

WHAT'S INSIDE:

NONVIOLENT SOCIAL CHANGE
 Information Gathering
 Education
 Personal Commitment
 Negotiations
 Direct Action
 Reconciliation



NONVIOLENCE ...
 Is a way of life for courageous youth
 Is youth seeking to win friendship and understanding
 Is youth seeking to defeat injustice not each other



NONVIOLENCE ...
 Holds that suffering can educate and transform
 Asks youth to choose love instead of hate
 Asks youth to believe that the universe is on the side

USING HISTORY TO PREVENT CRIME AND CHANGE BEHAVIOR

THE thematic STRANDS, CIVICS, and SERVICE LEARNING

Pen or pencil: Let me read you your rights

PEN OR PENCIL uses curriculum integration (media literacy; experiential, reading comprehension/mentoring, and service learning exercises) to address **eight thematic strands** of the National Standards for the Social Studies published by the National Council for the Social Studies.

CULTURE

The ability of mentor and mentee to share in the reading of *Silver Rights* and the examination of both scenes from *The Intolerable Burden* and select episodes of *The Wire* during the ten-week course will stimulate discussions and exercises regarding the study of culture and cultural diversity in Mississippi versus urban and rural America today.

TIME, CONTINUITY, AND CHANGE

Has change occurred? Clips from *The Intolerable Burden*, customized vignettes, and excerpts from select episodes of *The Wire* will allow participants to compare and learn from the way persons, particularly those of color, viewed themselves and how others viewed and continue to view particularly young black males during the '60s in the Mississippi Delta in contrast, if any, to today in urban settings such as West Baltimore.

PEOPLE, PLACES, AND ENVIRONMENT

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In *The Intolerable Burden* as well as a series of articles by the *Clarion-Ledger* (*eight months following the death of Mae Bertha Carter*) headlines read, "*Public, Private Education Puts New Face on Old Segregation.*" The article begins, "*Segregation didn't die with the 1970s court rulings that public schools had to include both black and white children in the same classroom. In the Mississippi Delta, it took another form: predominantly black public schools and separate private schools that enroll mostly white children . . .*" Forty years later, demographics of classrooms in school systems are much the same. Building more prisons to hold juveniles (and adults) in Sunflower County, Mississippi and across the country means one thing to some and represents quite another to many. Lessons explore the correlation.

CIVIC IDEALS and PRACTICES

In the Intolerable Burden, Mae Bertha Carter makes a profound statement, “. . . Somebody had to do it . . .” The Carters understood their role in creating social change, regardless of the consequences. In scenes such as those portrayed in the excerpts PEN OR PENCIL will use from *The Wire*, we are provided an opportunity to consider society's responsibility to make change in what we see and what youth face in



Racism is a philosophy based on a contempt for life. It is the arrogant assertion that one race is the center of value and object of devotion, before which other races must kneel in submission.

The King Center
Atlanta, Georgia

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, And SOCIETY

Modern life as we know it would be impossible without technology and the science that supports it. With the television came the ability for America to see the harsh realities and mistreatment of a racist south. Today, traditional classroom education competes with high tech devices and image technology. Computers and the internet make bulky encyclopedias obsolete and devices smaller than a finger transcend color lines and facilitate negative influences as well as the positive of hiphop culture. Through this, what can we learn from the past about how new technologies result in broader social change, some of which is unanticipated?

Triple evils (risk factors) are POVERTY, RACISM, and WAR.

They are interrelated, all-inclusive, and stand as barriers to our living in the Beloved Community. When we work to remedy and teach our youth to remedy one evil, we affect all evils.

- POVERTY = Materialism, homelessness, hunger, malnutrition, illiteracy
- RACISM = Prejudice, discrimination against differently abled, stereotypes
- WAR = Domestic violence, terrorism, media violence, drugs, child abuse

INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT AND IDENTITY

The images of forty years ago as revealed through oral history in *The Intolerable Burden*, the text of *Silver Rights*, and the reflections and the excerpts used from *The Wire* will provide the grounds to discuss why people behave as they do; what influences how people learn, perceive, and grow; Emphasis will be placed on how identity was shaped by Drew's culture, by and by institutional influences

INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS, AND INSTITUTIONS

The Carter family and the four boys of *The Wire* share the involvement of common institutions such as schools, religious groups, the family unit, government agencies such as law enforcement, and the courts. Participants of PEN OR PENCIL will how institutions are formed, what controls and influences them, how they influence individuals and culture, and how they are maintained or changed by following and applying what occurs in each story.

