active community participation in One Vision One Life events and interventions
 - Community planned events
 - Community specific resource lists

- 4. Unified message: No Shooting**
 - Regularly and consistently delivered to highest risk persons by community coordinators, community partners, service providers, clergy, business leaders, and community residents
 - Public education through person-to-person outreach, flyer distribution, posters, brochures, T-shirts and other material as appropriate
 - Visible presence of community coordinators and community residents at high risk times of day

- 5. Rapid response to all shootings in target areas**
 - Community Coordinator(s), residents, clergy, community partners, and law enforcement respond to every shooting
 - Outreach and mediation to deter further shooting, promote truces and prevent retaliation

- 6. Programs for at-risk youth**
 - Programs for youth, both high risk and those in high risk communities, in the evenings and nights, especially during the summers
 - In-school and after-school mediations, mentoring services
 - Safe passage after school to ensure safety

Organizational Structure

2008 finds One Vision One Life postured in the secondary stage of an organizational assessment. The assessment is focused on the organizational structure and management staff's developmental needs. Beginning with the development of a Human Resources Department, One Vision One Life has continued to move forward with its capacity building efforts to meet the needs of its employees. One Vision One Life's development of the Human Resources Department, along with its investment in its employees, will distinguish One Vision One Life as a viable organization, with a sound organizational structure. As One Vision One Life sets its sights on current and future growth needs, the standards developed will serve as a benchmark for other organizations providing violence prevention/intervention services locally and nationally.

Board Development

Board development is a priority focus for One Vision One Life. Currently, One Vision One Life has several dynamic, committed individuals from diverse backgrounds. Expanding the Board of Directors will become necessary as the organization progresses into the next year and faces new and rapidly approaching opportunities and challenges. In anticipation of the fund-raising, training and program expansion needs, the current board members are assisting in the identification and recruitment of appropriate candidates for board membership.

Staffing our outreach efforts

One Vision One Life strives to recruit a staff with a vast knowledge of their communities, historical feuds, existing disputes and the individuals most at risk to engage in or be a victim of a violent incident. Additionally, One Vision One Life endeavors to ensure all rival groups, existing within our target areas, are represented by staff members. For example, the Northside neighborhoods of Northview Heights and Manchester have historically been known as rival neighborhoods. Given the organization's knowledge of the existing tensions between these neighborhoods, it is imperative that One Vision One Life recruit and employ staff members from these communities. Due to the volatile nature of this ongoing feud, One Vision One Life recruits men from the neighborhoods who are knowledgeable about the history of the feud and whose status within the culture allows him to speak to primary actors and mediate disputes. With this particular example, it is necessary for One Vision One Life to use these criteria for the representatives from both neighborhoods, as a truce is only as strong as the commitment of the individuals involved. The process of recruiting continues to evolve in an effort to keep pace with the many neighborhood changes.

The process of hiring new staff begins with the Lead Community Coordinators, Community Coordinators with both influence in the community and proven dedication to One Vision One Life's mission. In many cases, existing Community Coordinators are best positioned to make recommendations related to which men will be most influential in neighborhood issues. Furthermore, as existing rivalries flare up and new rivalries come about, Community Coordinators are, again, best-positioned to make recommendations on where additional staff is needed and the individuals likely to be an asset in working toward the organization's mission.

All applicants complete an application which is then reviewed by One Vision One Life staff. Applicants determined to be eligible and appropriate for employment are then invited to participate in One Vision One Life's interview process. One Vision One Life employs an innovative hiring process utilizing a hiring panel comprised of law enforcement representatives, service providers, community residents, clergy and other individuals representing various interests in community improvement. The panel is provided with general information pertinent to One Vision One Life's history and mission. After this, the panel is given information specific to the candidates who will be interviewed. This specific information includes the current needs of the organization, community information relevant to where the candidates are interviewing to work and preliminary information about each candidate. The panel interviews each client, asking a revolving series of questions covering personal history in the community, philosophies, situational/scenario questions, etc. Panel members are provided with a list of possible questions, however are encouraged to engage in dialogue with candidates.

The panel is then asked to rank each candidate in four areas: (1) Understanding of the Program; (2) Understanding of the Position; (3) Ability to Succeed as a Community Coordinator; and, (4) Potential to Replace Richard Garland. Each panel member individually ranks each candidate. Following the conclusion of the interviews, the panel discusses their recommendations with One Vision One Life staff. While the Executive Director makes the final decision regarding offers of employment, the panel's input is invaluable. In addition to assisting One Vision One Life select the most appropriate individuals to work in the communities, this hiring process also increases community understanding of the program, increases buy-in of key community stakeholders and gives the applicants an understanding of the community-centric nature of the program.

Training

The goal of One Vision One Life is to enhance the staff members' skill sets in an effort keep them ahead of the curve of violence prevention and intervention methodology. In doing so, One Vision One Life continues its compassionate level of commitment and effective methods of service with the communities, families and youth affected by violence.

*-Roland Slade, Sr. MSW
Director of Operations*

Initial and ongoing training is essential for the program's success. Initial training includes an intensive review of our Outreach Protocol and the requirements of the position. New Community Coordinators are required to shadow with a Lead Community Coordinator before providing services independently. One Vision One Life also partners with other agencies and institutions to provide ongoing training opportunities for staff.

Additionally, One Vision One Life provides internal trainings with a consulting firm specializing in professional development. These trainings cover topics such as team building, straight talk, professional development, professional growth, what it is to be a black professional, effective communication, leadership development, juvenile justice system, role modeling and professional presentation.

Despite the efforts to provide training, a survey of our outreach workers suggests they feel a need for additional training opportunities. Therefore, One Vision One Life management staff is currently developing an internal training series and continues to notify Community Coordinators of trainings available with partnering agencies. During the next year, One Vision One Life will expand these opportunities. Additionally, One Vision One Life is developing a model by which individual career counseling and personal development support will be available for staff. These opportunities will become available during the course of the next year.

Components of the Intervention Strategy

Conflict Intervention and Mediation

Being knowledgeable of and intervening in potentially violent disputes is critical to the success of One Vision One Life's mission to prevent violence. This effort includes hiring the right staff, providing training for staff, working to intervene in and mediate conflicts and thoroughly documenting these efforts.

To better understand the conflict mediation/resolution services Community Coordinators provide, One Vision One Life collects *conflict mediation forms*. In 2007 One Vision One Life documented approximately forty-five conflicts with resolution. Over fifty percent of those reported were conflicts occurring on the Northside, with the remainder being fairly evenly distributed among the South Side, Homewood and the Hill District.

In seventy-nine of the reported cases, staff indicated the type of dispute mediated. Of those, thirty-six percent were gang-related, thirty-one percent domestic, thirteen percent acquaintance disputes and eight percent were drug related.

A weapon was involved in thirty-nine percent of the incidents and of those, a gun was involved in sixty-eight percent of the cases, a knife in sixteen percent and an unspecified weapon also in sixteen percent of cases. Clearly, firearms are the most common weapon our staff encounters when providing mediation services. Because of the prevalence of firearms involved in these disputes, it logically follows that if the conflict is allowed to escalate, the possibility for a violent incident increases substantially.

In fifty-three percent of incidents, staff indicated whether a shooting would have occurred without intervention. Of those, fifty-eight percent indicated a shooting was either likely or very likely to occur without intervention and mediation services. In most of the reported mediations, staff indicated the result of the intervention. Of those reported, thirty-seven percent were reported to be resolved with no additional action needed (minus follow-up monitoring), two percent resulted in reports to law enforcement and in fifty-four percent the conflict was reported as ongoing and required additional monitoring and follow-up at the time it was reported. This information indicates the persistent nature of the conflicts One Vision One Life Community Coordinators address on a daily basis and the necessity for follow-up and continued monitoring of recently mediated conflicts.

