

# Reducing Delinquency Through Service

July 2000

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This material is based upon work supported by the Corporation for National Service under a National Service Fellowship. Opinions and points of view expressed in this document are those of the author and

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Created in 1993, the Corporation for National Service oversees three national service initiatives – AmeriCorps, which includes AmeriCorps\*National Civilian Community Corps, and hundreds of local and national nonprofits; Learn and Serve America, which provides models and assistance to help teachers integrate service and learning from kindergarten through college; and the National Senior Service Corps, which includes the Foster Grandparent Program, the Senior Companion Program, and the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP).

The researcher wishes to thank the Corporation for National Service for providing the opportunity to research the subject. Linking service and delinquency reduction provides an opportunity for practitioners, academicians, youth care workers, court personnel, parents and youth to come together in a manner that has theoretical underpinnings of success.

*Combining two disciplines together was not an easy task. It was completed only with the assistance of many. First and foremost I thank the Creator for providing the opportunity to enjoy the wonders of this world. I also thank Dr.'s Frank Williams and Marilyn McShane for their theoretical discussions and the administrations of OJJDP, Quantum Opportunities Program as well as Big Brothers Big Sisters for their countless hours of information. Finally, I would like to thank the staff of the Corporation for National Service Fellowship Program. I thank Mrs. Paula Jones for her humanistic aspect on the realities of life, Mr. Jeff Gale for his extraordinary administrative support, Dr. David Morton for his phenomenal insight and resourcefulness, last but, certainly not least, Mr. Tom Flemming for the forethought of creating a most informative and meaningful program to expand the thinking and perceptions of service in the minds of Americans.*

*To my Fellows. May we be fellows for life.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Increases in juvenile crime have been predicted by criminal justice experts (Fox,1996; DiIulio, 1996). Prior to the 1994 decline in juvenile crime, criminal justice researchers warned of a “superpredator” species of teenagers (Fox, 1996; DiIulio,1996). Examples of these “superpredators” can be seen in the infamous juvenile crimes that have taken place in Littleton, Colorado, Fort Smith, Arkansas as well as Detroit, Atlanta, Chicago and other cities throughout the country. Additionally, DiIulio contents that the most violent cohort of young males will soon reach its crime-prone years (DiIulio, 1997).

Whether a significant increase of juvenile crime will occur is debatable. What is known is that in 1996 alone, persons aged 10 to 17 accounted for 19% of all arrests (Snyder, 1997). Additionally, in 1997 2.8 million persons under the age of 18 were arrested in the United States. Alarmingly, in a recent national self-report study of 12 year olds, one in 20 admitted carrying a handgun in the past 12 months (Puzzanchera,2000).

Approaches to juvenile crime have often focused on a preventive model based on *parens patriae*. *Parens patriae* is a doctrine which charges the state with the ultimate responsibility for the welfare of children (Rush, 1994). Although individual states are tasked with carrying out this doctrine, the federal government also has a vested interest because of the billions of dollars spent annually for criminal justice and social service programs. Finding methods, and implementing programs that will reduce juvenile delinquency is a concern at the highest levels of government as demonstrated by the number of federal commissions and legislative initiatives.

The President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice (1967) studied a number of criminal justice issues in order to develop strategies and solutions that could be implemented nationally. One conclusion in the Commission's final report, entitled The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society, was the necessity for the average citizen to work toward crime reduction.

. . . the Commission is convinced that governmental actions will not be enough. Crime is a social problem that is interwoven with almost every aspect of American life; . . . controlling crime is the business of every American institution. Controlling crime is the business of every American.

(President's Commission, 1967, xi).

Meeting the recommendation of the President's Commission to actively involve every American in crime reduction is one of the mandates that gave life to the Corporation for National Service. This federal agency has been directed by the United States Congress "to meet the unmet human, educational, environmental and *public safety* needs of the United States" (42 U.S.C. § 1250). Since 1993, the Corporation for National Service has been devoted to the promotion of service to help solve critical problems in every state, many American Indian tribes, and most territories (Corporation for National Service, 1997).

