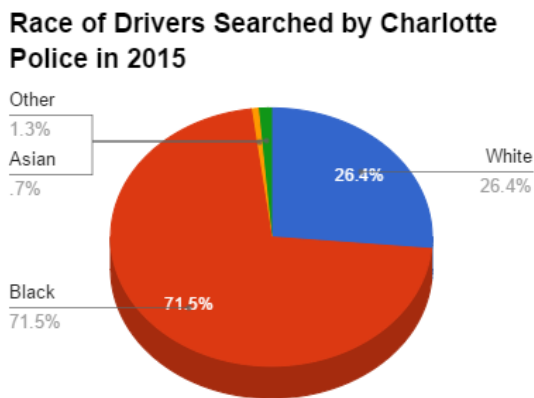


Problem

Many Charlotte communities suffer and do not feel safe from violence that occurs in their community. Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department's 2015 statistics show that violent crime was up 18%, murders up 36%, robberies up 23%, and aggravated assaults up 16%. This rise in violent crime is not spread evenly throughout the city but centralized in a handful of neighborhoods. These are lower-wealth communities with large African-American and Latino populations.



In response to this spike in crime, the Charlotte City Council moved to pass Exclusion Zones. The zones would have given nearly unchecked power to the Charlotte Police Department to declare a neighborhood a 'safety zone', further stigmatizing already struggling communities. This policy requires individuals charged with crimes in these declared 'zones' to be banned from entering the neighborhood.

Imagine the consequences for a banned neighbor? Separation from family, inability to earn an income, or even loss of housing. Understanding that this policy would not fix

the problem of violence, SAFE Coalition NC and our community partners successfully stopped its passage.

With no other clear solution to rising crime and violence, communities continue to call for a stronger police presence. Simultaneously, people of color in Charlotte experience a disproportionate rate of traffic stops, and are sentenced at a higher rate than whites for minor offenses. Several high profile shootings of black women and men by law enforcement worsened the climate of fear and mistrust. Community members fear for their safety with police, and yet find no sanctuary in their own neighborhoods.

"Community accountability refers to the ability and desire of community members to adopt a harm-free way of thinking. This includes developing the mechanisms to prevent harm, to intervene directly when harm occurs, to repair harm amongst community members, and to transform individual and collective relationships" - Critical Resistance Policy Framework

SAFE Coalition NC is proposing a multi phase solution to create sustainable and permanent change in affected communities. During the initial phase, SAFE Coalition NC, will pilot a youth initiative focused on teaching participants the life skill of mindfulness and a community-based nutrition initiative. Both pilot initiatives are tested and conducted by facilitators with years of experience. The objective of the pilot program is to show a target community their power in influencing positive change in their community, establishing cohesiveness within the community, and building their trust.

The community building and programming in the pilot is vital before moving into the longer term work of establishing Harm Free Zones (HFZs) in Charlotte. Creating HFZs is a long-term theory of change, built in multiple phases to ensure we have the infrastructure and community trust required to maintain the zones. SAFE has retained Dr. David Campt, a renowned consultant on race relations to start engaging Charlotteans in the long-range planning. Building upon existing innovative models from other places, Charlotte will build a Harm Free Zone (HFZ) that helps prevent violence and supports community members to learn to cope and address the reality and the perceptions of violence.

An example of this work in North Carolina, is under the leadership of SpritHouse, a nonprofit organization in Durham. SpiritHouse has dedicated years to building HFZ communities, often emphasizing community member's power to share their stories of fear and pain through art, music, and plays. Spirit House's efforts have led to department-wide reforms of Durham police and a reduction in the disproportionate rate black community members were stopped and searched by officers.

SAFE NC will utilize many of SpritHouse's lessons learned in building our program. Ultimately we will create a program designed to fit Charlotte's needs, with an emphasis on self-care, healthy habits and removing barriers to employment. The key point is that change will come from the community without police or government involvement. These decisions must come from an autonomous community with a shared daily living, a shared identity, and ultimately a shared vision to combat the social harms that affect them

Systemic oppression, institutionalized racism and implicit bias are social harms that detrimentally deter communities of color from achieving their full potential. The byproduct of these societal ills include higher arrest and conviction rates, mass incarceration of African-Americans and Latinos, as well a lower sense of worth in communities of color. Negative community norms dominate in neighborhoods impacted by these types of social harms. The resulting internalized oppression destroys community trust, minimizes open dialog between neighbors, stifles community investment, and deprives the residents of the vision and hope needed for positive community development.