Mediation Efforts - A Closer Look

To provide additional understanding of how One Vision One Life staff addresses conflicts, the following example illustrates the mediation process. Furthermore, this example illustrates the importance of One Vision One Life's relationship with community institutions as well as community residents. Finally, this example clearly demonstrates the necessity for and benefit of effective community communication among One Vision One Life staff members.

In February 2007, an altercation took place between two youth at a high school on Pittsburgh's Northside. The situation was considered volatile and likely to escalate by both school officials and community residents aware of the situation. Immediately following the initial altercation at the school, a faculty member contacted One Vision One Life's Northside Area Manager and identified the youth involved in the altercation and the neighborhoods in which they live. The Area Manager, in turn, contacted the Community Coordinators from the identified neighborhoods. The Community Coordinators investigated the situation and discovered the conflict was serious in nature and, according to actors involved, was likely to escalate to the use of firearms. Community Coordinators already knew both of the youth involved in the dispute – the primary actors involved in the physical confrontation. Conversely, the youth involved knew the Community Coordinators and respected them enough to agree to a meeting. Initially, each youth met with the Community Coordinators individually, and during the course of those meetings, both youth agreed to a meeting with each other to participate in mediation. At the mediation Community Coordinators were able to identify the cause of the dispute and assisted the youth in coming to a resolution.

Another way to measure conflict resolution is to survey outreach staff about this aspect of the work. One Vision One Life Community Coordinators resolved conflicts nearly every day, yet resolving these disputes often comes so naturally to staff, they do not see these mediations/resolutions as significant enough to document or even mention. However, many of the ongoing feuds developed because of the lack of intervention during the initial stages of the dispute. Left to fester, these minor conflicts will often escalate. When surveyed, Community Coordinators reported breaking up an average of three fights/disputes per week (this includes physical and verbal incidents). In addition to intervention in new conflicts, Community Coordinators also dedicate a substantial amount of their time providing follow-up and monitoring services for individuals and/or groups involved in mediated conflict to ensure these disputes do not re-emerge and escalate to violence. When asked about this topic, Community Coordinators reported addressing an average of twelve conflicts per week, including new conflicts and mediated conflicts for follow-up.

Trauma Center Interventions

In 2006, One Vision One Life developed partnerships with the Level-1 trauma centers in Pittsburgh's hospitals. In 2007, One Vision One Life has met with twenty-seven victims at UPMC Presbyterian, Mercy, Allegheny General Hospital and UPMC Children's Hospital. One Vision One Life has two primary focuses when meeting with victims in the trauma centers. One Vision One Life provides information about available and appropriate resources for the victim, particularly housing and substance abuse treatment services upon release from the hospital. The other focus for One Vision One Life is an assessment of the situation that led to this incident. In gathering this information, One Vision One Life is able to ascertain the likelihood of a retaliation and respond swiftly and appropriately.

While in the hospital, One Vision One Life offers services to the victim. If he/she is interested and would like to meet with a One Vision One Life staff member, he/she begins the intake process. First, general demographic information is provided – name, age, address, phone number, etc. One Vision One Life staff then meets with the victim to first assess where the victim is at in their recovery (i.e. time until they return to the neighborhood and are active again) and second to assess where the client is at mentally (i.e. angry, if so enough to retaliate?; sad, if so is self-harm a concern?; tired, if so is he/she tired enough to change their habits?; etc.). Following these conversations with the victim, One Vision One Life staff documents the meeting and reports on health status, living status, gang involvement, services needed/requested, etc. Additional information regarding educational level completed (age appropriate), employment status, legal issues, etc. is collected to be used in assessing and scheduling needed services. This information is vital in determining which services are most needed by the victim and which agencies are most appropriate for referrals. It is also essential in the development of the victim's goals as well as in determining the client's level of commitment to achieving established goals. After the initial intake process, One Vision One Life provides follow-up services to victims, referring them to needed services and ensuring the victim is able to access the services.

During 2007, the average age of shooting victims met with by One Vision One Life staff was thirty-one years old. The overwhelming majority (22 of 27) are male and (24 of 27) are African American. With the victims met with in 2007, One Vision One Life discovered twenty-five percent reported being engaged in illegal activity to make a living. An additional twenty percent reported they were not employed at the time of the incident and sixteen percent reported an issue with substance abuse. A total of sixty-to percent of those met with were deemed to be struggling with achieving their goals in life.

As a result, One Vision One Life staff assists the victims in developing goals. One Vision One Life utilizes a goal setting method that is client driven, meaning the goals reflect the desires of the client. In an effort to assist clients in achieving these goals, One Vision One Life assists clients in setting realistic and attainable goals. Services offered at this juncture have included mediation services, relocation, drug and alcohol treatment, assistance with housing, etc.

Community Risk

In order to help One Vision One Life prioritize and organize its community efforts, each Community Coordinator rates its community's risk on a four-point scale (from most at-risk, code red to least at-risk, code green). These risk assessments are reviewed and discussed on a weekly basis. The most important information from this documentation is found in the Community Coordinators' explanation of their ratings. Contained in these short narratives is the information that indicates why a community is or is not at risk. Community Coordinators are knowledgeable enough about their communities that they are able to evaluate the community's potential risk based on the events in the community during the past week. Community Coordinators also make suggestions regarding what is needed to reduce the communities' risk levels.

During the past year, the breakdown of risk levels has been; red, twenty-eight percent; orange, thirty-five percent; yellow, twenty-three percent; and green, fourteen percent. This breakdown suggests that community risk is fairly evenly spread from relatively low risk (green and yellow) to high risk (orange and red). However, this breakdown does not demonstrate the weekly fluctuations in risk assessment, which is highly dependent on the events within the community during that week. The best way to illustrate these fluctuations is to look at one Community Coordinator's community risk assessments over a course of time.

Date	Risk Level	Excerpt
1/12/08	Green	Since the shooting, it's been real quiet. Real heavy police presence.
1/19/08	Green	Quiet.
1/26/08	Red	There is a whole lot of inner hood feuding. I am trying to see if I can talk to those guys and see if I can get them to agree to a cease fire.
2/2/08	Red	There was a drive-by shooting and a 15 year old kid got shot. There has been a real heavy police presence since then.
2/23/08	Red	A shooting happened in Mt. Oliver and it could lead to retaliation but there is a real heavy police presence.
3/16/08	Green	It's been really quiet. I've been trying to come up with some activities for the kids to do when the weather starts to break. I've been asking them for suggestions.
4/6/08	Green	Ever since the truce there hasn't been anything happening There has been a real heavy police presence.
5/4/08	Red	There was a shooting..... I'm working on setting up a mediation. Both sides are willing to talk and

		it's scheduled for Saturday at 3pm
6/22/08	Yellow	There was a situation where one guy was outside another guys house with a gun. He planned on killing him if he came out. I was able to diffuse the situation and nobody was hurt.
7/13/08	Green	I organized a basketball league in the neighborhood to give the kids something structured to do. Since I did that it's been pretty quiet. Real heavy police presence still.
7/27/08	Yellow	There was an altercation between two females but I was able to step in and stop it before it got any bigger. Nobody got hurt and no police were called.
9/14/08	Red	There is an ongoing in house feud between these two guys and they are really trying to kill each other but I'm working on trying to get them to agree to a sit-down so we can try to stop the shooting
10/26/07	Yellow	Ever since I scheduled a mediation with the guys who were having problems with each other it's been quiet
12/14/07	Green	It's been pretty quiet. I'm guessing it's because of the weather trying to come up with some type of activities to keep them busy and occupied.

Outreach

The mission of One Vision One Life is to reduce violence by reaching out and providing opportunities for a better way of life. The goal of the outreach strategy is to offer alternatives to violence. Every Community Coordinator is required to recruit and manage a caseload of at least ten at-risk individuals. Outreach workers are required to meet with individuals on their caseload at least one time per week and to maintain communication with the clients throughout the week. While the primary goal is to prevent individuals from being involved in violence, Community Coordinators also assist individuals in obtaining employment, getting treatment (D&A, MH/MR, counseling, etc.) and enrolling in/applying for educational institutions or programs.