Public safety is a critical concern of citizens in every community. Finding innovative, empirically-based methods to reduce juvenile crime is a challenge. Research will bridge the gap between theory and practice and provide a stepping stone for policy development for government agencies such as the Corporation for National Service. The research has eight objectives as listed below.

### **Objectives of the Research**

1. Identify factors leading to juvenile delinquency.
2. Present a theoretical foundation for service as a tool to reduce juvenile delinquency.
3. Survey juvenile delinquency "at risk" programs in order to identify those which contain volunteering/service activities.
4. Detail the types of volunteering/service occurring in programs found in "3" above.
5. Present successful and innovative programs involving service.
6. Present elements common to successful programs involving volunteering/service.
7. Present a model for reducing delinquency through service.
8. Present policy suggestions to be implemented by the Corporation for National Service.

### **Applications and Audience for the Research**

Based on the findings, the research will have five applications:

1. Provide empirical support demonstrating the need for financial support by government agencies such as the Corporation for National Service. Historically, financial support has supported, K-12 and higher education sites mobilizing volunteers, promoting service and stimulating service-learning activities.
2. Provide empirical support that reinforces the importance of the public safety objective as

listed in the Corporation for National Service Strategic Plan.

3. Provide empirical support for collaboration between the Corporation for National Service and the Department of Justice (specifically, the Office of Juvenile Delinquency and Delinquency Prevention).

4. Provide empirical support for volunteering and service as a tool to reduce juvenile delinquency.

5. Provide a national model for service as a means to reduce delinquency.

The research is intended for service professionals as well as those who work with children and youth. The intent is to produce an academically sound document that with stands the rigors of empirical research, yet can be understood and applied by practitioners across the nation.

The findings of the research will be disseminated through several channels. These include but are not limited to: The Corporation for National Service, The United States Department of Justice and The Texas Youth Commission, as well as social science journals and publications. Findings will be presented at several criminology and criminal justice conferences throughout the country.

### **Definition of Terms**

As an aid to the reader, several terms are defined. These terms include; “at-risk” youth; categorized variables associated with delinquency, delinquent, “get tough” approach and “ability” approach. Unless otherwise stated, the definitions provided below will be used throughout the report.

#### **“At-Risk” Youth**

I find trying to survive in this world very hard, but when there’s violence on the streets, it makes survival even harder. I think about how many innocent people get killed every day. I think about kids getting killed at young ages . . . . I don’t think that life should be this way.

[Excerpt from a Prizewinning Essay by Mukaya Adams,  
17 years old, Jeremiah E. Burke High School, Boston]  
(Prothrow-Stith, D., 1991, p. 80).

Defining “at-risk youth” is an ambiguous task. Social science literature provides a variety of definitions often meeting the specific needs of the researcher. This report employs the same methodology by attempting to define “at-risk” youth as specifically as possible in order to keep the focus of the research on those variables that make a youth “at risk” for juvenile delinquency.

The juvenile delinquency literature from 1920-1999 was surveyed and analyzed. The guiding question was: What are the factors correlated with juvenile delinquency as found in social research? From the literature review, findings were placed into three areas; the individual, the family and the environment. Nine broad categories are listed within the three areas as follows:

### **Categorized Variables Associated with Juvenile Delinquency**

#### **1. The Individual**

***A. Lack of strong social ties to conventional society.*** A display of dishonesty; antisocial behavior, beliefs and attitudes are exhibited. Such displays take the form of violence, cheating, hostility, rule breaking and strong opposition to authority, especially police (Hawkins et al., 2000).

***B. Association with antisocial peer group.*** Research indicates that young persons who have friends that are delinquent have higher rates of delinquency than similar youth that do not have delinquent friends. Additionally, gang association and membership tripled or even quadrupled the risk of being involved in violent crime (Hawkins et al., 2000).

