

Saving Our Brothers and Sisters (SOBS) Project

Partnership of
Truth & Destiny Covenant Ministries UCC – Pastor Lesley E. Jones
House of Hope Fellowship Church– Pastor Nick Burnett
R.E.A.L. Truth, Inc – Rufus Johnson
B.E.A.F Project – Candance Tubbs

Introduction/Executive Summary:

With more than 80 years combined life, work and ministry experience Pastors Lesley E. Jones and Nick Burnett, community advocates Rufus Johnson and Candace Tubbs have created a partnership and commitment to address gun violence and street culture.

The Saving Our Brothers and Sisters (SOBS) Project is a community-led strategy that takes a comprehensive, wholistic and inclusive approach to addressing long-standing community issues through the use of non-traditional and traditional methods, formal and informal structures, relevant current events, and life experiences.

We recognize that each part of the strategy could stand alone, however we have discovered that more cooperative efforts are needed to be effective and yield a long-term result in communities most impacted by gun violence and street culture. To that end, it is necessary to simultaneously implement each part of strategy over a concentrated period of time, ideally, 3- 5 years.

Based upon the uptick in shootings, preparedness of neighborhood residents, commitment from faith and community leaders, social and civic organizations, and current relationships. We suggest SOBS be immediately implemented in these neighborhoods: West End, OTR, Mt. Airy, and Westwood.

Qualifications:

- Experienced faith/community leaders, advocates and entrepreneurs
- Individuals with street credibility, capable of building meaningful, trusting relationships
- Experienced community organizers capable of building strong collaborations and networks
- 30 plus years experience in program/project development and management
- Former middle/high school teacher
- Trained in mediation and crisis intervention
- Certified CCW Instructor
- 5th Degree Black Belt

Executive Summary:

Project Coordinator: Lesley E. Jones

Trailblazer, Organizer, Advocate, and Justice Fighter are words frequently used to describe, Pastor Lesley E. Jones who has spent her life working to improve the quality of living for all people. A licensed United Church of Christ minister she serves as senior pastor of Truth & Destiny Covenant Ministries in Mt. Airy. Her vast work experience includes working with at-risk youth at Cincinnati Job Corps, Executive Director for the Cincinnati Human Relations Commission and Equality Cincinnati, Program Director at Melrose YMCA. She led the Greater City Study Circles to Improve Community-Police Relations that yielded more than 100-common

ground solutions from citizens and police; organized and staged, five “Outreach Festivals” designed to provide space for positive interaction between citizens and police and to bring needed resources and opportunities into neighborhoods experiencing high crime and gun violence.

A strong community advocate and faith leader, Pastor Jones has responded to more than 300 homicides over the past 5 years, ministered to families and victims both independently and as a member of the God Squad. She partnered with Ceasefire Cincinnati to hold one the largest gun backs to date, where more than 70 guns were removed from the streets in 2 hours.

Lead Facilitator/Mentor: Rev. Nick Burnett

Pastor, entrepreneur, mentor and advocate for youth, Nick Burnett is a visionary faith leader. A native Cincinnati, Pastor Nick is familiar with the City’s street culture as he leads House of Hope Fellowship, a growing church in the heart of Over-the-Rhine with robust outreach in the West End and Winton Terrace neighborhoods.

Safety Instructor: Rufus Johnson

A certified CCW Trainer and 5th degree Martial Arts trainer, Mr. Johnson brings a wealth of knowledge and first-hand experience that will serve to educate the youth of Cincinnati. He is the founder and CEO of **Reality, Education, Attitude & Lifestyle, (R.E.A.L. Truth Inc.)**.

Outreach: Candace Tubbs

A long-time, Cincinnati resident who has led initiatives serving returning citizens to youth crime prevention projects. Ms. Tubbs is business owner with deep knowledge of the City’s street culture and needs of those who desire to escape from it.

Rationale:

We will never police our way out of crime and violence. Thus far in 2020, Cincinnati has recorded 390 shootings, 68 fatal. In one weekend, the City experienced 24 shootings. A 4-year-old, 8-year-old and 10-year-old were shot in separate incidents by another child. These incidents are telling. Our City is in a state of peril and it will take more than a law-enforcement approach to address the issues and restore peace in our neighborhoods. Community-led strategies and programs are vitally important to reducing crime and violence.