Individuals on caseloads range in age from eight to fifty years old. Analysis of information collected upon client's intake suggests approximately six percent of our

clients reported their primary source of income as being illegal employment. Thirty percent of our clients have previously been arrested, charged and/or convicted of a crime.

One Vision One Life works diligently to engage both perpetrators and victims of violence. Fifteen percent of clients reported having been violent recently while eleven percent reported they had made threats of violence toward others. At the same time, sixteen percent of clients reported being a recent victim of violence at the time of intake.

At the time of the intake interview with a Community Coordinator, clients and Community Coordinators work together to establish goals around areas including education, employment, housing, conflict resolution, gang involvement, substance abuse, etc. Preventing violence is the primary goal, however, One Vision One Life recognizes that in able to prevent violence, clients must have the knowledge and opportunities to succeed living an unfamiliar lifestyle. Linking clients to services, encouraging clients to focus on positive uses of their time – all of these things aid Community Coordinators in preventing violence. Because of the vital role service provision plays, One Vision One Life's link with the Allegheny Department of Human Services is critical as they provide ready access to needed services.

In most cases, One Vision One Life Community Coordinators work with many more youth and residents than are tracked on their caseloads. When surveyed, Community Coordinators reported working individually with between fifteen and twenty youth per week. Additionally, because Community Coordinators attend community events and outreach in their neighborhoods, they are likely to be in contact with many more youth than this. Finally, many of One Vision one Life's Community Coordinators also serve as coaches, referees, and provide security for community leagues and events exposing them to a multitude of community youth and residents.

Community Mobilization

Essential to One Vision One Life's success is community buy-in to the organization's methods and community support for the mission and programs. Community partners are the key to this community support as they provide community exposure for the organization's message. Additionally community partners support One Vision One Life's efforts and programs within their communities.

The process of community mobilization continues to evolve. In 2004, One Vision One Life made significant progress in mobilizing target communities. In 2005, One Vision One Life implemented a supplemental approach to community mobilization. Community Coordinators now manage a "caseload" of a minimum of ten community partners. Community Coordinators are expected to update their caseload of partners on our activities, invite them to One Vision One Life sponsored events, seek their support and ask them to reinforce the anti-violence message of One Vision One Life.

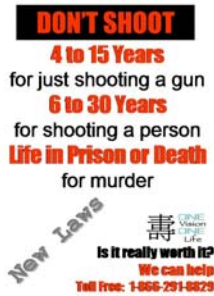
Currently, One Vision One Life has 312 active community partners. Of the 312, sixty-four percent of these partners are residents, thirteen percent are businesses, eleven percent are service providers, eleven percent are other non-profit organizations and two percent are clergy or religious leaders.

In addition to holding its own collaborative meetings, One Vision One Life staff also participates in existing community coalitions including block watches, the South Pittsburgh Coalition for Peace, Grandparents as Parents on the Northside, East Side Community Coalition, the Hill House Collaborative and several other collaborative efforts with service provider groups.

One Vision One Life continues to partner with similar programs across the region, state and nation. Programs such as Chicago's CeaseFire, Los Angeles' Homeboy Industries and other similar programs in Newark, New Jersey; Southbend, Indiana; and Baltimore, Maryland continue to work with One Vision One Life to create a network of programs across the nation.

Public Education





Research suggests violence is a learned behavior and is driven by expectations and norms. Changing individuals' thinking and cultures of violence is a necessary step to modifying the behavior and is consistent with the public health approach to violence prevention One Vision One Life employs. A broad-based public education campaign facilitates these necessary changes, as has been demonstrated in many other areas of public health and has been a successful component of the Chicago CeaseFire Program.

In 2004, One Vision One Life operated largely under the radar. Except for staff's jackets and badges, the violence prevention message was delivered by work of mouth. The anti-violence message was most usually conveyed during times when a conflict was brewing, during interventions. However, when One Vision One Life staff visited Chicago's CeaseFire Program, staff recognized the value of the public education materials in violence prevention.

Therefore, in 2005, 2006, and 2007 One Vision One Life's public education campaign included the hand-to-hand and door-to-door distribution of brochures, flyers and posters. These materials are distributed throughout the target communities, at and after school, via community partners and at One Vision One Life events. One Vision One Life materials can be seen in store fronts and residents windows, moreover, One Vision One Life materials are visibly displayed in correctional institutions and in local hospitals. The flyers publicize a toll free number community residents can utilize to inquire about One Vision One Life's services. On the back of the flyers is a list of community services to provide contact information to the community.

Another important aspect of One Vision One Life's public education efforts is the use of education presentations. One Vision One Life regularly offers presentations and trainings for organizations and institutions in need of information about a variety of topics including identifying gang indicators, violence prevention, conflict mediation, etc. A partial list of presentations is included below.

Partial List of Presentations	
Shuman Juvenile Detention Center (weekly)	Myers Ridge Housing Community
Allegheny County Jail (monthly)	Lutheran Services
Pace School	Corner to the Coroner
FamilyLinks	Action Housing
Allegheny County Department of Human Services	Federal Gang Prevention Conference
Area Universities (University of Pitt., Duquesne, Chatham)	Weil Technology Institute
Pittsburgh Mediation Center	Local, State, National Violence Prevention
Allegheny County School Districts	Conferences
Homewood YMCA	

Response to Shootings

“It is with a sense of urgency that we address violence, because it has become an epidemic.”

Elbert Gray, Director of Programming

Every shooting and homicide in a target neighborhood warrants a response from One Vision One Life staff. Over the course of the past two years, One Vision One Life has held approximately seventy responses. At the programs inception, One Vision One Life’s response to violent incidents was largely behind the scenes – staff met, discussed the situation and developed a strategic plan to intervene in and mediate the conflict that led to

the incident. One Vision has successfully implemented these interventions – reducing retaliations and minimizing conflicts.



Commencing in February 2005, One Vision One Life implemented a two-tiered response to violent incidents. Staff continued the behind-the-scenes response, meeting with victims, and possible perpetrators. However, at this time, a public response to shootings was introduced. Public responses are conducted within seventy-two hours of every reported shooting/homicide in our target neighborhoods. The public responses are held outside, on or near the scene of the incident and includes community partners, residents, youth, family members of the victims, friends of the victim and other parties with an interest in the safety of their community. The message is purely one of anti-violence – not anti-shooter (or anti-gang), as the organization seeks to utilize these events to speak to the community and offer services to those in need, especially those at risk of perpetrating violence (i.e. friends of the victim). At these responses, One Vision One Life reaches out to participants with resources and education materials and attempts to recruit more community partners.

The main purpose of the public violence response, just as with the public education campaign, is to change people's thinking and change cultures of violence that have been existing in the streets and ensnaring innocent community residents. It is a visible unification sending the message to potential shooters that the community will not longer support the violence and furthermore will no longer tolerate it. At the same time the stern anti-violence message is delivered, alternatives to violence are being offered to the individuals most affected by violence.

Following every reported shooting and homicide, a shooting review is completed. This document provides information on the incident and assists in documenting efforts following an incident. It also assists One Vision One Life staff maintain a history of the many ongoing feuds between neighborhoods. Information about historical violent incidents often proves invaluable in the organization's work to prevent retaliations.



Programs for At-Risk Individuals

“When a window of opportunity presents itself to you, you must climb through it because you never know when it will close. That’s what One Vision One Life has been to me and other people in my community – our window of opportunity!”

Taili Thompson, North Side Area Manager

Youth Programming

In One Vision One Life’s target communities, youth identified as being at-risk (particularly those who are not yet old enough to obtain a work permit) need positive activities and safe events after school and during the summer months. While athletic leagues, sports-related camps and community days may not resolve the issues the youth

face daily, they do provide a safe-haven, provide a captive, engaged audience to hear the anti-violence message and provide a forum where youth from various neighborhoods can interact, focusing on similarities like interest in sports, rather than harp on differences that can divide and create conflict.

