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# What Tools, Policies and Practices Do Youth Need to Positively Transition From Corrections to Community?

Mikva Challenge Juvenile Justice Council

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Juvenile Justice Council



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# Mikva Challenge

## Juvenile Justice Council

Mikva Challenge's Juvenile Justice Council (JJC) is a group of young advocates making recommendations on solutions to improve the juvenile justice system in Cook County, Illinois. We want to create a more fair justice system by providing a youth-oriented view and new perspectives on what juveniles need in the areas of housing, employment, and education. JJC aims to help incarcerated youth transition out of the detention centers and ensure they have a better life. We exist to represent all of the youth voices in Cook County who are not heard or counted.

Our framing question is: *What tools, policies and practices do youth need to positively transition from corrections to community?* When seeking to answer our framing question we sought solutions in the following areas to help juveniles released from incarceration reintegrate into their community or join a new community:

**Tools:** digital resources used to achieve a goal (i.e. apps, websites, etc.)

**Policies:** rules, regulations and laws

**Practices:** actions put in place through partnership between youth advocates and public officials

Through our rigorous research process, we have acquired new insight and knowledge about the juvenile justice system -- both its strengths and its flaws. We acquired this knowledge through the critical analysis of a series of articles, various visits from guest speakers, site visits, and other online research. We talked with people such as Precious Wright of the Evanston Youth Job Center, who informed us about juveniles and their challenges to obtaining employment. We also met Pastor Joe of the Lawndale Christian Development Corporation, who shared stories about turning his life and others' lives around. We read articles and watched videos about the struggle of a youth getting out of detention centers. All of this contributed to the formation of our recommendations.

This year we also used the social media such as twitter, instagram, and rapgenius to spread the word about the struggle of youth once out of detention centers and asked for people's opinions about what youth need in order to have a life full of opportunities. We surveyed people in the streets of downtown Chicago for their opinion of how reentering youth can reenter their community. These research methods helped us have an open mind and informed us about the struggle of a youth who was once incarcerated.

We hope that after you read this report you will have a simple understanding of the problems youth face within the juvenile justice system as well as some tangible solutions for youth reentering their communities. We have tried to figure out what factors contribute to recidivism so that we can stop these triggers and help the youth remain out of incarceration. To that end, our recommendations seek to help youth transitioning from corrections to community in a positive manner. We have been studying the costs of

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housing inmates in incarceration as well as out on parole or probation and simply put, it is not worth it. There are many alternative uses for funds that better support youth. We developed recommendations to help youth gain employment, education, and housing. What follows are our recommendations for what youth need to positively transition from corrections to community. We look forward to working with you on creating a better system for the youth of Cook County.

# Mikva Challenge

## Juvenile Justice Council

### **Authored by:**

Ahmed Aktar

*Young people need good, supportive role models to help them transition from corrections to community.*

Anna Travis

*Youth need support to have a life full of opportunities in their community.*

Anthony Buford

*One thing youth need is knowledge.*

Bea Eusebio

*A role model is one thing youth need to reenter.*

Carlos Zarate

*One thing young people need in order to successfully reenter the community is education that helps integrate things that they are interested in, an education that doesn't make them feel trapped, but an education that enlightens them!*

Charlie Beltran

*I would say family and friends' support.*

Darsale Harrison

*A youth needs a proper education.*

Dasean Thompson

*They need positive people, hope, joy and support.*

Davion Benton

*They need mentors.*

Dymond Hunley

*Youth need support, love and education in order to reenter their community to have a life full of opportunities.*

Jesus Medina

*Knowledge itself is power. You need books to attain that power.*

Joanna Martycz

*I think the youth need an education and a stable living environment.*

Kareem Marshall

*Youth need support, love and guidance from their families and community.*

Kendred Belk

*They need support, employment and housing.*

Korynna Lopez

*A stable place to call home.*

Lisa Jean Baptiste

*A youth needs continuous guidance and support in order to be successful, whether or not they have been incarcerated.*

Lorie Fernandez

*What a youth reentering needs most is not a house, but a home. A place where they will feel safe and supported and loved.*

Mahfus Muntari

*Youth need effective transitional training and housing when reentering community from corrections.*

Taylor Reagan

*One thing youth need when reentering a community to have a life full of opportunities is trust; trust from parents, family and their community.*