POWER, AUTHORITY, AND GOVERNANCE

The abuse of power and authority of the '60s in the Mississippi Delta and as portrayed in Baltimore will provide participants with the opportunity to place faces on the historical development of structures of power, authority, and governance and their evolving functions in contemporary U.S. society.

Service learning: The B.U.S. Boycott

After the initial presentation has occurred, critical to PEN OR PENCIL are the acts of volunteer service which will reflect each student's personal commitment to reduce crime, and as applicable, disproportionate minority contact in their school and community.

A boycott is a campaign of withdrawal of support from a company, government, or societal influence which is committing an injustice. As Dr. Martin Luther King said, "There is nothing quite so effective as the refusal to cooperate with the forces and institutions which perpetuate evil in our communities."

Ironically, most youth and even their parents have never heard of the term

disproportionate minority contact; therefore, they are at a disadvantage in understanding any individual role they might



play in reducing it.

PEN OR PENCIL will help youth and adults implement the first two

steps of nonviolent social change: *Information gathering and education*

More about the boycott

Service-learning offers a unique opportunity for America's young people -- from kindergarten to university students -- to get involved with their communities in a tangible way by integrating service projects with classroom learning. Service-learning engages students in the educational process, using what they learn in the classroom to solve real-life problems. Students not only learn about democracy and citizenship, they become actively contributing citizens and community members through the service they perform.

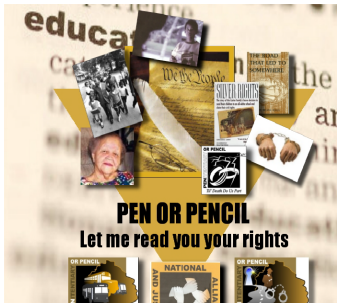


BUILDING UNBALANCED SYSTEMS

Entering the criminal justice system often begins an endless journey to self-destruction. Today's generation of middle to high school students were not yet born during the lifetime of Dr. Martin Luther King. Replicating the citizens of Montgomery however, participants of the PEN OR PENCIL Movement will be able to apply the individual and collective spirit of volunteerism. Through exercises and directives in the PEN OR PENCIL Activity Booklet, students will be able to gain extra points by combining their energies into teamwork and refusing to help build the unbalanced system of DMC.

YOUTH BOYCOTT TO ACHIEVE CHANGE

The B.U.S. Boycott will open the minds of students to the applicability of history and the logic. During the boycott, they must refrain from group-agreed



Parks, and other key persons of the original boycott as named in the Activities Booklet. Our lives today symbolize that the people of Montgomery were able to achieve measurable outcomes. The goal of this exercise is to produce mea-

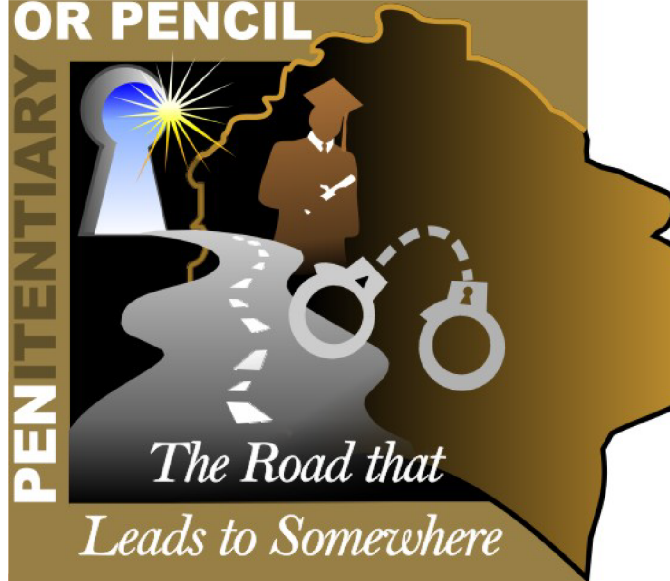
asurable results in lowering the number of students who have contact in any negative way with the criminal justice system. Even in instances like those portrayed on episodes of *The Wire*, the PEN OR PENCIL movement can be used effectively implemented as a tool to help students learn about history while exercising the discipline, tenacity, and strength which led to the success of the Montgomery bus boycott.