During 2007, One Vision One Life held numerous recreational programs for youth and communities. One Vision One Life continues to sponsor the Kennard Basketball League and the Northside Basketball Academy. Hundreds of people attend these events annually and look forward to the safe community gatherings that occur at these events.

For older youth, One Vision One Life partnered with a consortium of five organizations to implement a summer community service project in ten high-risk neighborhoods. Because of the organizations strong coalition with these organizations, One Vision One Life youth are recruited for the positions utilized to improve the aesthetic value of their communities.

During 2007, One Vision One Life maximized the partnership with Tickets for Kids©, taking youth to events on nearly thirty occasions. These events include Pirates' games, Steelers' games, Univ. of Pitt. basketball and football games and special events including Monster Jam, Ringling Brothers Circus, MotoCross, live performances, and museum trips.



One Vision One Life's educational programming has made great strides in the past twelve months. During the previous year, the program experienced a change in leadership with the hiring of Amanda Kopnitsky as the Director of School-Based Services. While most of the past year was spent becoming familiar with the program, this year, One Vision One Life is diving right in, making functional changes and resetting goals, in an effort to improve program delivery and content. Changes began when the education component started working with Marsha Tongel of Tongel Consulting Group, Inc. and

Pat Murphy of Cornerstones for Development, Inc. Together, Mrs. Tongel and Ms. Murphy have helped develop a “Policies and Procedures Manual,” outlining all operating procedures within the department, allowing for regulation and rules to prevail, simplifying daily business. In turn, after-school program sites will receive a reworked copy of the manual, allowing for better communication between One Vision One Life and the sites.

In April, One Vision One Life hosted a successful site visit with Cara Akright, an evaluator from Communities In Schools, contracted by the Pennsylvania Department of Education to visit 21st Century Community Learning Centers in order to assess the compliance with grant regulations. Several concerns were conveyed, however all of those concerns have since been addressed, and One Vision One Life anticipates being in complete compliance by October 2008.

During the 2007-2008 school year, One Vision One Life worked with Bloomfield Garfield Corporation, the Manchester Youth Development Center and Schenley Heights Community Development Program. For summer 2008 programming 2008-2009 school year programming, One Vision One Life intends to contract with Bloomfield Garfield Corporation and the Schenley Heights Community Development Program. A request for proposals for new after-school program sites has been developed but will not be implemented this school year in order to focus on improving current site management and relations. In the future, this request for proposals will be used when new projects come to the attention of the education component’s director or when One Vision One Life is looking to expand its educational programming.

For 2008-2009, one of the primary goals is to improve training opportunities for after-school program staff members. Tutor certification trainings will be offered by Pittsburgh Public Schools, and One Vision One Life will also hold professional development meeting several times throughout the year in an effort to best prepare staff for the demands associated with after-school program employ. Also, in concurrence with the 21st Century Community Learning Center guidelines, two staff members are registered for and will be attending the “Bridge From School to Afterschool and Back” Conference in Vancouver, Washington in October 2008.

Life Skills and Entrepreneurship Training

One Vision One Life offers this Life Skills and Entrepreneurship Program under its social enterprise plan. To launch the plan, One Vision One Life will operate a start-up business in vending. The company will be a flavored ice, mobile vending operation.

The plan targets individuals with a serious interest in business ownership. It offers participants opportunities to develop the skills, preparation and experience to enter into and sustain a successful business. The objectives of the program are to assist participants

in the areas of life, social, and work skills appropriate to form legitimate businesses that provide life, family and career sustaining income.

Each session focused treatment/training on three areas to include personal management skills, business practices, and effective communication. Each week the curriculum covered a minimum of four hours per subject over four week intense course. Thereafter, each week, the sessions include focus on personal and business skills development.

Components of the Training Program

Rules of Conduct

Evaluations

- a. Self-Evaluation
- b. Peer Evaluation
- c. Program-Agency

1. Workshops

- Assignments
- Attendance
- Participation

2. Internship/Work Assignment

3. Business Plan

The initial training session has been structured according to the following schedule:

Schedule: June 3 thru June 26, 2008 (12 Sessions in 4 weeks)

Tuesday – 12 to 3 p.m.	Wednesday – 12 to 3 p.m.	Thursday – 12 to 3 p.m.
Business Principles	Skills Development	Business Principles
Skills Development	Business Principles	Skills Development

Schedule: July – October, 2008

Training/Workshops: 6 hours per week

Paid Internship/Work Experience: 20-25 hours per week

Business Principles: Flavored Ice Vending: Mobile Cart

The following principles will be addressed in a series of trainings and workshops:

Customer Base

Imaging

The Consumer Dollar

Advertising

Leisure and Choice
Time
Quality
Service

Marketing Positioning
Location, Location, Location

Equipment: purchase & maintenance
Product: mix of goods sold & preparation/presentation
Production
Operations: Transportation, Shipping & Handling, Inventory control
Accounting
Budgeting & Financing
Profit/Loss
Regulation & Compliance

Personnel & Staffing
Procurement
New Business Development: Events, Sites, Promotions

Skills Development

Values Clarification
Effective Communication
Money Management
Customer Service
Team Work
Organization

Time Management
Goal Setting
Leadership
Accountability, Responsibility & Reliability
Workplace Ethics and Standards

Internship

Cart Assignment
Work Schedule
Training: Equipment, Service, Operations, Supplies, Product mix

Self Assessments

Participants complete various assessments to help with framing personal strategies for changing behaviors in meeting with standards of performance, operation and activity associated with successful business practices.

Personality Inventories
Value Systems
Goal Setting
Behavior Trait Analyses (individual, group, social/community)
Communication Skills (speaking, writing - reporting/record keeping)

One Vision One Life uses available resources from agency “best practices” to model its entrepreneurship and life skills program. Drawing on statistical data from reports on population demographics and community profiles, participants are exposed to principals of consumer economics and buying habits to help in formulating the marketing approach for the business venture.

Curriculum was developed into presentations from the following sources, among others:

University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work
U. S. Department of Labor
PA Department of Commerce
U.S. Census Bureau
U. S. Department of Justice and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.
PA Department of Labor and Industry
PA Juvenile Court Judges’ Commission

Business Development Sources

Small Business Administration
PA Department of Revenue

Drug and Alcohol Recovery Services

One Vision One Life continues to maintain a strong partnerships with White Deer Run and Cove Forge Rehabilitation Programs. Each year One Vision One Life is able to link individuals in need with in-patient drug and alcohol treatment programs. Addiction to drugs or alcohol are often at the root of violent incidents in the community, therefore reduction of the number of persons addicted serves to aid in the prevention of violence in the community.

Community Services

One Vision One Life has hosted a series of community days throughout the various target neighborhoods. The Homewood North, Northview, Sheraden, and Hill District communities all hosted a community day cookout. At these cookouts, residents are invited to enjoy a positive and safe community gathering. Children are invited to enjoy the various activities provided for them and everyone receives the message to end the violence.

One Vision One Life also hosts bingo events for senior citizens on Pittsburgh's Northside. Often residents affected by violence are long-time community residents invested in the safety of their communities. These bingo events provide an opportunity to speak with these residents and look at ways to revitalize the communities from the perspective of long-time community residents.

Sisterhood Initiative – Women's and Girls' Programming

During this year, the girls' and women's program, formerly WAVE, was renamed – the Sisterhood Initiative – and it was restructured. Upon the development of the program, Sisterhood staff decided that WAVE did not adequately convey the program's mission. Furthermore, the name was ambiguous when presented to communities. Therefore, staff established that the vision of the female program was to empower young women, encourage personal growth and foster positive relationships between females. After discussing this vision, the Sisterhood Initiative was a more appropriate name for the program.

Since the program's inception, Sisterhood staff members have been engaged in developing new programming for girls and young women in Allegheny County. Throughout the country, females have been the afterthought of a juvenile justice system designed to deal with boys (Bergsmann, 1989; Miller, Trapani, Fejes-Mendoza, Eggleston, Dwiggins, 1995). At One Vision One Life, the Sisterhood Initiative is developing programming and thereby positive alternatives for young women.