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Tashe Fults

*Young people need equality.*

Terrence Franklin

*To be successful in life and your future.*

Tykierra Thurman

*They need help from a mentor.*

Vanessa Mora

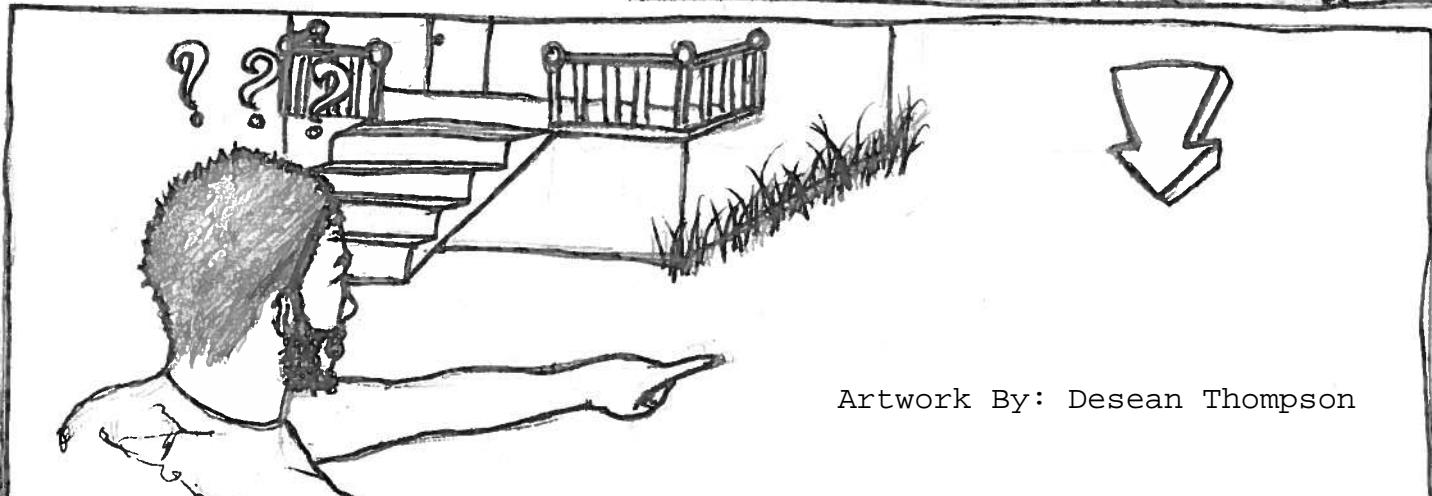
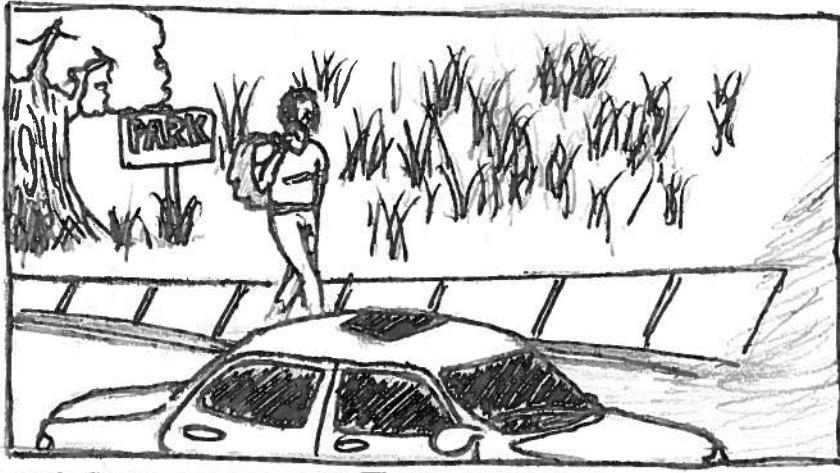
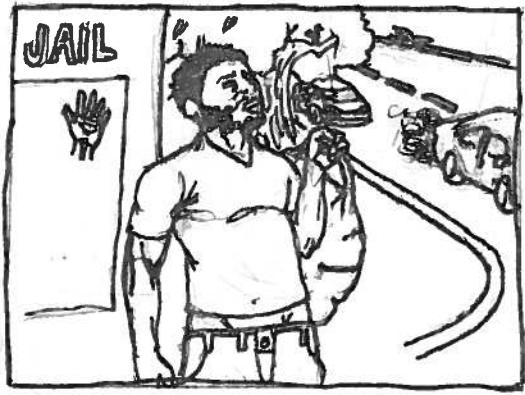
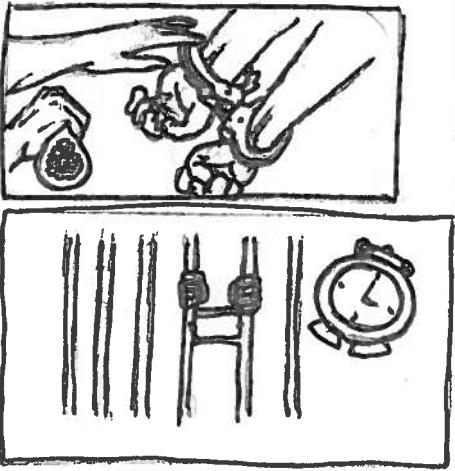
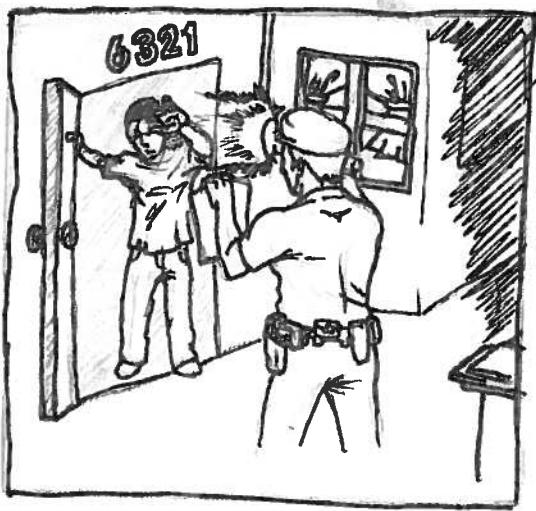
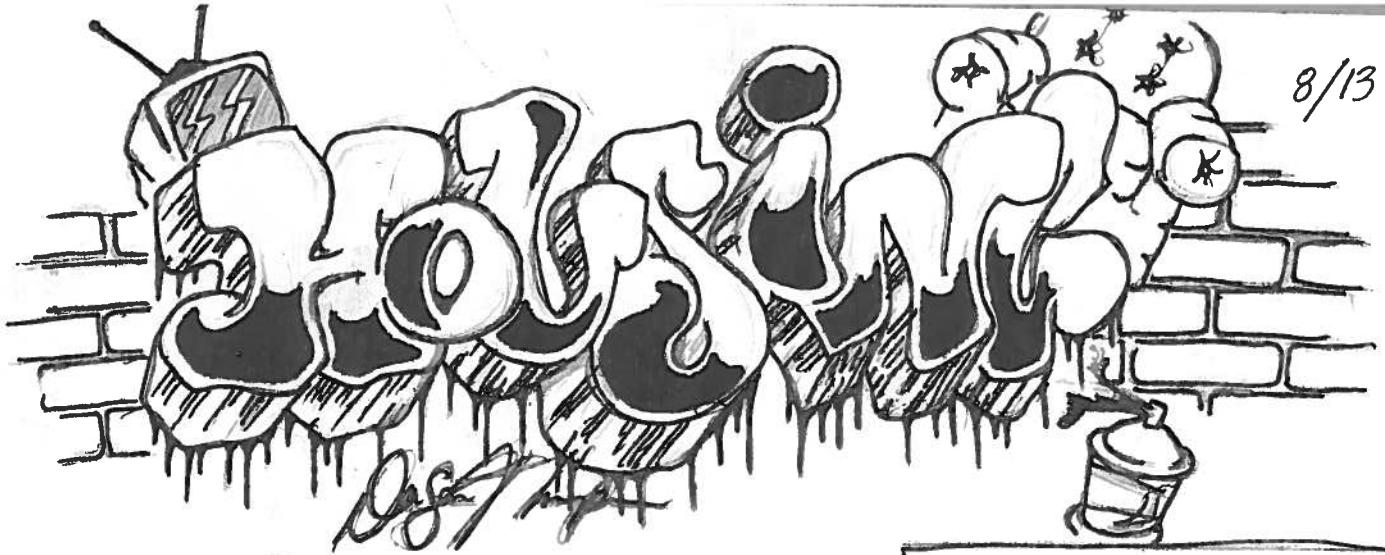
*They need an education and job to be successful in their community.*

Xitlali Avila

*Youth need family support*

Jevante Snipes

Mileak Johnson



Artwork By: Desean Thompson

**Housing is essential for juveniles transitioning from corrections to their communities. If a juvenile is returning to a good home and a stable environment then they wouldn't have a reason to commit acts of delinquency. Having a positive home promotes a positive mindset. The community that a youth lives in really influences a juvenile's life as well. If they are returning back to the same things and people that were around when they were put into corrections, they are put at greater risk of recidivating. When we talk about housing we are seeking shelter and a safe place to be.**

## **Housing**

### **Recommendation 1:**

The Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) should modify its one-strike policy. Those with non-violent offenses should have a three-strike policy.

### **Recommendation 2:**

Cook County's Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) should work with the Cook County Land Bank Association (CCBLA) which buys foreclosed houses and apartment buildings in order to transform those properties into transitional homes for youth to be managed by DFSS.

### **Recommendation 3:**

Provide drug rehabilitation facilities for youth that are in need as an alternative to going to a juvenile detention center.

### **Recommendation 4:**

The Youth Services branch of the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) should create a five-week program for youth ages 15 to 21 that were once incarcerated now living in public and section 8 housing that has them bring units up to code and stay on staff as handymen/handywomen and as other maintenance staff, such as janitorial work.