***C. Poor school performance.*** Consistently, throughout juvenile justice research, poor school

performance remains a strong predictor of future delinquency (Loeber and Farrington,1998; Maguin and Loeber,1996). Other related school issues are; low bonding to school, truancy, and frequent school transition and dropping out. All are correlated with delinquency (Hawkins et. al., 2000).

**D. Low self-control.** Characteristics common to those who participate in crime include; immediate gratification; risk taking; lack of planning or skill; and simple gratification. Gottfredson and Hirschi, (1990) summarized these common traits into one variable called low self –control.

## **2. The Family**

**A. Anti-social parents.** This broad area encompasses a variety of traits including; parental attitudes favorable to substance abuse; child maltreatment; parent-child separation and a lack of family activity. All have been correlated with delinquency (Hawkins et. al., 2000)

**B. Criminal activity in family.** Although, research on the subject is sketchy a growing body of literature concludes that children and youth who have parents that have been arrested are 2 to 3 times more likely to be involved in delinquent or criminal behavior themselves (Baker and Mednick,1984; Farrington,1989).

**C. Unsupervised hours.** After school hours on school days, and in the evenings on non-school days are the times when juvenile crime peaks (Snyder and Sickmund, 1999). Because fewer children have a parent at home waiting for them after dismissal from school (Snyder and Sickmund, 1999), the unsupervised hours of 3-6 p.m. leave many juveniles at risk of delinquent activities (Snyder and Sickmund,1999). Not only are these juveniles at risk for committing delinquent and violent activities, but also the hours at the end of the school day (2 p.m. to 6pm) are the highest for juveniles to be victims of violence (Snyder and Sickmund, 1999).

### **3. The Environment**

**A. *Social disorganization.*** Borrowed from sociology social disorganization may mean less neighborhood cohesion. In such places relationships between family, friends and groups in the neighborhood are weakened. Additionally, the neighborhood is unstable and transient and there is no sense of loyalty to the surroundings (Williams and McShane, 1994). Sampson and Groves (1989) list four elements that lead to social disorganization; low social economic status; a mixture of different ethnic groups; moving in and out of many different residents and finally; broken families. Delinquency is high in these socially disorganized neighborhoods (Loeber and Farrington, 1998)

**B. *Low socioeconomic status.*** Being raised in poverty has and continues to be a strong predictor of delinquency (Hawkins et. al., 2000). Officials indicate that between 1988 and 1997 the number of youth living in poverty increased 13% (Snyder and Sickmund,1999). Currently, over 14 million (1 in 5) young people live in poverty in the United States (Snyder and Sickmund, 1999). Such data indicates a widening gap between poor and rich children (Snyder and Sickmund,1999).

### **Summary of Categorized Variables Associated with Juvenile Delinquency**

An “at risk” youth is defined as one who displays, lives in, or is prone to any of the nine categorized variables listed above. Within the criminology literature, support exists for the idea that risk can be reduced by: mentoring, bonding and involvement (Loeber and Fannington, 1998). Such activities are often the core of volunteer and service programs for youth. A lack of strong social ties to conventional society was mentioned often and was highly correlated with delinquent behavior (Loeber & Fannington, 1998). In other words, when a youth is bonded to conventional society through activities and organizations such as school, Boy and Girl Scouts, 4H, sports, etc., there is less of a likelihood he/she will be involved in delinquent

activities. Volunteering and service are at the very nucleus of these bonding organizations and activities. Volunteering, and, to a greater extent service, attaches a person to conventional society.

### **Delinquent**

In common terms, a delinquent usually refers to a juvenile offender whose misconduct is an infraction of the law. Most states define offenses committed by persons under 16 as delinquent (Rush,1994). Definitions of juvenile delinquency are often behavior-based. As a result, there are often disagreements over who should decide which behaviors to designate as delinquent or what expectations to the criteria should be considered. Many definitions are either too narrow or too broad, over inclusive, unclear and often inaccurate or controversial. Problems with definitions often lead to problems in determining the target population, and in developing intervention and treatment strategies.