Throughout the pilot and long-range program, SAFE Coalition NC will be challenging community members to focus their attention on developing agreement on the following HFZ acknowledgements:

- The harms that community members inflict on themselves and each other as a consequence of the social conditions that structure their lives.
- The benefits to the community and its members from intervening, preventing, and repairing these harms, and transforming the community and its members through these processes.
- A general and concrete understanding of processes of intervention, reparation, prevention and transformation, and their interventions.

Target Neighborhood

Safe Coalition NC will pilot our youth and nutritional initiatives in the Grier Heights. Grier Heights is Grier Heights is an 82% African American neighborhood with a violent crime rate five times the city average. The neighborhood's subsidized housing rate is 41% compared to the city average of 2%. The high school graduation

rate for Grier Heights is 53% compared to a Charlotte Mecklenburg rate of 81%. In 2014, the City of Charlotte had an employment rate of 90% but Grier Heights employment rate was only 64%. The average household income for the City of Charlotte is \$56,772 compared to Grier Heights average family earning only \$16,988. ¹

Pilot Program

The Harm Free Zone Pilot Program will foster change in three domains: individual healing, community norms, and institutional behavior. The three areas of the pilot program while distinct from each other tackle multiple barriers which could prevent the future creation of a HFZ. The programs build upon each other cohesively preparing Grier Heights for the long-term program. Community alignment and cooperation cannot be reached without first providing opportunities for individual growth and healing.

Individual Healing

Communities of color are significantly impacted by health issues such as obesity and diabetes. These health problems are worsened by lack of access to healthy foods due to the distance a person must travel to reach a grocery store, or limited income and lack of affordable healthy food. In recent years the NC General Assembly has cut benefits to Medicaid recipients and has passed a bill denying SNAP benefits to families with unemployed mothers.

SAFE Coalition NC will conduct community education and programming around healthy lifestyles. The initiative will improve the health status of the targeted community by identifying each child and their family's preliminary health score and addressing the behaviors related to those health risk factors associated with the unhealthy behaviors being addressed. Pretests will be utilized to gather this information. Post-test health scores will be gathered after exposure to the initiative to measure and evaluate success. Over a 10-week period, 25 adolescents of color ranging in age from 13 to 17 years living in the Grier Heights will be exposed to the Healing the Community Initiative.

Paul West will be responsible for the delivery of the instruction and the curricula. Paul West is the Founder and President of M.A.T.E. Health Promotions Corp, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide a support system to educate working class and socioeconomically challenged parents on how to provide a healthy environment to flourish for themselves and their children,. Inspiring positive change by mentoring and healthy lifestyle coaching is the foundation on which the organization's program is based.. Paul was featured in Jet Magazine for his tremendous accomplishments in weight loss and healthy living.

Long-Term Strategy: Introduce the concepts of community partnerships for future community gardens, eating healthy, and community development by first instilling health and well being on an individual and family level.

Program Goal: Improve the behavior and health status of the youth of the community by identifying each adolescent's preliminary health/behavior score and addressing unhealthy behaviors associated with the health risk factors these behavior can create.

Expected Outcomes:

¹ City of Charlotte's Quality of Life Data <http://mcmap.org/qol/report.html?n=370>

- Improve the child’s self awareness, self image, self discipline, self respect and respect for others through physical exercise, healthy modeling and mentoring.
- Improve each child’s level of self efficacy or confidence in their ability to be successful in taking action and overcoming obstacles in fitness and in life.
- Build new habits by increasing the frequency of daily physical activity among children and parents to at least one hour per day.
- For those overweight/obese children, reduce their total pounds overweight percentage by up to 40%.
- Instill healthy eating behavior in families by increasing the frequency of parents and children eating a minimum of 3 healthy meals per day and 1 to 2 healthy snacks through tangible measurements.