Key Research

- There are fewer community-based services for girls [than for boys]. As a result, girls are twice as likely to be detained, with detention lasting five times longer for girls than boys (OJJDP, 1998).
- A lack of female role models may make their [girls'] dreams of future careers in male-dominated fields seem unrealistic. The culture of adolescence “demands that while young women may achieve, they should be careful not to look too smart or they will not get a boyfriend (Maryland Department of Juvenile Justice, 1995).

- The formation of a girl's mature identity cannot be based solely on separation from her parents, but must also include her enduring relationships with adults (Acoca, 1995)
- Studies of female gang members show that many have come from homes with a high incidence of sexual abuse, domestic violence and family dysfunction (Molidor, 1996).
- Young women's participation in gangs has grown more rapidly in smaller cities than in large urban areas. It is estimated that 10% of gang members are young women. (Girls Incorporated).
- Growing up in poverty, isolated from the economic mainstream, marginalized because of race, class and academic failure, girls most likely to affiliate with gangs tend to feel hopeless about their future (Bjerregaard & Smith, 1993).
- The emerging profile of women offenders bears strong resemblance to the profile of female delinquents, with many of the same risk factors impacting women's and girls' lives (OJJDP).
- Research shows that among female populations, substance abuse coexists with other problems such as mental illness and academic failure at a significantly higher rate than among males (Rotheram-Borus, 1993).
- During the last decade, violent crime among girls has increased faster (16.5 percent) than for boys (4.5 percent) (OJJDP 1998).
- In most cases, the [girls] were victims themselves before they became offenders (Prescott, 1997; Girls, Inc., 1996; Davis, Schoen, Greenburg, Desroches & Abrams, 1997).

In School Services

In early, 2007, Sisterhood staff was engaged in assisting with issues in various school districts throughout Allegheny County. Sisterhood staff provided services in the East Allegheny, West Mifflin and Woodland Hills School Districts. At East Allegheny and West Mifflin, Community Coordinators were able to assist in school transitioning. The students displaced due to the closing of the Duquesne High School lead to the students' reassignments to East Allegheny and West Mifflin. While at both schools, Community Coordinators provided case management services as well as general transition and

intervention services. Community Coordinators assigned to specific schools engage with students not only during school hours, but also attend school events as chaperones and school activities such as football games to be a visible supporter of both the students and the schools.

Program Structure

Very exciting for the Sisterhood Initiative this year was the restructuring of the program, both internally and externally. First, the Sisterhood Initiative developed a management team consisting of Program Director, Samantha Swartz; Program Manager, Tonya Daniels and Lead Community Coordinator, LaKeshia Washington. This team was developed based on skill inventories completed to assess each staff member's strengths. The structure developed was done so to fulfill the following general responsibilities:

Program Director: The program director is one of the two administrative members of the management team. The program director is responsible for researching, being familiar with and conveying gender specific Best Practices Programming. Additionally, the majority of the administrative duties for the program are performed by the program director.

Program Manager: The program manager is the second administrative member of the management team. The program manager is responsible for the implementation of gender specific Best Practices Programming. The program manager also works with the Lead Community Coordinator to organize and supervise personnel and programming.

Lead Community Coordinator: The lead community coordinator is responsible for the supervision of the community coordinators in the field and documentation of this supervision. The lead community coordinator also works with the program manager to organize personnel and assign staff to programming.

In further efforts to create a complete, well-rounded team, the management team completed a personnel inventory for the Sisterhood Initiative. This assisted the management team in assessing the strengths of current staff and additionally revealed areas in which new personnel would be helpful. Utilizing this structured approach has allowed the program to utilize strengths while strengthening weaknesses, both for individual staff members and for the entire team implementing the programming for the Sisterhood Initiative.

Personnel Development

During this year, Sisterhood staff has attended and engaged in many opportunities for professional development, both for individual staff members as well as for the Sisterhood team. Staff engaged in professional development training with DJ Jones consulting. These trainings focused on professional development and team building. With new staff brought on, these trainings helped to create a cohesive team, all striving toward the same goals.

Under the direction of Program Manager Tonya Daniels, a new standard was developed related to the staff's continued education. Regardless of each staff member's educational level already attained, Ms. Daniels has found appropriate classes and trainings for each staff member and has made completion of these programs mandatory. Not only is the staff attending these trainings, but members of the management team have also been provided with opportunities appropriate for their current educational level and responsibilities with the program.

Finally, the entire staff has embraced a more formal schedule, attending weekly working meetings. At these meetings, staff develops programming ideas, share ideas for mentoring the most challenging clients, and make weekly assignments for each staff member to complete prior to the next meeting. This structure has assisted the staff in developing accountability to the program and to the other team members. The management team develops the weekly assigned tasks in such a manner that the completion of the entire project depends heavily on each individual's completion of her tasks. This system in and of itself has created a more cohesive team, causing the team to depend on each other to complete a common goal. In addition to the weekly meetings, the female staff is expected and required to account for a minimum of five of their weekly hours in the office. This provides the management team more consistent opportunities to interact with and supervise the staff. Additionally, management staff is available to staff to ask questions and discuss new ideas.

Program Development

Another exciting development in girls' and women's programming, has been the formal development of programming and moreover, the successful implementation of that programming. Initially, the Sisterhood staff was disjointed, maintaining caseloads of girls in their individual neighborhoods, however the delivery of services varied greatly from neighborhood to neighborhood. The first programming goal for the new Initiative was to create standard and consistent programming for girls and women in Allegheny County.

The first step undertaken by the women was the creation of more rigorous and thorough documentation standards. Trainings related to documentation through case notes and reporting were attended by all staff. Attendance at these trainings led the staff to choose to develop the DAP Format for case notes. The DAP (data, analysis and planning) Format is an academically recognized format for case notes, and provides staff with an outline for the information most relevant in reporting on client progress. Furthermore, staff has begun the process of making files client-based, rather than Community Coordinator based.

During the initial development of the client files, consistent client needs were identified through analysis of the current documentation. While staff has been adept at identifying clients' needs, the provision of services to address those needs has lacked continuity. As the team worked to develop programming to address these needs, one of Sisterhood's first challenges presented itself, and quickly became the Initiative's first opportunity.

Following a physical altercation between two rival groups of girls at a high school in Allegheny County, One Vision One Life was asked to provide mediation services. Because the actors in this incident were young women attending the Schenley High School, staff from the Sisterhood Initiative responded to the situation with Executive Director Richard Garland and additional One Vision One Life staff from the targeted community, the Hill District.

During the course of the mediation, the young women involved revealed many of the same needs Sisterhood staff had already identified for other clients in review of client documentation. Therefore, One Vision One Life Executive Director and the Sisterhood Program Director initiated new programming to address the specific needs of girls.

Skill Building Series

In response to the identified needs, Executive Director Richard Garland proposed a series in which the young women would attend and gain valuable skills and knowledge while being mentored by Sisterhood staff. Because many of the girls expressed the need to gain employment, there was a small stipend attached to program attendance and participation.

The management team established a list of skill areas the girls needed to develop to assist them in developing into independent, successful women. In addition to skill areas, the staff felt there was a need for “areas of exposure.” These areas of exposure are identified opportunities, both present and future, that the majority of our clients are not exposed to in the course of their daily lives. This area covers things such as tours of colleges, meetings/dinners with women from various professional fields, etc. The identified skill areas are:

- Academic Success
- Conflict Mediation
- Communication
- Financial Skills
- Healthy Relationships
- Sexual Health
- Decision Making
- Etiquette

The identified areas of exposure are:

- Career Exploration
- Cultural Events/Education
- Education – to include financial aid, college research, etc.
- Job Readiness Skills
- Positive Social Events

The skill areas will be addressed in weekly sessions to be facilitated by field experts from partnering agencies. Additionally, consultants will be brought in to facilitate special subject areas. Identified areas of exposure will be addressed in both weekly sessions and also during nontraditional hours to attend special events. The career exploration will be achieved through the Professional Women Series. Girls will complete and interest inventory including a list of professions in which they are interested. Women in those various professions will be identified and asked to attend a luncheon with the girls interested in that profession. This will create a comfortable environment for candid conversation between the girls and the professional regarding the pathway to the profession and a woman’s experience in that profession.