### **“Get-Tough” Approach verses “Ability” Approach**

A dichotomy of responses exists for juvenile delinquency reduction in the “get-tough” approach, and the “ability” approach. The “get-tough” approach is based in punishment and the classical school philosophy that the punishment should fit the crime. The “ability” approach is based on the belief that the young person can be treated and the illness that led to the criminal activity can be fixed.

The “get-tough” approach, involves treating juveniles as adults for certain crimes, thus making stricter fines and prison time for juveniles as young as 10. In two states alone, a 10-year-old can be transferred to adult criminal courts for serious crimes (*USA Today*, 2000). Unfortunately, this approach is expensive and ineffective.

Federally-funded studies in Florida and New York, (states with the most juveniles being placed in adult facilities), have found that juveniles in adult facilities are more likely to commit new crimes following

release than comparable youngsters from juvenile facilities (*USA Today*, 2000). The Justice Department estimates that rehabilitating a juvenile by age 18 saves society about \$1 million, while warehousing a juvenile costs about \$25,000 per year (*USA Today*, 2000).

Greater empirical research for effectiveness exists with the “ability” approach. The “ability” approach precedes rehabilitation. Providing a juvenile with socially valued competence, skill, and aptitude can help him/her avoid delinquency. The “ability” approach should not be confused with rehabilitation. Rehabilitation means to restore to a former capacity. Restoring delinquent juveniles to their former state would in most cases return them to unsupervised hours, poor academic achievement (Loeber & Fannington, 1997), a lack of a positive role model (Loeber & Fannington, 1998), and a socially disorganized community (Wilson, 1987). These variables along with the categorized variables listed above are highly correlated with juvenile delinquency (Loeber & Fannington, 1998; Wilson, 1987; Prothrow-Stith, 1991; Grossman & Garry, 1997; Maguin & Loeber, 1996; OJJDP, 1997).

The “ability” approach, when applied with proper resources, provides a cost-effective alternative to the “get-tough” approach for reducing juvenile crime. In accordance with the “ability” approach researchers and practitioners have identified seven principles underlying effective programs for youth:

1. Adult support, structure, and expectations;
2. Creative forms of learning;
3. A combination of guidance and rich connections to the workplace;
4. Support and follow-up;
5. Youth as resources; and,
6. Implementation quality

(American Youth Policy Forum, 1999).

## **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for reducing delinquency through service comes from criminological theories originating in the University of Chicago during the early 1900s. Social scientists studied the urban environment and concluded that human behavior is “developed and changed by the social and physical environment of the person rather than simply by genetic structure” (Williams & McShane, 1994, p. 50). The work of the Chicago School promoted policies that enhanced community through service.

The first community service-based, youth program emerged in the 1930's, largely from the ecological studies of Shaw and McKay (1930; 1931 and 1938). Shaw and McKay believed theory was secondary to action that would reduce delinquency ( Binder, et. al , 1997). This belief gave life to the Chicago Area Project (CAP). Shaw and McKay wrote:

Family, school and the community lack the money and skills with which to attract and hold the child to a conventional course of action. They cannot provide the channels that lead to successful achievement.

(in Kornhauser, 1978, p.8)

The Chicago Area Project (CAP) was intended to encourage community development through the promotion of family life and social institutions filling the needs of the impoverished (Binder, et. al, 1997). This was accomplished through the involvement of community volunteers, community organizers, churches, and other community-based organizations. The idea was to give the community ownership over the problem of crime, as well as the solutions (Rosenbaum, Ludigio, & Davis, 1998). Research indicates that the project was associated with lower rates of delinquency especially in African-American and Hispanic

neighborhoods (Scholossman, Zellman, & Shavelson, 1984).

Beyond the work of Shaw and McKay, Sutherland's "differential association" articulated in *Principles* (1947) emerged. The significance of this theory was that it explained individual behavior, rather than general rates of delinquency and crime (Williams & McShane, 1994).