Activities:

- Hold a 10 week course with 25 adolescents of color from Grier Heights
- Conduct pre and post programming surveys to evaluate the programs ability to improve and adolescents self-awareness, self-image, self-discipline, self-respect and respect for others, reporting zero acts of physical aggression or violence toward others.
- Create individualized plans with each participate identifying their specific actions steps for improving their levels of self-efficacy or confidence in their ability to be successful in overcoming obstacles in fitness, school and in everyday life.
- Hold in-class activities to increase participants physical activity.
- Hold in-class and on the ground trainings on reading and interpreting nutrition labels.

Community Norms

”One of the most important factors of whether someone commits violence is what we think our peers expect us to do. Aggressive norms are perpetuated in environments by norms that promote maintaining respect as essential and discourage walking away from any fight.

These norms prohibit an individual from allowing others to take advantage of him or “mess with him” and demands willingness to exact retribution if such incidents do occur. When violence is concentrated for a long period of time in an individual community, it becomes normalized and therefore even “expected” by peers – and in fact by the whole community. “ - <http://cureviolence.org/understand-violence/changing-behavior/>

The first phase of our community norms programming will include a dedicated curriculum for neighborhood youth. Michael P. Anderson will lead Choosing Love Together, a 12-week leadership academy that centers on positive self-identification for young boys of color. Michael is the Founder and Executive Director of The Jerseygrown Foundation. Mike is a 2008 Harvard College Graduate and has worked for over 15 years in building community service programs that serve minorities in underserved areas. Mike will bring a dynamic program that instills the values and tools of mindfulness, cultivating an empowered mindset, and reaching your dreams for youth. The mission is to prepare young boys of color to excel in a competitive marketplace, especially with respect to the intricacies of their environment.

Long- Term Strategy : Build support for in-community conflict resolution, reducing reliance on police and reducing acts of violence.

Program Goal: Provide Choosing Love Together mindfulness and conflict resolution training to 25 youth of color from Grier Heights.

Expected Outcomes:

- Develop and nurture positive relationships among peers.
- Galvanize infrastructure to assist students in goal setting and creating long-terms plans.
- Develop socially aware youth leadership able to serve as mentors to their peers.
- Reduce physical violence in schools and communities.

Activities:

- Serve 25 students in pilot 12-week program.
- Participants will learn how to construct a positive self-identity through opportunities for self expression.
- Hold community forum to explore personal, career, and social interests of community.
- Use entry surveys to measure current level of violent peer incidents—e.g. fights in school.
- Provide training for participants to learn to manage stress.
- Student-leaders will participate in community engagement. For example, each student-leader finds another in the community to mentor.

Institutional Behavior



Like most cities, a multitude of Charlotte’s policies suffer from institutionalized bias, often punishing and disenfranchising the very communities they aim to serve. Addressing these underlying biases is a long-term goal and too large to imagine tackling in just a few steps. Instead we seek to first run local campaigns aimed at asking local cities to stop asking potential employees if they have been convicted of a crime in job application materials. Passage of these policies increases the likelihood ex-offenders will

have access to sustainable employment. For the purposes of this project these campaigns also provide opportunities to identify individuals impacted to serve as activists, and others to serve as allies.

SAFE Coalition NC has been organizing to pass a Ban the Box ordinance in Mecklenburg County for the past three months. We have met with County Commissioners and the Mecklenburg County Sheriff, secured a commissioner to sponsor the ordinance, and held a press conference to garner community support. Our Ban the Box Ordinance has a champion for its passage in At-Large Commissioner Pat Cotham. Through Commissioner Cothams’ efforts, we believe that there are enough votes on the board to pass the Ban the Box ordinance.

Long -term Strategies:

- Use local campaigns to raise awareness of the institutionalized bias in city and county hiring practices and other policies.
- Recruit leaders and activist who will work long term in development of Harm Free Zones.
- Demonstrate feasibility to tackle institutional bias.

Program Goals:

- Passage of Ban the Box campaigns in multiple municipalities.
- Recruit new leaders through local campaigns.