At reporting time, the series was in the final stages of planning and is scheduled to be implemented during the summer of 2008. Sisterhood anticipates hosting the Skill Building Series in three communities in 2008, as the caseload clients have expressed interest in having a series in their communities.

Case Management

Community Coordinators on the Sisterhood staff maintain a minimum caseload of ten clients in their home communities, Northside, Homewood, Southside, Pleasant Ridge and the Hill District. Community Coordinators are required to meet with clients a minimum

of one time per week and to contact client via telephone a minimum of two times per week. These contacts are thoroughly documented and Community Coordinators utilized these contacts to ascertain a client's status and commitment, determine appropriate services as circumstances evolve and most importantly, gauge the client's current risk level.

Initially, Community Coordinators assess a client's most immediate needs and address those needs through individual assistance and referrals. Community Coordinators assist clients in prioritizing goals. Sisterhood has initiated a method of goal setting in which clients establish action steps that will lead to the completion of the long-term goal. This approach serves two purposes. First, it allows the client to see accomplishment more quickly, thereby reducing the frustration often experienced by clients on their way to completion of the long-term goal. Standing alone, achievement of the long-term goal can seem a daunting task, however when broken into four to six smaller steps, accompanied with a flexible but established timeline, clients are more likely to recognize their progress earlier. The second benefit of this goal setting model is it also assists staff in identifying client progress and client need. If a client is consistently working toward a goal, and suddenly has not made mentionable progress for two weeks, it is likely a new issue has arisen in the client's life. Community Coordinators will utilize meetings and contacts to discuss new issues with the client. Additionally, it assists the program with data collection regarding client success.

In addition to the services provided, Sisterhood Community Coordinators engage clients in recreational activities, cultural events and other positive social opportunities. With generous donations from Tickets for Kids®, Sisterhood has been able to take girls to museums, live stage performances and have a season of activities planned for the summer of 2008.

Outcome Measures

The final development during this year, and perhaps the most important development, is the move toward concrete, measurable outcomes. The administrative members of the management team have been working closely with the FISA Foundation and a consulting firm to establish appropriate, measurable goals for clients working with the Sisterhood Initiative. Working with representatives from FISA and the consulting firm, Sisterhood is currently revising its logic model and is working to incorporate programming recognized by the Office for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP).

Summits, Conferences and Recognitions

In partnership with Pennsylvania State Senator Jane Orie, One Vision One Life assisted with the S.T.O.P. Convention. Annually, the S.T.O.P. Convention brings close to 800 youth from area high schools together to create and perform stage performances addressing issues that are pertinent in the young people's lives. This year's Convention,

held at Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Hall, discussed topics such as addiction, bullying, dating violence and eating disorders.



Perhaps most exciting for One Vision One Life this year was the organization's participation and selection in the Robert Wood Johnson and Ashoka Changemakers online competition for the world's most innovative social entrepreneurs and focus a Changemakers Summit on the methods those entrepreneurs' methods and programs. This competition invited applicants from all over the world, and received over 350 proposals from over thirty countries. A panel of judges with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation evaluated the proposals and chose thirteen finalists. One Vision One Life was both honored and excited to be chosen as a finalist in the competition. As a finalist, One Vision One Life will be attending the Ashoka Changemakers' Summit: Young Men At Risk: Transforming a Generation at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's campus in Princeton, New Jersey.

An online audience will vote on finalists, and three winners will be selected from the open voting. At the time this report was prepared, One Vision One Life staff was awaiting the results of the voting and preparing to attend the Summit in New Jersey.

Documentation and Outcomes

After a short period of trial and error, in 2005, One Vision One Life, Inc. successfully implemented a series of weekly and monthly reports. These reports capture quantitative and qualitative information on community organizing, public education distribution,

conflict mediations, shooting responses, and community programming. Perhaps the most integral documentation is the weekly case notes provided on clients on Community Coordinators' caseloads. The case notes track at-risk individuals and their progress or lack of progress. These tracking mechanisms enable One Vision One Life staff to identify times of hardship or crisis that are recognized triggers for that individual. The ability to identify these times in an at-risk individuals life assists One Vision One Life in being able to prevent negative behaviors often used as coping mechanisms by at-risk individuals. The information collected in One Vision One Life's documentation is cited throughout this report. The established collection and documentation methods are strong enough to have enticed the RAND Corporation to apply for federal funds to evaluate the program. The RAND Corporation will be evaluating the program through 2010.

During this year, One Vision One Life has implemented a comprehensive integrated information management system. This system allows One Vision One Life to track client caseload and the progress being made by clients. A data analyst maintains the database and, in the future, will be able to quantify information by demographic, geographic, and other fields of information. This will provide further opportunity for One Vision One Life to evaluate outcomes based on data.

Neighborhood Profiles

One Vision One Life works in neighborhoods throughout the city. Beyond statistics, One Vision One Life sees the challenges, successes and tragic consequences of failure inside the neighborhoods in which this important work is done. One Vision One Life strives to reach as many youth as possible, however, there are never enough Community Coordinators to reach the hundreds of youth in the many communities. Community

Coordinators give as much time as they can to each youth on their caseloads, sometimes having as many as twenty youth on a caseload. Additionally, there are serious challenges to working with our target population. A culture of violence encourages behavior that is self-destructive and destructive for the community. The following stories demonstrate

Even when a youth is engaged in programming, there are never guarantees that the youth will stay engaged. However, One Vision One Life Community Coordinators are able to reach the community's most at-risk youth. Some hear the message and utilize services and programming to escape a "street life." Some, unfortunately, do not. However, One Vision One Life is uniquely equipped to not only reach this population, but more importantly, influence this population. Where it is difficult for traditional service providers to initialize services with One Vision One Life's target population, Community Coordinators serve as conduits between the clients most in need of services and the services the clients need.

Along with their differences, the communities One Vision One Life serves share many similarities. But every community can boast great success stories and heartbreaking failures. The following is an intimate look into the great triumphs and tremendous tragedies One Vision One Life staff, especially outreach staff, witness every day in their communities.

"I feel it is important to tell these stories, because to see your victories, you must know your defeats."

Taili Thompson, Northside Area Manager

NORTHSIDE

One Vision One Life's work on the Northside cannot be fully appreciated without first sharing the story of the Northside Area Manager, Taili Thompson. In 1996, Taili was sitting in a prison release room in Secaucus, New Jersey. He had been in New Jersey State Correctional Institutions for the past three years after being convicted of drug trafficking, possession of a controlled substance with intent to deliver and possession of a firearm. After being released, Taili returned to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and resumed his negative means of providing for himself and his loved ones. During this time, Richard Garland approached Taili and explained his vision, going to the problem for the solution.

A few days before Mr. Garland's and Taili's first meeting, in 2002, Taili's home was searched by law enforcement and, as a result, Taili was again charged with possession of a controlled substance with intent to deliver and illegal possession of a firearm. After this, Taili felt his options were limited - he was facing four new felony charges. Anticipating the need to raise funds for a lawyer, Taili attended the meeting to explain why he would be unable to participate. Taili told Mr. Garland about his new charges since they had last seen each other and explained the issues that would arise because he would need attorney fees.

Mr. Garland's response changed Taili's life. Mr. Garland said he still wanted Taili working with the program, and he assisted Taili with his legal counsel. Mr. Garland was offering Taili a job and assistance with his current legal issues – from that day forward, Taili has been committed to Mr. Garland's vision and to changing his own life. Taili looked at Mr. Garland's investment in him as a one time opportunity not likely to come around again.