### **Recommendation 5:**

When sentenced to electronic monitoring [EM], youth should be monitored through a cell phone rather than an ankle bracelet.

### **Recommendation 6:**

Make a website that would provide information about transitional housing programs for youth leaving incarceration.

## Recommendation

The Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) should modify its one-strike policy that causes all arrests to lead to eviction court. CHA's one-strike policy should only affect youth and adults with violent offenses. Those with non-violent offenses should have a three-strike policy. Strikes should only be counted if the cases are officially closed and rule the offender guilty in criminal court. Only the offender who reaches their strike limit should be subject to eviction, rather than all tenants, unless the leaseholder is the offender.

When a CHA tenant or their guest is arrested, the lease-holder is automatically summoned to eviction court which usually ends in the court's favor as tenants can't afford lawyers. Eviction makes it difficult for youth re-entering their community to return to their family and have stable housing.

This recommendation says the policy should be run based on the type of case and be less harsh overall.

From the article, *One and Done* by Angela Caputo lies our evidence:

"Tenants have lost their homes over non-violent offenses, including shoplifting and marijuana possession."

"One in three tenants whose criminal cases were tossed out or ended with a 'not guilty' verdict, had their entire household evicted or moved out without a fight, the analysis shows."

This change in policy matters because consequences for a youth's mistakes have major and drastic effects by keeping them and their families from having a stable home.

With this change they can have a chance to learn from their mistakes and change their path upon re-entering their community.

**"The Chicago Housing Authority is basing a growing number of eviction cases on low-level crimes."**  
**(*One and Done* article Angela Caputo)**

### Why are they arrested?

Nearly 75 percent of one-strike cases were based on drug possession arrests. Of those, more than a quarter involved cannabis.

#### Top five charges

Charge	Count	Percentage
Drug possession	633	45%
Cannabis	397	28%
Drug sales	97	7%
Weapon	54	4%
Gun	54	4%

(Source: One and Done,)

## Recommendation

Cook County's Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) should work with the Cook County Land Bank Association (CCBLA) which buys foreclosed houses and apartment buildings. They should transform those properties into transitional homes for youth to be managed by DFSS. Currently, CCBLA is receiving money from Attorney General Lisa Madigan's office through the Blue Ribbon Advisory Council in order to rebuild communities.

When juveniles are released from incarceration, they face difficulty finding a place to live. If they don't have a house to return to, they stay in the detention centers costing DJJ more money and further prolonging their incarceration. Also, many communities are facing property foreclosures and this housing can be put to better use.

"There is a definite need to provide systematic aftercare services that are designed to address reentry issues, including reoffending, that may affect a juvenile offender's reintegration back into society" (Mears and Travis 2004; Altschuler 2008). Repurposing these houses could be a substantial piece of this aftercare.

There are efforts taken addressing foreclosed properties, but efforts can be expanded to help youth. Properties can be transformed to be aftercare to provide stable housing. Transitional housing programs, such as Hand In Hand N.F.P., prove to be effective, but there need to be more.

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/06/09/recidivism-harlem-convicts\\_n\\_1578935.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/06/09/recidivism-harlem-convicts_n_1578935.html)

**"The two land banks [Suburban and Cook County] will support local municipalities in bringing vacant, abandoned and foreclosed properties back to productive use – boosting local economies, benefiting area schools and reducing crime."**

[http://illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/pressroom/2013\\_07/20130717.html](http://illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/pressroom/2013_07/20130717.html)

**Within the DJJ, 54 percent of juveniles re-incarcerated while on parole (in their same neighborhoods) are nailed each time they go back with technical violations, such as curfew and truancy.**

<http://beaconnews.suntimes.com/news/9416891-418/report-illinois-failing-to-help-young-offenders.html>

## Recommendation

**Provide drug rehabilitation facilities for youth in need as an alternative to going to a juvenile detention center.** The judge will have the power to evaluate which facility is appropriate for each juvenile. It will be located away from the community in which they previously lived. They will live there for the duration of their sentence. It would be low security (for comfort and a sense of home), have educational opportunities and employment workshops, as well as provide comprehensive drug treatment.

This recommendation is seeking to have a rehabilitation program at a residential facility. It will help youth focus on what they want and be on the right path instead of focusing on negative things that were in their life.

Juveniles entering the juvenile justice system can bring a number of problems with them. Effectively addressing these problems requires their gaining access to comprehensive assessment, treatment, case management and support services appropriate for their case.

Principal of Drug Abuse Treatment Study-  
<http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/principles-drug-abuse-treatment-criminal-justice-populations/what-are-unique-treatment-needs-juveniles-in-crimin>

This recommendation matters because there is an epidemic of drug addiction in urban communities, and it is not adequately addressed. Changing this practice of sentencing will break the cycle of addiction which will help youth focus on a better future- school and work-rather than being on drugs again.

**82% of youth reported heavy (daily) drug use prior to admission to rehab. 14% regularly use drugs more than 2 times weekly.**

[http://www.wested.org/online\\_pubs/hhdp/css\\_10th\\_heavyusereport.pdf](http://www.wested.org/online_pubs/hhdp/css_10th_heavyusereport.pdf)

## Recommendation

The Youth Services branch of the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) should create a five-week program for youth ages 15 to 21 that were once incarcerated now living in public and section 8 housing that reflects the “Greenworks: Building Maintenance for the Future” skills training program held by the Michael Barlow Center. The Greenworks program “prepares individuals for entry-level positions in building maintenance, construction, and related fields.” **Youth participating in the proposed five-week program can bring units up to code and stay on staff as handymen/handywomen and as other maintenance staff, such as janitorial work.**

Youth and their families are living in housing units that are not up to code. By fixing the units, youth will have a constructive way to integrate into the community and be employed despite their record.

Angela Caputo, writer for the Chicago Reporter, spoke to us about the poor conditions of public and section 8 housing: “One third of subsidized housing units have failed inspection, but the landlords still get paid the normal amount.”

This recommendation matters because a stable home creates a foundation for stability in other parts of a youth's life. By updating these housing units, a young person's housing and employment are jointly addressed.

**Andrew Fernandez, Director of Youth Services for DFSS, explained that a work program designed for youth that were formerly incarcerated was not successful because youth didn't have an address for where they were residing. Fernandez expressed that housing is critical to being able to find and keep a job.**

**Nearly 20% of youth from low-income families are charged with an adult crime by the age of 24 because these youth often lack the resources and opportunities found to lead to better outcomes.**

Department of Health and Human Services Fact Sheet -  
<http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/09/vulnerableyouth/3/i>

## Recommendation

**When sentenced to electronic monitoring [EM], youth should be monitored through a cell phone rather than an ankle bracelet.** Ankle bracelets can hinder their self-esteem when reentering back into the community. By using a cell phone that has the ability to track people, it can be easier to “fit in” and not be judged as well as providing access to other technological resources that would contribute to a youth’s successful reentry.

EM in the form of ankle bracelets hinders success as they label youth as criminals. Money spent on ankle bracelets can be better used instead to provide smart-phones for youth. That way, youth can be monitored by parole/probation while having access to online tools helping them transition back to the community and stay connected to family, employers, and other support staff.