While gun violence is rising and must be addressed it is really the manifested symptom of deeper rooted maladies created by poverty, lack of access to alternatives to street culture, and lack of properly funded community-led strategies, programs, and organizations.

The “war on drugs”, America’s 40 billion-dollar investment in prisons, increased funding of law enforcement, mandatory sentencing statutes and court ordered diversion programs have not been effective in reducing gun violence or leveling street culture.

However, through our research and experience we have come to the conclusion that change comes and is sustained through the direct involvement with faith and community leaders and organizations, citizens,

community advocates, and others who serve as a system of support to individuals who are high risk to be involved in gun violence and street culture.

Goals & Objectives:

- ❖ Reduce shooting incidents and violence in Cincinnati neighborhoods
- ❖ Change the culture of violence and caliver attitude among youth ages 5-17 about gun usage, violence and street culture.
- ❖ Mentor/coach youth ages 5-17
- ❖ Identify, mentor/coach individuals who are high-risk for involvement with gun violence and/or street culture
- ❖ Mobilize and train faith/community leaders and citizens, in order, to change social norms surrounding the use of violence and response to shooting incidents.
- ❖ Coordinate and implement an inclusive, wholistic community-led strategy to reduce gun violence in partnership with faith-based institutions, social service agencies, formal and informal community leaders, criminal justice and law enforcement.

Methodology:

- Youth and adult(parent/guardian) gun safety classes
- Mentoring /Coaching events for youth to expose them to professionals, business owners, leadership development activities,
- Mentor/Coaching events with “high risk” individuals designed to address behavior, personal accountability, decision-making, life skills, and facilitate life change.
- Training and connecting “high-risk” individuals to needed resources and support networks by eliminating obstacles to disconnecting from “risky” behaviors and potential conflicts
- Facilitated training sessions for faith and community leaders and residents
- Public and group (town-hall style) presentations on violence and trauma.
- Gun Safety/Violence Prevention Awareness campaign using social media, local radio and print media

Outcomes/Performance:

- 150 youth trained in gun safety
- 240 youth mentored/coached
- 30 faith/community leaders and citizens trained in gun safety, violence and trauma
- 30 high risk individuals attend mentor/coach events
- 80% completion rate of all participants
- 75% of high risk participants employed or in school over the project duration
- 100% not involved in gun violence or street culture
- 27,159 households impacted with awareness campaign
- 5,000 impacted through public events and community engagement

Budget:

Youth Gun Safety Training	\$30,000.00
Youth Mentor/Coach Events	\$16,000.00
Mentor/Coaching Events with High Risk Individuals	\$ 9,000.00
Community Engagement & Training Events	\$10,000.00
Awareness Campaign	<u>\$ 5,000.00</u>
Total	\$70,000.00

Itemized Budget:

Youth Gun Safety Training Administrative Fee \$1,750.00 Instructor \$7,500.00 Assistant Instructor \$5,000.00 Student Manuals \$3,000.00 Certificates & Jackets \$5,250.00 CPR & First Aid \$4,500.00 Graduation Events <u>\$3,000.00</u> Total \$30,000.00	5- 6 week sessions
Youth Mentor/Coach Events Administrative Fee \$1,600.00 Facilitator \$4,000.00 Speaker Honorariums \$3,200.00 Shirts \$2,500.00 Participant Stipends <u>\$4,700.00</u> Total \$16,000.00	8 – 3 hour events
Mentor Coaching Events with High Risk Administrative Fee \$1,500.00 Facilitator \$2,500.00 Speaker Honorariums \$1,500.00 Participant Stipends <u>\$3,500.00</u> Total \$9,000.00	3 -3 hour events
Community Engagement Project Coordinator \$3,500.00 Outreach Coordinator \$2,500.00 Training Materials \$2,800.00 Shirts <u>\$1,200.00</u> Total \$10,000.00	5- 2- hour events
Awareness Campaign Graphic Design \$1,000.00 Printing \$1,000.00 Social Media Ads \$500.00 Print Ads \$1000.00 Radio/Podcasts <u>\$1,500.00</u> Total \$5,000.00	PSA campaign designed to raise awareness about gun safety.

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