Sutherland (1947) stated that "criminal behavior is learned". This learned behavior takes place in "intimate personal groups" such as family and peers. One learns from these "intimate personal groups" definitions favorable to violations of the law that supercede definitions unfavorable to violations of law (Sutherland, 1947). Thus, not only is the "intimate personal group" in which a young person associates important, but also the definitions provided by those persons becomes important. From these associations, a person learns the motives, drives, rationalizations, and attitudes of criminal or non-criminal behavior (Sutherland, 1947). Therefore, a youth will be more likely to follow the law if he or she is associated with law-abiding persons. The more time spent with such law-abiding persons, the greater the opportunity to learn law-abiding practices, standards, attitudes, and rules of behavior (Sutherland, 1947).

Further support for positive law-abiding associations can be found in Hirschi's (1969) "social control theory". Hirschi's research asked: Why do people bond to society? In other words: Why do people follow the law rather than break it? Hirschi discovered four elements that have relevance to this bonding: attachment, involvement, commitment and belief (Hirschi, 1969).

*Attachment* was described as the emotional strength of ones tie's to significant persons, such as parents, peers and institutions (schools, clubs, and programs). Children and youth desire the affection, of these persons and institutions, especially parents. In order to avoid losing this affection a child will avoid delinquency (Hirschi, 1969).

*Involvement* has origins dating back to biblical times (“idle hands are the devil’s workshop”). Children involved in positive bonding activities will have less time for delinquency (Hirschi, 1969). Involvement in clubs, recreation activities and other programs also will increase the level of conformity to conventional society (Williams and McShane, 1994).

*Commitment* is how much a child or youth has put into the conventional society (Hirschi, 1969). How a youth or adult "invests" in the conventional society takes many forms. Investments include education, leadership, employment and/or status. Through success, achievement and ambition one invest in conventional society. Committing a delinquent act hurts one’s chances of future success and stifles the previous accomplishments (Williams & McShane, 1994).

*Belief* is the validity of conventional norms as accepted by the child or youth and the acceptance of society’s rules as being fair (Hirschi, 1969). Persons who have a respect for the common value system behave “properly” and are more likely to conform to law-abiding practices (Williams & McShane, 1994).

For those youth that more often associate with persons who are involved in criminal behavior, a lack of a bonding to conventional society takes place. Likewise, these youth are more likely to be involved in criminal behavior. Wilson (1987) describes this process as "social isolation". Wilson states social isolation is: “. . . the lack of contact or sustained interaction with individual and institutions that represent mainstream society" (Wilson, 1987, p. 60). Through learned and model behavior, these socially isolated youth respond violently to only potentially violent situations (Prothrow-Stith, 1993). They demonstrate a lack of interest in school, positive clubs, programs, and groups (Canada, 1995) and participate in gang and criminal activity (OJJDP, 1998; Wilson, 1987; Prothrow-Stith, 1993).

## Methodology

Over a nine-month period qualitative methods were used to answer the research question: How does service reduce delinquency in “at-risk” youth aged 10 to 17? Literature from the Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) was used as a source for the best delinquency reduction programs for youth. The work of OJJDP made the researcher aware of the “Blueprint” series. The Blueprints for Violence Prevention series was the combined work of the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence at the University of Colorado at Boulder, the Colorado Division of Criminal Justice (CDCJ), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Pennsylvania Council on Crime and Delinquency. In 1996, these agencies “initiated a project to identify ten violence prevention programs that met a very high scientific standard of program effectiveness—programs that could provide an initial nucleus for a national violence prevention initiative” (McGill, 1997, p. xiv).

More than 400 delinquency, drug, and violence prevention programs were reviewed and evaluated to meet four evaluation standards as described below:

**1. Strong Research Design**

Strong methodological design of the program was essential. Measurement issues included reliability and validity of low rates of participant attrition. In addition, were outcome measures met? Was there quality, consistency, and timing of the administration to program participants?

**2. Evidence of Significant Deterrence Effects**

A survey of juvenile delinquency programs in the past shows very few truly demonstrate effectiveness in reducing the onset, prevalence, or individual offending rates of violent behavior. Blueprints established an effective program as one which demonstrated evidence of deterrent effects for delinquency (including childhood aggression and conduct disorder), drug use, and/or violence and arrest. Programs that provided evidence of violent behavior reduction were given preference in selection. All other criteria were considered equal.