Using a cell phone from Sprint costs \$110/month that has a tracking device compared to an electronic monitoring bracelet which costs \$5-25/per day and \$213.00 to regulate. Using a cell phone tracking device could save up to \$85,671 per person each year. 197 youth in Cook County are currently being monitored by the EM bracelet (Source: Collaborative on Reentry, Juvenile Reentry Workgroup Briefing, Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice, 7/7/09)

This recommendation matters because youth will have access to many digital resources while respecting the regulations of their parole/probation. They will also be better integrated into the community by not having the stigma of wearing an ankle bracelet.

**“I feel that it’d be easier to carry a cell phone because people won’t discriminate against me compared to having an EM bracelet.”**  
–Charlie Beltran, Mikva Challenge’s Juvenile Justice Council Member

## Recommendation

**Make a website that would provide information about transitional housing programs for youth leaving incarceration.** The website will feature the description of the facility, reviews from previous participants/residents that have enrolled in them, consent forms that parole officers can sign, information on how to access the facility and info on the amount of space left in each program.

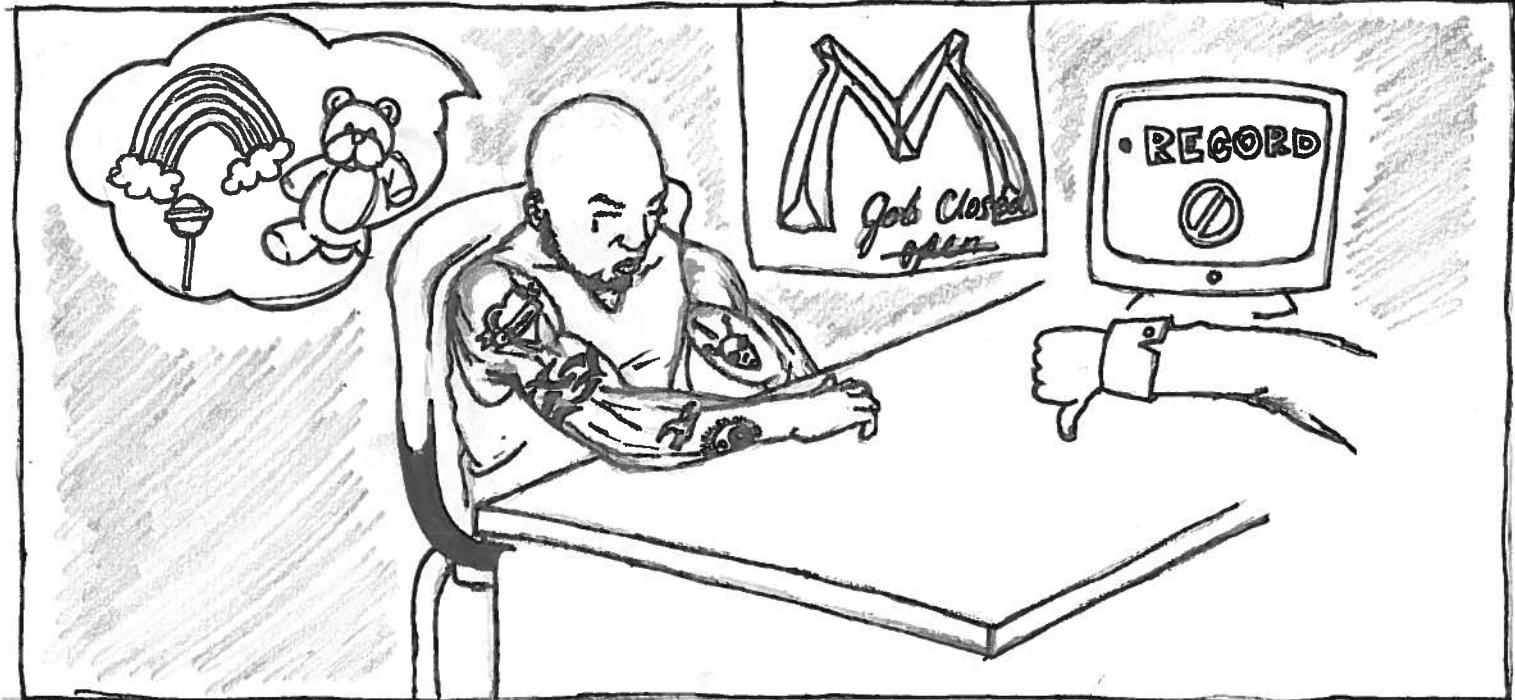
This is addressing the issue of juveniles not knowing the rules and requirements for transitional housing programs and how to find an appropriate fit for them . If the preliminary host site doesn't work out, then there are shelters, group homes, transitional and temporary supporting homes.

"More housing options in more areas have been proven to reduce recidivism (the tendency to relapse into previous criminal behavior)." "Nowhere to Go"  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-myMnr0aRCA>

Juveniles need to know that there are better options for housing after detention such as transitional houses and group homes. When stable homes are provided the youth have a sense of structure in their life.

**Offering housing options outside of a juvenile's native neighborhood can interrupt recidivism.** 15-year old Elias Roman from Little Village on Chicago's West Side said of his experience with the juvenile justice system "**I was out late one night with a gun, cops picked me up. I did one month in the detention center and was put on house arrest. I cut off my electronic monitor and ran with the same guys from my neighborhood I was running with before. Four months later, I was picked up on unlawful use of a weapon and did a longer stint in the detention center.**"

Kids Behind Bars: Illinois Rethinking Juvenile Justice - <http://www.npr.org/2012/08/18/159131971/illinois-seeks-new-approach-to-juvenile-justice>



**Employment is one of the key steps to solve the problem of youth being caught in a cycle of recidivism. Youth struggle with money because there are not enough job opportunities available in Cook County and they need a source of income to support their family members and themselves. Stable employment will help youth be committed, responsible people and learn how to manage their income. Employment is especially important for juveniles with criminal records because it is even harder for them to get a job than youth without records. Getting employment has many requirements such as resume writing, having references, job training, and skills. These recommendations are designed to help juveniles with these requirements and to pursue successful employment, even while having a criminal record.**

**Employment**

**Recommendation 1:**

There should be an app and website for people who are looking for information on expungement.

**Recommendation 2:**

Juveniles should be able to earn badges in a certain working field while incarcerated for skills acquired through classes or workshops, in partnership with The Chicago Summer Of Learning and Mozilla.

**Recommendation 3:**

Create a mentoring program for juveniles in and out of jail. While in jail the juvenile will video chat, through Skype or Google Hangout, with the assigned mentor and once they are released from jail they will meet 2-3 times a week.

**Recommendation 4:**

Create a policy in which it will be illegal to deny employment to a juvenile qualified for a job who has under 3 misdemeanors solely based on their criminal background.

**Recommendation 5:**

The Juvenile Temporary Detention Center (JTDC) and Illinois Youth Centers (IYC) should offer job readiness workshops.

**Recommendation 6:**

Create a class (located in detention centers and alternative schools within Cook County) that would teach incarcerated or formerly incarcerated juveniles about the expungement process.