Activities:

- Organize advocates, community partners and coalition partners to pass Ban the Box Ordinances in Mecklenburg County and in the towns of Matthews, Huntersville and Davidson.
- Hold leadership development trainings for identified impacted individuals.
- Produce Op-Eds and Letter to the Editor by impacted individuals.
- Develop individuals able to serve as ‘storytellers’ for Ban the Box campaign.
- Conduct a Re-Entry Summit for 250 formerly incarcerated residents with All of Us Or None, Myers Park Baptist Church, and other community partners
- Form an Action Panel that includes elected officials and community leaders to vet and plan policy recommendations raised during the summit.
- Form active All of Us or None workgroups to build membership in the ongoing work: Policy, Outreach/Inreach and Sustainability.
- Conduct mobilizations with formerly incarcerated people in the neighborhoods that are hardest hit by incarceration.
- Hold regular outreach/inreach at local jails and prisons around All of Us or None campaigns.

“All of Us or None started our Ban the Box campaign after a series of Peace and Justice Community Summits all over California. At the summits, formerly-incarcerated people and our families identified our needs and the discrimination we face every day because of our records. We also identified a host of solutions, which we are organizing to win. Our Ban the Box campaign is one of those solutions, because it confronts the structural discrimination formerly-incarcerated people face in so many areas of life.”

Expected Outcomes:

- Leverage the summit to organize an All of Us or None chapter in Charlotte.
- Create community dialogue around race and community bias.
- Identify and create leaders serving on local councils or committees willing to serve as advocate for recognizing and tackling bias.
- SAFE NC will become a clearinghouse for Re-Entry work in Charlotte.
- Raise awareness of the great work being conducted by various organizations and breaking down the silo barrier usually associated with individual group efforts.

Long Term Program

At the end of the pilot program SAFE will have engaged the planning energy of a broad set of community stakeholders – from formal community officials, leaders, faith leaders, youth, elders, and community members. The aim is to have a process that is inclusive, transparent, efficient, and that uses the best methods in civic



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4q3AJK52t98>

engagement to achieve clear outcomes. SAFE has contracted with Dr. David Campt to consult and facilitate the initial planning stage.

Dr. Campt currently provides consultation about race relations and diversity issues with United States congressional representatives, the foundation community, and national community organizations. Before becoming a consultant, Dr. David Campt worked as a senior policy associate with the President's Initiative on Race at the White House from September 1997 until the end of 1998. Dr. Campt led an effort by the Initiative to bring together the best diversity trainers to produce a general-purpose guide for racial dialogue that was promoted by the President. In addition, Dr. Campt used his extensive background in program evaluation to design to criteria from which diversity efforts would be evaluated for potential recognition by the White House.

The creation of Harm Free Zones is the historical process of building community autonomy and self-determination in the struggle to abolish the prison industrial complex, and to transform our ways of treating each other, and is inseparable from the process of community building.
Harm Free Zone General Framework by Critical Resistance.

SAFE Coalition NC proposes an 11-month citywide planning process that can be thought of in a four-phase model facilitated by Dr. David Campt.

Phase 1: Initial Leader Conclave – Purpose: Develop Possibilities (Early April 2016)

Phase 2: Post-Conclave Subcommittee – Purpose: Refine Possibilities (April – August 2016)

Phase 3: Community Congress: Clarify Community Priorities (September 2016)

Phase 4: Sustainability Subcommittees – Purpose: Create Proposals (December 2016)

Key Staff

Robert Dawkins (SAFE NC Founder, State Organizer)

Robert will serve as Project Manager for the Pilot Initiatives and the Long Range Program and serve on the planning committee for the Reentry Service Project. Before Starting SAFE Coalition NC, Robert worked for 7 year with Democracy North Carolina as the Western NC Field Organizer. Robert's work centered on organizing communities of color on the issues of voter rights, voter access and ending voter disenfranchisement. Robert was the Head Organizer for the Charlotte chapter of ACORN for 3 years where he worked in low to moderate income neighborhoods building neighborhood capacity, neighborhood power and on leadership development.

Robert has a B.A in Political Science from the University of South Carolina. A Graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Management from the University of North Carolina Charlotte and is currently working on his M.A in Social Justice at Loyola University Chicago. Robert can be heard weekly on People Demanding Action Radio hosting his Agitator Radio Show

Minister Corine Mack (SAFE Coalition NC Board Member)

Corine will serve as a board advisor for the pilot initiatives, the long range program and the Reentry Service project. Minister Mack is the current Charlotte NAACP President. Prior to this appointment, she was the Community Affairs Chairperson for the Charlotte NAACP, while also serving on their Executive Board. Corine has also worked at the Center for Community Change. Ordained Elder in 1982, Corine was commissioned as a minister in the Perfecting Faith Church in New York by her spiritual father Pastor Donnie McClurkin.