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To become a PEN OR PENCIL site, please contact the National Alliance of Faith and Justice (703) 765-4459. Visit our website, www.nafj.org.

You may also email us at office@nafj.org.



Disproportionate minority contact

1

Disproportionality exists in other points of the criminal justice system

The extent of overrepresentation amplifies as minority youth penetrate deeper into the juvenile justice system.

2

Many factors contribute to DMC

Only through a comprehensive, balanced, and multidisciplinary approach can the states and localities reduce DMC.

3

MC intervention strategies need to be data based

To understand which minority groups and to what percentage are disproportionately represented is important.

4

Support for DMC reduction must be demanded from the top

Congress, through the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act restricts the drawdown of 20% of a state's Formula Grant allocation in the subsequent year as a consequence of non-compliance with reduction efforts.

5

DMC reduction demands sustained efforts

DMC is a complex and longstanding phenomenon that demands steadfast and sustained efforts and partnerships.

6

DMC reduction requires strong partnerships

Multi-disciplinary approach implies a partnership of all stakeholders, public and private, at the local, state, and federal levels.

7

DMC reduction needs to occur at the local level

To carry out a local plan to reduce DMC requires top-down and bottom-up support

8

National Standards For Civics and Government

Of five published curriculum standards from the National Standards for Civics and Government, PEN OR PENCIL: FREEDOM OF CHOICE will address the following content standards.

I. *What are Civic Life, Politics, and Government?*

II. What is civic life? What is politics, and how does it apply to the Carters and to the youth portrayed in select episodes of “*The Wire?*” What purposes should government serve in protect ing youth?

What are the nature and purposes of constitution?

What are the Foundations of the American Political System?

A. What are the distinctive characteristics of American society?

B. What values and principles are basic to American constitutional democracy?

(1) **Life.** Each citizen has the right to the protection of their life. Was this true of the Carters and those who lived in the Mississippi Delta during the civil rights move ment?

(2) **Liberty.** At what point can or should students/youth collectively or individually promote change in the disparity of sentencing, census rules, zero-tolerance laws, DMC, or any rule which poses inequitable consequences?

(3) **Pursuit of Happiness.** If the Carter family were attempting to pursue happiness by obtaining a better education, why were local and state government officials involved in creating obstacles?

(4) **Public or Common Good.** Is it possible in many urban settings for students to understand and have the will to place the good of the whole community and the general welfare of others before their own self-interest?

C. **Equality.** We know that it did not exist during the 60's and before for the Carters. Does it exist for youth in the pursuit of education today?

(6) **Legal Equality.** It suggests that all citizens have equal opportunity and access to any form of public education, public housing and public facilities. If the Constitution guarantees these rights, why did so many attempt to deny this right to the Carters? Is it ethical to deny public housing to persons guilty of a felony?

(7) **Truth and open and free inquiry.** If truth and full disclosure is a core value of the American Democracy, then why isn't the definition, causes, and any individ ual steps which could be used to reduce or prevent disproportionate minority con tact by the targeted population as much the requirement as the law requires states to study and report findings to qualify for continued federal support?

III. How does the government established by the Constitution embody the purposes, values, and principles of American Democracy?

A. How are power and responsibility distributed, shared, and limited in the government established by the United States Constitution?

B. What does the national government do, and how was the national government involved in the local issues in Sunflower County during the Carters' struggle?

C. How are state and local governments organized and what do they do?

D. Who represents you in local, state, and national governments?

IV. What are the roles of the citizen in American democracy?