## Recommendation

**There should be an app and website for people who are looking for information on expungement.** This app and/or website will provide resources to help the youth obtain a lawyer, look up their RAP sheet and know the procedure to get their RAP sheet expunged.

Many teens dont know about expungement. Over 1800 teens have a criminal record and many of these teens aren't getting their RAP sheet expunged even though they are eligible for expungement.

<http://chiyouthjustice.wordpress.com/>

Over 18,000 youth were arrested in Chicago in 2009. That means that over 18,000 youth in Chicago now have criminal records. Most of these records would be eligible for expungement.

<http://chiyouthjustice.wordpress.com/category/juvenile-expungement/>

Over 25,000 kids are arrested in Cook County each year. Twenty-five thousand.

<http://www.chicagonow.com/chicago-muckrakers/2011/09/expungements-prove-elusive-for-juveniles/>

This recommendation is important because it will provide teens a way to access legal aid and to get information on how to get their RAP sheets expunged. Juvenile expungement is essential for access to jobs and housing in the future.

## Cook County Juvenile Arrests and Expungements

Year	Arrests	Expungement Requested	Expungements Granted
2006	31509	40	39
2007	30667	86	86
2008	29420	59	58
2009	26755	96	96
2010	32553	83	83
2011	29779	68	67
2012	25373	70	70

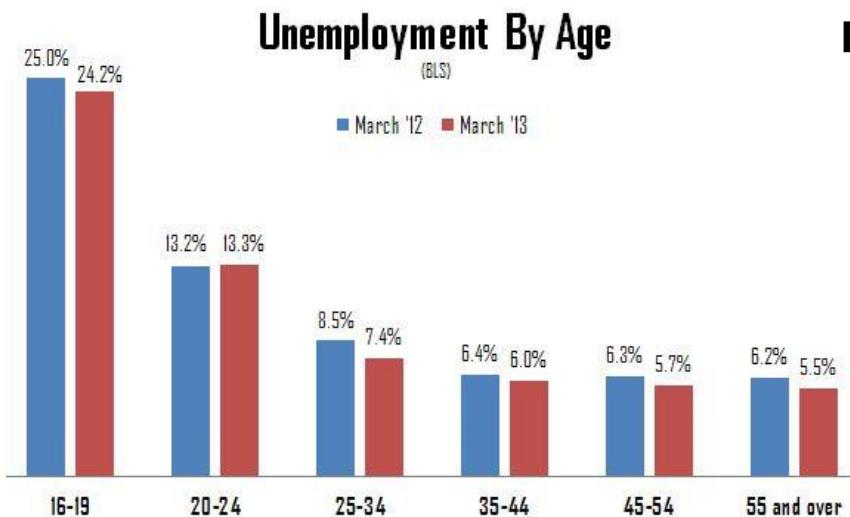
## Recommendation

Juveniles should be able to earn badges in a certain working field while incarcerated for skills acquired through classes or workshops, in partnership with The Chicago Summer Of Learning and Mozilla.

Teens who were formerly incarcerated have a hard time obtaining a job. This recommendation helps these youth earn skill badges to show they mastered the skill while incarcerated so when they leave the detention centers they are qualified for stable jobs.

"Surveys show that only 40% of people would consider hiring a youth who has a criminal record."  
<http://www.insideoutwriters.org/employment-after-incarceration/>  
 "Last year, more than 72% of Illinois teens age 16 to 19 were unemployed."  
[http://rainbowpush.org/commentaries/single/an\\_economic\\_divide\\_is\\_growing\\_in\\_our\\_cities](http://rainbowpush.org/commentaries/single/an_economic_divide_is_growing_in_our_cities)

This recommendation matters because it helps youth earn digital badges in skills they need in order to get a stable job and will make them more desirable for potential employers. It also helps the youth connect with technology and receiving a reward for something they accomplished lifts their self-motivation as well.



In addition research has shown that having a history of incarceration reduces a workers chance of being hired by 15-30%. – Center for Economic and Policy Research.

## Recommendation

**Create a mentoring program for juveniles in and out of jail. While in jail the juvenile will video chat, through Skype or Google Hangout, with the assigned mentor and once they are released from jail they will meet 2-3 times a week.** It has to be mandatory for juveniles to have Internet access in every facility. The mentor will be currently working in the field that the youth wants to pursue for a career path. The mentor will explain and teach best practices for their field to equip the youth with key information for employment.

There are many juveniles who do not have a role model or mentor. Therefore they do not receive advice or guidance on job skills.

The National Evaluation and Technical Assistance Center says, "Research has demonstrated that adolescents with at least one high-quality supportive relationship with an adult are twice as likely as other youth to be economically self-sufficient, have healthy family and social relationships and be productively involved in their communities."

This recommendation matters because this helps the youth receive job skills and guidance that will help them maintain a stable job instead of being in the streets getting money illegally.