**3. Sustained Effects**

Many programs demonstrate success-detering delinquency during treatment. Long-term effects sustained beyond treatment or participation needed to be identified. An example is that of a preschool program designed to offset the effects of poverty on school performance. The program demonstrates its effectiveness when children start school, but the program has little value if these effects are lost during the first two or three years of school and do not reduce violence during junior or senior high school years, when the risk of violence is at its peak. Such a program would not be included due to the lack of sustained effects.

#### **4. Multiple Site Replication**

Is the program exportable to new sites? No longer is it possible for a single program to maintain daily, operational control over large national programs. It is desirable to have adequate procedures for monitoring in place in order to produce effective programs throughout the country.

#### **Other Criteria**

“Blueprints” also looked at evidence of how the program changed the targeted risk behaviors or risk-factors. In other words: Did the program change the actual violent behavior rather than causal influences or a correlated effect?

Cost was also a factor. Typically, evaluation reports fail to assess the cost of the program. Program cost is important in order to replicate the program in other sites. Such information is difficult to obtain. Only a few programs reported both program costs and cost-benefit estimates.

A final criterion was the willingness of the program participants to work with the Center. Program participants had to attend conferences, submit documents, read literature, and provide feedback as needed to the Center.

From the over 400 programs, the “Blueprint” researchers found 10 programs to be the best. These ten programs found below were identified as “Blueprint” programs.

## **“Blueprint” Programs**

Midwestern Prevention Program

Multisystemic Therapy

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America

Nurse Home Visitation

Functional Family Therapy

Treatment Foster Care

Quantum Opportunities Program

Bullying Prevention Program

Life Skills Training

PATHS

## **Selection of Service-Based Delinquency Prevention Programs**

Literature was surveyed on all ten “Blueprint” programs. The intent of the survey was to find programs that required, promoted or suggested service in the community as part of their program methodology. After a thorough reading and interviews it was found that two of the ten programs had some form of service to the community as part of their program: Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) and Quantum Opportunities Program (QOP). Big Brothers Big Sisters community service was indirectly a part of the program because adult volunteers (called Bigs) took their Little Brothers and Sisters (called Littles) to many volunteer activities in the community. The Quantum Opportunities Program had a direct requirement that all youth involved in the program had to complete 250 hours of service in the community. Both programs have their headquarters in Philadelphia, PA but have offices throughout the United States.

## **Research of Service Based Delinquency Prevention Programs**

After selection, each service-based program was examined in order to understand its history, philosophy, goals, organizational structure, challenges, successes, future goals and evaluation status. Contact was then made with the administration of each organization. The researcher identified himself and made them aware of the research project asking for their assistance. Each program was more than willing to be a part of this research. Representatives were asked to send any additional information about the program via the mail and sight visits were also coordinated. The researcher visited each program's headquarters, spoke with administration and observed operations. The objectives of the site visits were to qualitatively understand the role of service in the program design and how service is correlated with juvenile delinquency reduction.

## **FINDINGS**

### **Quantum Opportunities**

The Quantum Opportunities (QOP) serves disadvantaged youth (defined as a family receiving food stamps and public assistance). Upon entering the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, eighty-six percent of the students were from an ethnic minority (largely African-American), and only nine percent lived with both parents. The pilot demonstration program began in 1989, with five communities: Milwaukee, Philadelphia, Oklahoma City, Saginaw, and San Antonio. The pilot period ended in 1994. From 1995-1999, other sites including Cleveland, Fort Worth, Houston, Memphis, and the District of Columbia, were added to serve 579 students.

QOP focused on three areas primarily: educational activities (tutoring, homework assistance, computer-assisted instruction), developmental activities (life and family skills, future career and educational

opportunities), and community service. The program takes place in the community under the supervision of a caring adult, who served as a mentor.