Taking full advantage of his opportunity, Taili is currently enrolled at the Community College of Allegheny County and is currently three classes from completing his associate's degree. Taili says, "I went from a laundry list of charges to a laundry list of trainings and certifications."

Finally, while Taili was sitting in Secaucus, New Jersey, so many years ago, he swore to himself he would never return to New Jersey again. However, Taili will be returning to New Jersey under far different circumstances this year. Taili will be returning to Princeton, New Jersey to attend the Changemakers' Young Men at Risk Summit at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation campus.

When told about the upcoming Summit, Taili said, "From prison to Princeton, it gives me goose bumps every time I think about it. I'm going back to New Jersey on a completely different side of life. From bringing drugs and guns in and out of the state and doing time to attending a Summit for young men at risk – the same young man I used to be."

Kid B's Story

A One Vision One Life Community Coordinator came in contact for the first time with Kid B in early 2006. He was a fairly good kid, but was hanging out with negative peer group. Kid B was 18 years old and had not graduated from high school and was not pursuing his GED. Initially, Kid B was not concerned with obtaining his GED and his lack of education did not concern him. For months, Kid B was mentored by a One Vision One Life Community Coordinator (CC). Kid B's CC brought him a variety of flyers for educational programs, however Kid B refused to register for the classes. Finally, in November 2006, his CC brought Kid B information about enrolling in the YouthBuild Program, a program providing certified construction training and GED classes while providing a stipend for the youth involved. This program interested Kid B.

Upon further investigation, his CC discovered Kid B had recently found out he was going to be a father. When discussing this with Kid B, his CC told him, this prepares him for both the workforce and for further educational opportunities. Finally, in November 2006, his CC was able to make a referral to the YouthBuild Program, and Kid B was accepted. One Vision One Life's Community Coordinator continued to monitor Kid B's progress while he was in the program. Initially, Kid B was attending his scheduled classes and was making positive changes in his life. However, he stopped returning his CC's calls, and upon checking with the YouthBuild staff, he had stopped attending the program at approximately the same time he stopped returning calls.

Kid B's CC searched for him throughout the community. Youth in his peer group reported they had not seen him recently, and One Vision One Life was unable to locate him. Over the next two years, Kid B was in the community on a few occasions. His CC spoke with him, tried to reach him. On one meeting, the young man was driving a rental car he reported having got from a drug addict in exchange for drugs. While his CC kept trying to deliver a message to the young man, his CC could see the escalation of Kid B's negative behaviors and both feared and anticipated trouble for the young man.

The last time his CC saw Kid B, was in 2008 when his picture was flashed on the television. The caption read "North Side Man to stand trial in fatal shooting over iPod." (A Tribune Review article of the same name is attached). Kid B was charged with homicide and theft and has been ordered to stand trial.

Man D's Story

Man D was referred to One Vision One Life by a landlord in the community, Man D's landlord. Man D had fallen a few months behind in his rent, however the landlord believed Man D was well intentioned and was willing to arrange payments if Man D gained employment. The landlord's familiarity with One Vision One Life was as a result of street outreach performed by Community Coordinators, therefore he contacted the CC who had initialized dialogue with him.

One Vision One Life completed the intake paperwork with Man D and immediately set to work assisting him in obtaining employment. Man D, working with his CC, submitted several applications. While completing applications with his CC, Man D expressed his true motivation for so adamantly pursuing employment.

Man D revealed if he was to get evicted, he would have to move back with his brother. He believed this move would only prove detrimental to him because his brother's home had recently been robbed. Man D was sure he would become involved in the situation that would ensue. After hearing this situation, One Vision One Life was even more adamant about finding assistance. In addition to individual job searches and application completion/submission, One Vision One Life referred Man D to other agencies who assist with emergency housing issues. After four weeks, there were no return calls from employers, and after countless messages, there were no return calls from the other agencies.

After five weeks, Man D was dead. While working with his brother in a garage, the man rumored to have robbed Man D's brother's home came into the garage. According to police, when the two brothers confronted the man about the robbery, the man pulled out a gun and shot Man D and his brother. Man D was pronounced dead at the scene.

One Vision One Life is currently working to develop initiatives that would enable the organization to directly provide employment to individuals in situations like this one. But

the truest goal of the organization to provide the services to *prevent* individuals from experiencing the anxiety, pressure and tragic loss before it is too late.

North Side B-Ball Academy

For the past five years, One Vision One Life has sponsored and run the North Side B-Ball Academy. During the five years in operation, over 250 youth have been involved in the Academy. The Academy not only provides basketball instruction for younger youth, but also employs older youth. While basketball skills appear to be the focus of the Academy, the transferable skills – discipline, motivation, courage – are perhaps where the Academy has the biggest impact. Furthermore, the Academy has academic standards that must be met for youth to participate.

While the B-Ball Academy has success stories every year – this year’s was special. A youth, Mike, who had participated in the Academy since it’s inception will be going to LaRoche College. Mike focused on both the athletic and educational standards established at the B-Ball Academy. His consistency paid off when this year, he was offered a basketball scholarship to attend the college. At LaRoche, Mike will be studying engineering and playing basketball. Mike’s story is a testament to what the B-Ball Academy was designed to do and has successfully done – it uses basketball to motivate youth to reach for better opportunities for themselves.

HOMEWOOD NORTH

The Homewood North community is a part of the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh. Situated atop a hill, the Homewood North community is fairly separated from Homewood proper. Unlike the North Side where One Vision One Life is dealing with many neighborhoods, here, the organization focuses its efforts in the Homewood North community, often referred to as “Hilltop.”

The Homewood North neighborhood has a history of gang culture and involvement, stemming from the 1980's. The community's isolation provides the perfect environment for gangs to develop and flourish, necessitating One Vision One Life's presence. Because the community is detached geographically, the boys and young men in the community, whether erroneously or otherwise, develop an "us against them" mentality. This geographical divide, coupled with the development of gangs and the accompanying culture, led to a separation in the Homewood community. As gangs moved into the community, the separation between the Homewood North community the rest of the Homewood neighborhood became obvious. This separation evolved into an ongoing rivalry that continues to the present day.

Byron Johnson's Story

One Vision One Life's Community Coordinator had known Byron all of Byron's life. The Community Coordinator anticipated Byron's need for services, as his CC was familiar with the issues existing in Byron's family. The family had a history of alcohol abuse and a general lack of stability. As a result, Byron's life lacked structure and he struggled to succeed. At twenty years old, Byron had not graduated from high school, had not obtained his GED and was not employed.

Byron's CC had mentored him prior to him being admitted on a caseload, however, when Byron started exhibiting behaviors that were likely to get him killed or incarcerated, his CC stepped in and admitted him to his caseload. His CC sat down with him, and due to the long history his CC has with Byron, he was initially willing to accept the mentoring sessions.

At his initial intake, Byron set goals regarding employment, reducing his "street activity" and education. However, soon after his initial meeting, Byron began leaving the city to engage in business, primarily illegal. Byron contacted his CC rarely, and ceased returning calls. Due to the transient nature of his street activities, his CC was unable to contact him in the community.

Community residents recently contact Byron's CC to notify him Byron had been arrested outside the city and was being charged with a felony related to the possession of a controlled substance. Even more distressing to his CC, Byron may have been involved in other crimes, some of those violent in nature.

Byron is currently incarcerated, but there will come a time when he will return to the community. His CC will be prepared to offer assistance Byron will certainly need, as re-entering the community from incarceration presents an additional set of obstacles to overcome.

Damien Peterson's Story

As a juvenile, Damien had extensive involvement with the justice system. He had been in intensive supervision programs designed to monitor his location, community based

programming and was in and out of Shuman Detention Center. When the client was eighteen, his mother contacted the Community Coordinator in their community and requested he meet with her son, Damien.