**"More than 72 percent of Illinois teens age 16 to 19 were unemployed."**

DNA Info: Unemployment Chicago

**It appears that mentoring as an intervention strategy has the capacity to serve both promotions and prevention aims.**

<http://psi.sagepub.com/content/12/2/57.extract>

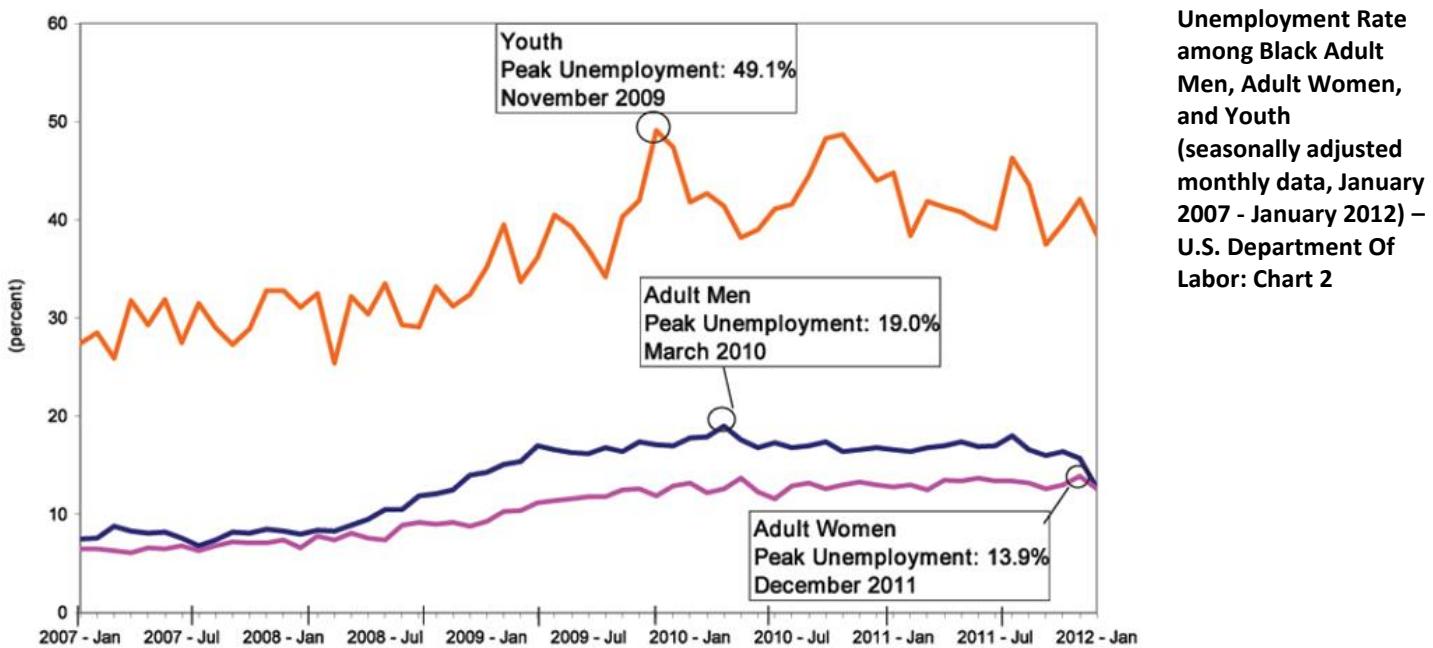
### Recommendation

Create a policy in which it will be illegal to deny employment to a juvenile qualified for a job who has under 3 misdemeanors solely based on their criminal background.

There are many juveniles who are not given a chance to work because they have misdemeanors. Not giving them a chance to show their potential leads them to seek out money in a different way.

"According to the U.S Department of Justice, up to 60 percent of ex- offenders can't find legitimate employment during the first year of being released." – Safer Foundations: Employment and Recidivism: Efforts to stop the revolving door

This recommendation matters because this gives many juveniles opportunities to prosper and gives the youth a chance to obtain a job.



## Recommendation

**The Juvenile Temporary Detention Center (JTDC) and Illinois Youth Centers (IYC) should offer job readiness workshops.** The workshops should focus on how to obtain jobs. They will address money management, time management, anger management, and how to handle stressful situations in the work place. The workshops would also include a mandatory seminar held at detention centers that includes employment classes, mock interviews, job skill programs and guest speakers from different industries. Experts will have “office hours” with Q and A sessions and provide job partnerships.

Youth unemployment is high. Youth can't find or acquire jobs because they just got out of jail and they don't have the necessary job skills needed to work in today's world. This recommendation helps them acquire the job skills needed in a field of their choice.

Brandon McMillan told Duncan and Dann-Messier that he has learned from his experience of being incarcerated and is now hoping to inspire others. He recommended that the Education department increase Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs. “Some people don't want to go to college,” he said.

<http://findyouthinfo.gov/node/20485>

This recommendation matters because it will help youth obtain employment. When a youth is employed he or she will remain busy through his or her parole/probation. Also it helps youth receive job training skills in a career they desire to pursue. Providing these services for youth in detention centers will also be good in the long run as it will help juveniles maintain employment, reducing unemployment rates in the future.

**“I needed money so I chose to sell drugs even though I knew it was wrong. I needed to provide for my family.”**

– DNA Info: Unemployed Chicago Youth Plead for Jobs

**“Workers over the age 55 have acquired 58 percent of available jobs because they have more job experience than younger people.”**

- Huffington Post: Youth Unemployment Gap of 2.7million

## Recommendation

**Create a class (located in detention centers and alternative schools in urban communities within the city of Chicago) that would teach incarcerated or formerly incarcerated juveniles about the expungement process.**

This practice is addressing the issue of most juveniles not knowing about the expungement process and clearing their RAP sheet. This addresses the issue by educating and informing them on how to clear their RAP sheet in order to pursue future employment.

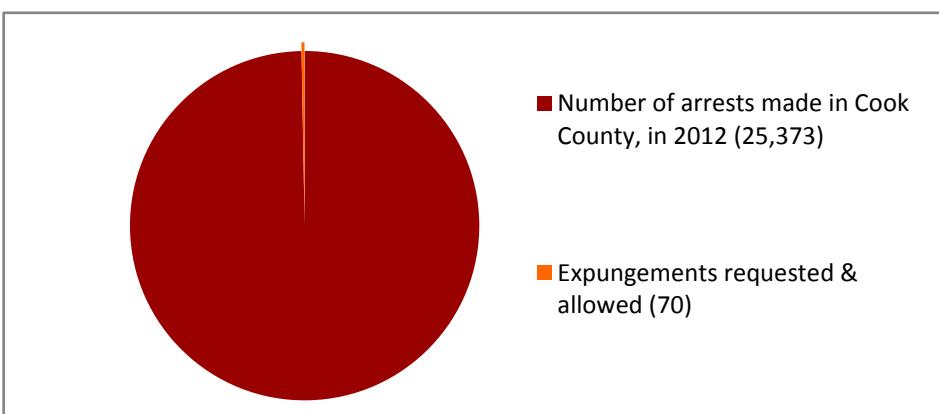
"An average of 20,000-30,000 of juveniles are arrested a year, but less than 100 expungements are requested." While the majority are granted, most juveniles are unaware of being expunged because they're not aware of the program.

<http://isfsite.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/ISF-Background-Information.pdf>

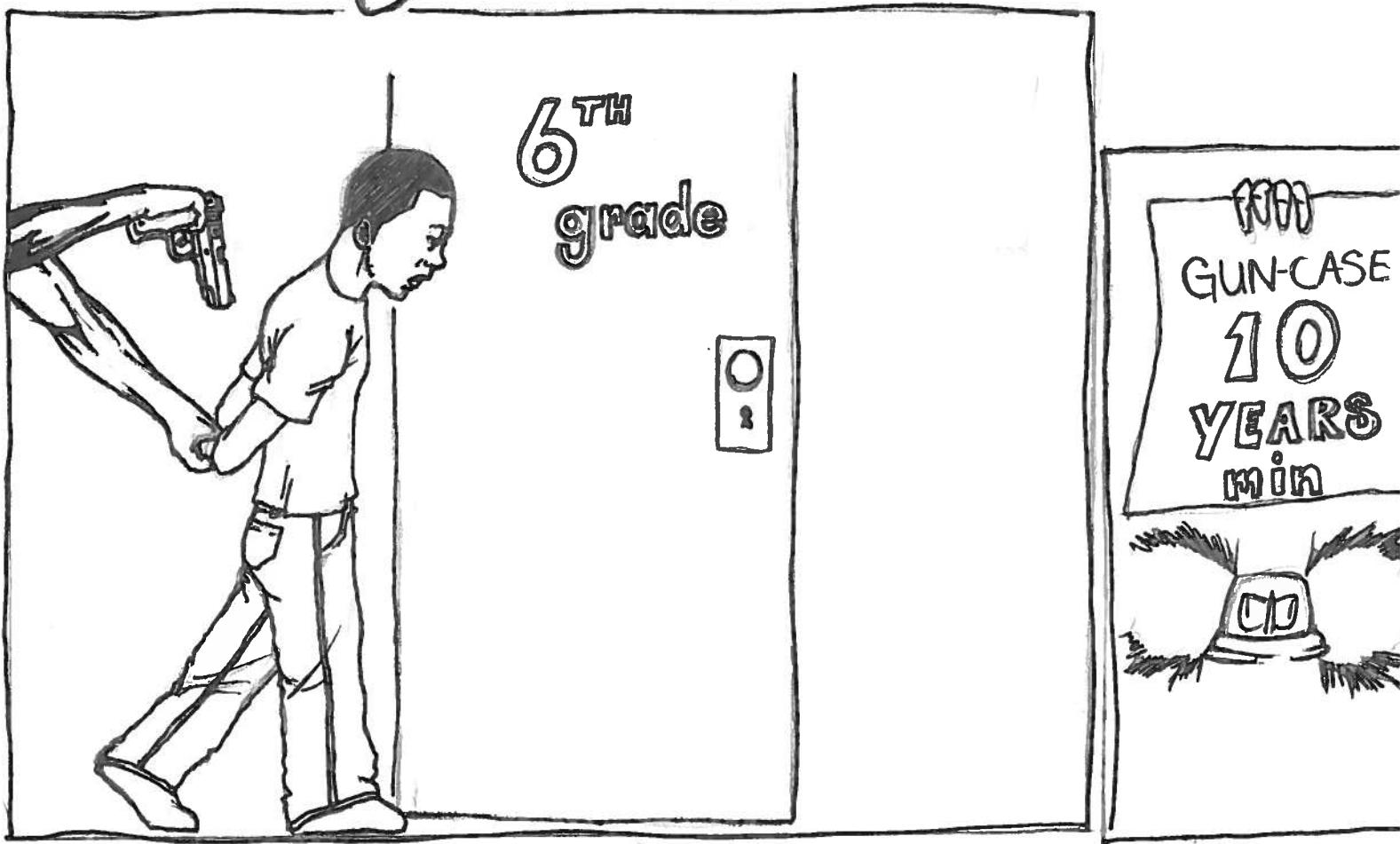
This matters because there are many juveniles with a RAP sheet full of petty crimes. This class would educate them so in the future they would be able to start careers, get housing, and other public funding.