The QOP student had to attend high school as well as complete 750 hours of activities in three areas called; learning opportunities. development opportunities and service opportunities.

Learning Opportunities (250 hours): These hours consisted of self-paced and competency-based academic skills enhancement outside regular school hours.

Development Opportunities (250 hours): These hours consisted of cultural enrichment and personal development. Youth visited museums and concerts, read and discussed current affairs, as well as learned about their own history and culture. Students also received a personal subscription to Time Magazine. They learned time management, how to get along with others, as well as the importance of setting goals and ways to accomplish them.

Service Opportunities (250 hours): Youth were required to complete service projects in their own community. The objective of these projects was to help develop skills needed for employment reliability, task completion, and working cooperatively. Service projects included tutoring elementary students, neighborhood cleanup, volunteering in hospitals, nursing homes, libraries, and human service agencies.

### **Incentives**

The program had financial incentives in order to encourage participation, completion and long-range planning. Youth participating were given an hourly stipend of \$1.00 to \$1.33 for each hour of the 750 hours completed, and a completion bonus of \$100 for each activity component completed. This resulted in a possible total of \$300 per year in bonuses. In addition, an “opportunity account” was created which matched the earned funds of each youth dollar for dollar over the four years in the program. At the end of

the four years, the youth could use the funds (including interest) for college, job training, technical training, or other approved educational expenses.

### **QOP Findings**

The evaluation of secondary post-program impacts indicates significant findings in the areas of high school graduation, college enrollment, childbearing, criminal involvement, welfare dependency, and future educational plans. Research conducted in 1995-1996 by Dr. Robert Taggart of Howard University consisted of comparisons made of QOP participants and a randomly selected control group in three sites (Philadelphia, Saginaw, and Oklahoma City). For the purpose of this report, only the areas of criminal activity, educational plans, dependency, and employment will be presented.

In the past, criminal activity, educational plans, dependency and employment have been highly correlated with delinquency as discussed earlier. Criminal activity among QOP participants in the form of number of times arrested was -.28 lower. The percent ever convicted was 12% lower for QOP participants. The educational plans of QOP participants are higher than the control group. In the control group, only 11% plan to obtain a four-year degree while 35% of the QOP program plan to complete college. Dependency on welfare programs decreased for those in QOP at a rate of 11%. All families of participants of QOP were originally in a welfare program. After involvement in QOP 47% of participants were on welfare compared to 58% of the control group. Finally, in the area of employment improvement is gained by involvement in QOP. Only 14% of QOP participants are not in school or work compared to almost half (48%) of control group youth.

### **Service**

The QOP presents positive findings in several areas directly correlated with a reduction of delinquency. Upon interviewing administrative personnel, several questions were asked concerning the

relationship of service to the positive outcomes of the program especially the reduction of criminal activity.

Overwhelmingly, administrative personnel believed the community service aspect of the QOP did not have a direct relationship to the positive outcomes of the program. “In its current state, the service part of the program helps, but it is not the most important part” (QOP Staff Interviews, 2000). When asked how does it help, the response was: “It gives them something positive to do and they can help the community but they do not exactly understand what they are doing” (QOP Staff Interviews, 2000).

Further questioning revealed that among the students involved in the program, there exists a feeling of apathy about service to the community. “Community service is seen as something you do because you have done something wrong.” “It is a punishment” (QOP Staff Interviews, 2000).

Most of the service completed by the students took place in pre-existing relationships (those that existed before being in QOP). The church was the organization where most students completed their 250 hours (QOP staff Interviews, 2000). Occasionally, and mostly in the summer, QOP would sponsor volunteer activities. These volunteer outings included neighborhood cleanups, tutoring and assisting at hospitals or nursing homes (QOP Staff Interviews, 2000).

### **Big Brothers Big Sisters**

Established in 1904, Big Brothers/Big Sisters (BBBS) is the oldest youth mentoring organization in the United States (BBBS, 1999). BBBS provides one-on-one mentoring between adult volunteers and children at risk. BBBS youth are those from low-income households with histories of substance abuse and/or domestic violence. The youth range between the ages of 10 and 14, with the majority being minority boys. Most youth live with only one parent or guardian (BBBS, 1999).