Upon meeting with his CC, Damien was attentive and reported growing tired of the street activity in which he was involved. His primary source of income was illegal and he understood and acknowledged the fragility of an income from those sources. With his CC, Damien initially developed a series of goals related to independent housing, employment and removing himself from the street lifestyle.

Since he set those goals approximately one year ago, he has achieved each and every one. Damien secured employment at a local pharmacy. After completing his first goal, Damien found out he was going to be a father. This made completion of his established goals all the more important. In order to both remove himself from his prior street life, and secure housing, Damien moved to a new neighborhood. He currently lives with the mother of his child and his child and is in the process of planning a wedding. Since becoming involved with his One Vision One Life CC, Damien has not been involved in criminal activities and has had no interaction with the criminal justice system.

The story would be successful for One Vision One Life if it ended there, but this story is ongoing. Although he lives in a new neighborhood, his CC continues to contact Damien and monitor his progress. Additionally, since his completion of his originally established goals, Damien's CC encourages Damien to continue setting goals in an orderly and structured manor and accomplishing them by focusing on one step at a time. Damien recently set a goal of pursuing education and a career in the medical field. He continues to work and take care of his family while exploring the various opportunities available in the Pittsburgh area.

Crisis Intervention

One of One Vision One Life's most successful interventions was done with a Homewood youth. A representative from FamilyLinks, a partnering organization, contacted the Homewood North Area Manager and notified her of an issue her staff was having with a youth from the Homewood neighborhood. Briefly, the youth was intimidating female staff, utilizing his large stature to frighten and bully them. With that initial introduction to the issue, the Homewood North Area met with the Program Director and Executive Director, who in turn, arranged for One Vision One Life staff to meet with FamilyLinks staff later the same day.

In response to this call, a meeting convened all parties from the organizations that were involved in this situation. From One Vision One Life, there was the Executive Director, Program Director, Area Manager and Lead Community Coordinator. From FamilyLinks, there was the Executive Director, Program Manager and House Manager. During this meeting, FamilyLinks arranged to have One Vision One Life's Community Coordinator mentor the youth while he was at the residential placement. However, the main area of concern was actually surrounding his home passes and his return to the community.

One of the staff members involved in the youth's treatment was from the same neighborhood as the youth. Apparently the youth saw the staff member while he was in the community and then used this information to threaten the staff member. Therefore, there was additional concern about the staff member's safety in the community. One Vision One Life was able to provide services to both the youth and the staff member in this situation. One Vision One Life's Lead Community Coordinator mentored the youth on a regular basis while another Community Coordinator monitored the staff member's home during times the client was on a home pass for the weekend.

While One Vision One Life was involved with this situation, a friend of the young man's was killed in the community. Due to the nature of the shooting, it was rumored to be a retaliation, FamilyLinks staff feared for the youth's safety, as well as the safety of the staff and other residents in the house. Because One Vision One Life recognizes the importance of attending a friend or family member's final services, One Vision One Life again worked with FamilyLinks to transport and chaperone the young man to his friend's funeral services. To address the safety of the other residents and program staff, One Vision One Life and FamilyLinks worked to secure a spot for the youth at a residential placement outside of Allegheny County. One Vision One Life Program Director and the Homewood North Lead Community Coordinator escorted the youth to the placement and assisted him in getting comfortable in his new location. One Vision One Life staff continued to monitor the youth's progress in his programs while he was out of the area.

Beyond the obvious relationship this incident fostered, between the organizations, among staff members and between staff and the client, it also provided a new training partnership for One Vision One Life and FamilyLinks. FamilyLinks extended an open invitation to One Vision One Life staff to attend their training series, which rotate topics quarterly. Shortly after the incident reached its resolution, One Vision One Life Executive Director and an assisting staff member were able to provide a comprehensive training on Pittsburgh gangs and indicators of gang involvement.

“The Whole Squad”

When providing services to their target population, One Vision One Life recognizes the need for swift service delivery. Opportunities are limited, and in some of the communities opportunities are scarce. Because this community is geographically isolated and the population is relatively small when compared to other Pittsburgh Housing Authority (HACP) communities, the only service providers operating inside the community are those agencies, like One Vision One Life, that are contracted by HACP to provide services. The remainder of the services in the Homewood area are located in the lower lying areas of Homewood, in areas dominated by youth involved in the feuds with

the youth from Homewood North. Therefore, while Homewood proper is served by many organizations, youth from Homewood North are often excluded from participating, both by choice and necessity. Therefore, when programming was available outside the Homewood neighborhood, staff tried to move quickly to introduce the opportunity, and if there was interest, moved just as swiftly to complete the application and/or enrollment process.

In 2007, the Homewood Area Manager was notified the YouthBuild Program, a program designed to provide certified construction training while providing GED class and pays youth a stipend, was recruiting and interviewing for participants. On the same day, the Area Manager contacted the two Community Coordinators currently providing services in Homewood North and took the YouthBuild applications to those Community Coordinators. In turn, the Community Coordinators contacted their clients that evening. For clients who were interested, the CCs arranged to meet with those clients the following day to complete the applications.

Upon completion of the applications, Community Coordinators brought the completed applications to the Area Manager, who in turn, submitted them to the YouthBuild Program staff. Following and application review and interview process, five Homewood North youth were accepted into the program. While in the program, one of the clients was able to obtain his high school diploma (as a result of his already substantial accumulation of high school credits), two received their GED's and three completed the program, however have not yet taken their certification exam.

Throughout their programming, both the Community Coordinators and the Area Manager monitored the progress of this group of young men. Their willingness to travel to the program and the commitment they showed as a unit to each other was admirable. In the end, all of these young men benefited from the program, even if they had yet to complete all facets of the program. This, yet again, demonstrates an example of a group of young men traditional providers have been unable to engage. However, One Vision One Life's Community Coordinators were able to provide immediate access to these young men and acted as the much needed link between this population and the needed services.

PLEASANT RIDGE

Approximately one year ago, the Allegheny County Housing Authority (ACHA) contacted One Vision One Life and requested the organization's programming in the Pleasant Ridge in McKees Rocks, a community bordering Pittsburgh's West Side. Pleasant Ridge provided One Vision One Life with a unique opportunity due to the new facility available to One Vision One Life to provide on-site programming. The facility had space for meeting and a full gymnasium. Additionally, outside the facility is a large field area also available for use. ACHA contracted with One Vision One Life to provide

programming Wednesday through Saturday from 3:00PM until 10:00PM. At the program's inception, if attendance was the measure, the program was sure to be a success.

While Pleasant Ridge staff, an Area Manager and two Community Coordinators, were able to quell the conflicts in the gymnasium and other programming with ease, other issues were starting to surface in the community. Because Pleasant Ridge is still a relatively new community, the residents are comprised of a combination of individuals from various neighborhoods throughout Pittsburgh, some of them rivals. As the neighborhood evolved, two primary gangs were represented, Crips having moved in from the North Side and Bloods having moved in from the Hill District. However, at the same time the youth were working to establish their gangs, One Vision One Life was becoming an integral part of the Pleasant Ridge community. Staff and the residents had developed a mutual trust and cooperation, recognizing the common goal was to maintain a safe community. This cooperation from the residents enabled One Vision One Life's staff to successfully intervene in and mediate most conflicts.

Consequently, the conflict manifested itself in a new location, a location where One Vision One Life was not providing services – the Sto-Rox High School. At the height of the escalation, students at Sto-Rox High School were in the cafeteria in the AM hours. A physical altercation escalated to include approximately ten students, a majority of who were from the Pleasant Ridge community. Officials who contacted One Vision One Life referred to the incident as a “riot,” and requested One Vision One Life assist them in swiftly addressing this situation. Following meetings with school district representatives, One Vision One Life staff provided daily services in the schools, monitoring lunch periods and other occasions where large groups of students were gathered. As a preventative measure, both the school and One Vision One Life also saw the necessity for One Vision One Life staff to be present during school transit hours, at school buses and on the buses if it were to become necessary.

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