**"Black males have higher rates of incarceration and repeat offenses that land them back in jail or prison, statistics shows. Changing that dynamic could begin with expunging their criminal records."**

(Source: northwestindiana.com)



Source:Chiyouthjustice.wordpress.com



???



GRRR  
I dont  
KNOW

TO BE FREED  
READ THIS  
AND PERFORM THIS  
MULTIPLICATION.  
"I WILL NEVER  
BE INCARCERATED AGAIN."

$$12 \times 10 = \underline{\quad}$$

7<sup>th</sup> GRADE LEVEL

The topic of education is one of the most meaningful and powerful influences in the world of today. From education you gain knowledge and from knowledge you gain power, with power comes influence, and with positive influence one can change the world. The number one root in making that change is an education that enlightens rather than diminishes; education that would improve rather than deteriorate. When we talk about education, we are talking about the future of tomorrow because the world as we know it will be in the hands of upcoming generations. If adults are not providing adolescents with the proper education and skills to take their place once they retire than we are just giving our future a death sentence. If there is a group of people that most certainly need education, than that group is youth reentering into the community. Many juveniles are unaware of the unlimited possibilities education presents. The youth are not mentally incapable; they just need to be provided with the proper tools to succeed, and that tool is education.

**Education:**

**Recommendation 1:**

While detained and throughout high school, incarcerated youth should have a counselor or educational advocate that develop a Juvenile Educational Plan (JEP) for each youth in juvenile detention.

**Recommendation 2:**

Young people leaving incarceration need additional educational opportunities such as extra-curricular activities after school.

**Recommendation 3:**

Allow juveniles to take online courses while incarcerated, to acquire the credits they need to be on track to graduate once they return to their home school.

**Recommendation 4:**

Juveniles in detention should be able to virtually connect with their home classroom while in detention through Skype.

**Recommendation 5:**

We recommend that a program be created that offers educational mentoring, similar to Big Brother/Big Sister program.

**Recommendation 6:**

Detention centers should be equipped with at least one, officer-supervised computer lab to provide juveniles with constant computer and internet access- at least 20 hours a week.

### Recommendation

**While detained throughout high school, incarcerated youth should have a counselor or educational advocate. A Juvenile Educational Plan (JEP) will be developed for each youth in juvenile detention.** The mentor and youth should work on possible schools or programs for the youth to enroll in upon being released and a realistic plan for the youth to graduate high school or obtain a G.E.D. The mentor should also expose the youth to different career options and post secondary school options based on his/ her interest. The JEP will determine literacy level and the strengths and weaknesses of the juvenile. It will develop a plan that determines where the juvenile will go back to school, what educational program to pair them with so they can catch up to the right math/reading level, and it will plan classes and goals to graduate.

Many juveniles enter detention far behind their literacy level. While in detention, studies show they fall significantly behind in school. This, in addition to poor schooling, encourage students to drop out, causing many to get involved in crime again as adults.

- \*Being locked up increases your chances of dropping out
- \*Teachers lack educational plans for each student
- \*A disproportionate number of these youth have not acquired literacy skills

Without proper schooling, kids are more likely to go to prison. Juveniles need a proper education plan to stay out of trouble and find a job.

**“Juveniles attempting [cold-turkey] re-entry typically say they feel lost or overwhelmed... the level of structure and attention that adjudicated youth receive... is limited... and contributes to disruptive behavior.”**

- **68% of males in state and federal prison lack a high school diploma.**
- **“Of incarcerated teens 15-16 years old, only 2% went back to school”**

“Locking up juveniles may add to crime woes,” Chicago Tribune. 2013

## Recommendation

**Young people leaving incarceration need additional educational opportunities such as extra-curricular activities after school.** This after school program will include music classes, sports, drama club, an art class, weightlifting, video games, book clubs, pen pals, and many other interactive games and classes. Adult leaders such as teachers or parents would facilitate these extra-curricular activities. This practice is designed for the juveniles coming out of the juvenile justice-system. When juveniles are released, they sometimes have a hard time integrating themselves in the community positively, and this recommendation would provide many opportunities.

Juveniles go back to the life of crime and violence. Eighty-six percent of youth in the study were re-arrested within three years of release. (Chicago Youth Justice Data Project : Information Activism & the Illinois Juvenile Justice System). They are unaware of the positive activities that are in place for them. Extra-curricular activities like the recommendation describes provides an enormous amount of support and hope for a better productive life.

"Violent crimes committed by juvenile offenders peaks during the after school hours. Nearly one-third (29%) of all violent crime committed by juvenile offenders occurs between 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. In comparison, nearly the same proportion of violent crime committed by adults (26%) occurs between the hours of 8 p.m. and 12 a.m." (Crimesolutions.gov).

Another study (Jones & Offord, 1989) reported a 75% decline in juvenile arrests during the course of a 32-month ASP (After School Programs) and summer recreation program in a single housing project served by the program, and a 67% increase in a comparison housing project which provided only minimal services by a Boys & Girls Club. (<http://ccjs.umd.edu/sites/ccjs.umd.edu/files/pubs/GottfredsonWeismanSoule.pdf>; p. 255)

**"Afterschool programs provide an alternative to gangs and street life, allowing kids to develop new skills and the opportunity to interact positively with peers"**

(Afterschoolalliance.org)

**Forty-one percent of youth were incarcerated at least once for a new offense and 53 percent of youth were re-incarcerated at least once for a technical violation of parole**

(Chicago Youth Justice Data Project: Information Activism & the Illinois Juvenile

### Recommendation

**Allow juveniles to take online courses while incarcerated and to acquire the credits they need to be on track to graduate once they return to their home school.** Juveniles should have access to the internet and computer labs within the detention center 8 hours a day where they can take online courses and will also provide the opportunity for credit recovery. There should be a tutor available 5 days a week to the juveniles to help whenever they need it. The online course will be offered by the board of education, the detention center and foundations.