Dr. David Campt. (Consultant for Long Range HFZ Program) Bio covered in proposal.

Michael Paul Anderson (Facilitator of Choosing Love Together Initiative)

Michael studied Government at Harvard College, obtaining his Bachelor’s Degree in 2008. At Harvard, Mike served as a cultural & civic leader via the Phillips Brooks House Association and leader in the Harvard Black Men’s Forum. A cultural connector, Mike’s story evidences the American dream, rising from poverty and public housing in an AIDS affected household to becoming an international champion of hope and steward of humanity.

Through his voice as an international recording artist, songwriter, producer, writer, actor & filmmaker, he strives to uplift, inspire, and mobilize a positive global youth culture. Michael has collaborated with Civil Rights Icons, Law Enforcement, & Universities, and has received critical acclaim for his work engaging youth. Mike has been featured on the MLK Day Podcast at SiriusXM, & and prominent television networks like MTV & CNBC.

Michael has 15+ years of experience in creating and serving community programs that sustain impact. In 2013, he developed the #Jerseygrown Community Foundation and partnered with the Newark Yoga Movement. By sharing life tools of yoga with children, they learned how to reduce stress and anxiety, increase focus and confidence as well as gaining physical benefits of strength, balance and improved flexibility. The Choosing Love Together Initiative and curriculum are proprietary to him and his Jerseygrown organization.

Paul West (Facilitator of Healing the Community Initiative).

Paul is a QMHP (Qualified Mental Health Professional), Certified Personal Trainer and Nutritionist who has personally lost over 200 lbs without surgery and has kept it off for 7 years². He has a B.S. in Criminal Justice from Fayetteville State University and a M.A. in Health Studies/ Health Promotion- w/focus-Behavioral Health from The University of Alabama. Paul, along with his second nonprofit organization geared specifically toward adolescents, Mates for Life, hosted their inaugural 24/7 health and lifestyle camp at an HBCU for adolescents of color and their parents. These adolescents from working class backgrounds lost up to 20 pounds and more than 23 inches each within a two week period. The Community Healing Initiative and curriculum are proprietary to him and his organization MATE Health Promotions Corporation.

Aires Williams (Community Organizer)

Aires is a talented millennial aged community organizer. His ability to canvass has been proven on multiple campaigns for SAFE Coalition NC. Aires will raise awareness and educate the community about our pilot initiatives. Aires ability to build and manage relationships with a variety of people will be crucial to our base

² . <http://www.jetmag.com/life/doctors-notes/true-story-200-pound-weight-loss/>

building efforts. Besides for canvassing, Aires will attend neighborhood meetings and functions as well assist the project manager with the development of educational and advocacy materials.

Ray Smith (Community Mediator)

Ray is a lifelong resident of the targeted community. He has served time in state prison and has since transformed his life to be a strong advocate for his community. Ray has a level of respect in the targeted community that will be a valuable asset for our pilot initiatives. Ray works with the youth in his community as a basketball coach and advisor. Ray has successfully mediated neighborhood conflicts.

Budget

Total Request For Funding - \$18,500

Item	Description	Cost	Notes
Consulting Fee	Dr. David Campt	\$5,000	Consultant Fee for Phase 1 of 1 Long Term Program.
Provider Fee	Michael Paul Anderson	\$3,000	Facilitating the Choosing Love Together Initiative.
Provider Fee	Paul West	\$3,000	Facilitating Heal the Community Initiative
Project Management	Robert Dawkins	\$3,000	PM fee for Phase 1 of Long Term Program, Pilot Project Program & Ban the Box Campaigns. Consultant services for Re-Entry Summit.
Stipend	Ray Smith (Mediator) Aries Williams (Organizer)	\$1,500	\$750 each for neighborhood organizing and mediation..
Overhead & Supplies	Room rentals, food, copies, etc	\$3,000	\$1000 for Long Term Stage 1 event. \$1,000 for Pilot Program \$1,000 for Re-Entry Summit.