Many teens once out of detention centers struggle to get back on track in school and end up having to retake their classes or end up dropping out of school. If they take online classes they will be on track to graduate and be updated with school work.

Youth who are locked up are separated from their families, many witness violence, and struggle when they get out, trying to complete high school, get jobs or go to college  
<http://chiyouthjustice.wordpress.com/category/youth-incarceration/>

More than half - 54 percent - of the nation's dropouts ages 16 to 24 were jobless on an average month during 2008.  
<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/black-male-dropouts-lead-nation-in-incarceration-63870242.html>

This matters because teens need a way to stay on track in school. This will help teens get the credits they need, and receive tutoring.

**Some of the students from Saura Center say that they want to graduate high school on time and with the online courses the youth will be able to graduate on time.**

**“Department of Corrections shows that rates of recidivism drop by 18% among inmates who complete a prison education program, and by 38% among those who also find employment after incarceration.”**

- <http://www.ihep.org/assets/files/publications/g->

### Recommendation

Juveniles in detention should be able to virtually connect with their home classroom while in detention through Skype.

Juveniles in detention fall behind in school because detention centers lack the resources and teachers to keep each student caught up. They have difficulty fitting in when they return to their home school.

Skype in the classroom:  
16,448 educators signed up  
888 collaborative projects created  
171 countries represented  
58 languages represented  
This proves that Skype does work in a regular classroom and could work for juveniles. It also gets juveniles familiar with how a classroom is outside of JTDC.

It matters because if you get juveniles to feel more comfortable and used to how it is to be in a normal classroom, they will want to go to school and it will be easier for them to transition to schools.

It would allow the students to feel more comfortable learning with people in a school environment.

**“Education for current and former prisoners as a cost-effective solution to reducing reoffending on recidivism has been well demonstrated, and even small reductions in reoffending can have a significant impact when spread across large numbers of participants.”**

<http://www.ceanational.org/phorum/read.php?16,140,3,1403>

**“In 2004 less than a third of prisoners had access to prison education at any one time.”**

<http://www.civitas.org.uk/crime/factsheet-education-prisoners-2004.pdf>

### Recommendation

Many juveniles coming out of jail do not have moral support and guidance. Too often, juveniles return into a broken family, home, or destabilized community. They lack the moral support they need. **We recommend that a program be created that offers educational mentoring, similar to Big Brother/Big Sister program.** This program should start with juveniles that are detained or incarcerated and continue on after the juvenile is released. Mentors will act as tutors and check up on their students two to three times a week to make sure they are on track in school. This program can offer youth someone to look up to and someone to be a consistent supporter in that juvenile's life.

It is addressing the issue of juveniles not having any guidance or moral support when they are released from jail.

According to the "Juvenile Bulletin" from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, "one of the documented protective factors that contributes to resiliency is the presence of a source of support outside of the family" (11-12).

"The program, Becoming A Man—Sports Edition, was developed and delivered by Youth Guidance and World Sport Chicago to more than 800 boys in 18 CPS schools during the 2009-10 school year. Youth who participated in the program showed a 44 percent decrease in violent crime arrests during the intervention." (<http://news.uchicago.edu/article/2012/07/13/study-chicago-counseling-program-reduces-youth-violence-improves-school-engagemen>)

**"Mentoring programs engage community advocates and volunteer mentors who are assigned to work with delinquent or at-risk youth and their families."**

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[https://www.ncjrs.gov/html/ojjdp/jjbul2000\\_02\\_1/ment.html](https://www.ncjrs.gov/html/ojjdp/jjbul2000_02_1/ment.html)

**The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention highlights a mentoring program called Partners in Crime, which "matches an adjudicated young offender with a community volunteer who had been screened and trained" (12). Studies from Wayne State University found that recidivism was 38 percent lower for PAC clients compared with a control group and more than 50 percent lower for PAC clients compared with probationers who declined to participate in PAC." « - <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/178900.pdf>**

### Recommendation

**Detention centers should be equipped with at least one officer-supervised computer lab to provide juveniles with constant computer and internet access- at least 20 hours a week.**

Juveniles will use this time to complete online classes and workshops; read e-books and other e-texts online; and stay connected to friends and family through recreational internet use.

While detained, youth are disconnected from school and their social life. With internet access, youth have new approaches to education that can improve a student's relationship with learning. The library in St. Charles' JTDC has lacked funding for years and operates mostly on donated books, which most juveniles find unrelated.

WBEZ: Inside and Out- "A Day in St.Charles"

"Over the 12-year span, the report found 99 studies in which there were quantitative comparisons of online and classroom performance for the same courses. The analysis for the Department of Education found that, on average, students doing some or all of the course online would rank in the 59th percentile in tested performance, compared with the average classroom student scoring in the 50th percentile."

"*Study Finds That Online Education Beats the Classroom*" By Steve Lohr, New York Times

It is important to make online, educational programs accessible because technology is now an inseparable part of learning.

Being computer and internet literate will be paramount to finding employment.

**"If we want people to have any chance of building productive lives for themselves (and the rest of us) after they get out of jail, we simply must give them access to the Internet while they're *in* jail."**

(Henry Blodget, Business Insider)

# Mikva Challenge

## Juvenile Justice Council



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**We would like to express our gratitude to all those people and groups who have made this report possible. This project is truly the sum of collective knowledge, insight and perspectives shared with us over the course of our summer and would not be possible without the support of the following:**

Angela Caputo, Chicago Reporter  
Bridget Anderson, Cook County Juvenile Probation  
Carmen Acevedo, Cook County Juvenile Probation  
Donna Neal, Cook County Juvenile Probation  
Dr. Miquel Lewis, Cook County Juvenile Probation  
Elgin Bokari, Know Your Rights  
Judge Andrew Berman, Cook County Juvenile Court Judge  
Juliana Stratton, Cook County Justice Advisory Council  
Karima Douglas, Illinois Collaboration on Youth  
Lisa Hampton, Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice  
Maasai Amewa, North Lawndale Employment Network  
Malcom London, Know Your Rights  
Mariame Kaba, Project NIA  
Martin Gleason, Cook County Juvenile Probation  
Mathilda de Dios, Know Your Rights  
Pastor Joe, House of Hope  
Pastor Phil, Lawndale Christian Development Corporation  
Precious Wright, Evanston Youth Job Center  
Richard Tekip, Cook County Juvenile Probation  
Rob Vickery, Illinois Collaboration on Youth  
Stephanie Boho-Rodriguez, Heartland Alliance  
Susan Trudeau, Heartland Alliance  
Todd Belcore, Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law