BBBS places a trained, caring adult who has passed a series of background and personal history

checks with a youth for one year. The relationship is informal, but is supported by a professional staff in the local BBBS office. The professional staff assists in arranging the match, setting goals, and maintaining open communication between the agency, parent, child, and volunteer.

### **BBBS Findings**

Public/Private Ventures (a nonprofit public interest group located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) conducted evaluation research on BBBS in 1992-1993 (Public/Private Ventures, 1995). A comparative study of 959 youths aged 10 to 16 who had applied to BBBS was used. Half of the youth were randomly assigned to the treatment group, while the other half were awaiting matches. Those awaiting matches were the control group. After 18 months, comparisons were made. "Little Brothers" and "Little Sisters" were 46 percent less likely to begin using illegal drugs, 27 percent less likely to begin using alcohol, 52 percent less likely to skip school, and 37 percent less likely to skip class (Public/Private Ventures, 1995). Some improvement was also seen in the academic performance of the "Littles" (Public/Private Ventures, 1995).

### **Service**

When researching the service aspect of BBBS, it was found that two-prongs of service were occurring. As stated by a BBBS administrator, "We find that our adult volunteers are already interested in service. So, as an activity, many of them take their "Little" along to their service activities" (BBBS Staff Interviews, 2000). Such service would be in a church, social group, homeless shelter, or other civic activity. Thus, the first prong is the initial service by the adult volunteer (volunteering to be a mentor role model). The second service prong is the youth being exposed to service through a positive role model. It is a positive and powerful motivator for the youth to see the fun of volunteering and service while at the same time building a relationship with a person who cares about their well-being and development. This exposure

may lead the youth to a positive perception of volunteering and service which may lead to later volunteering and service in the youth's adult life.

### **Boys and Girls Clubs of America**

Although not listed as one of the ten "Blueprint" programs, the Boys and Girls Clubs (B&GCA) provide additional data related to programs in the community using service to reduce delinquency. During interviews with the administration of Big Brothers Big Sisters as well as the Quantum Opportunities Program, the Boys and Girls Clubs were often mentioned as a good youth program that promotes service to the community.

Founded in 1906, B&GCA has over 2000 facilities, covering all 50 states, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, and U.S. military installations abroad (American Youth Policy Forum, 1997).

B&GCA strive to provide healthy partnerships between school-age children and caring adults (American Youth Policy Forum, 1997). By being open 5-6 days a week for 6-7 hours a day, clubs provide a safe haven for school-aged youth, tutoring, physical exercise, arts and crafts, leadership development, environmental awareness, as well as community service opportunities (American Youth Policy Forum, 1997).

In a 1991 evaluation report entitled The Effects of Boys and Girls Clubs on Alcohol and Other Drug Use and Related Problems in Public Housing (Schinke & Cole, 1991), and in the 1999 follow-up study (in press) entitled "Enhancing the Educational Achievement of At-Risk Youth" (Schinke, Cole, & Poulin, 1999), B&GCA's effects were evaluated. The 1991 research focused on 15 public housing developments involving over 4,000 youth (American Youth Policy Forum, 1997). The 1999 research involved 992 youth averaging just over 12 years of age (American Youth Policy Forum, 1997).

Schinke, Cole & Poulin 1999 research indicates that new and old clubs showed 15% fewer police reports than neighborhoods without clubs. In addition, grades and attendance in school improved when a youth attends the B & GCA, although no significant difference exists in behavioral incidents while at school (Schinke et.al., 1999).

### **Service to Reduce Delinquency**

Upon examination of the above research it may be concluded that youth service alone does not reduce delinquency. There appears to be a spurious correlation of service to juvenile delinquency reduction. This conclusion can be reached because no program examined in this research displays service as its sole or primary methodology to reduce delinquency or behavior of “at risk” children and youth. Service, theoretically, reduces delinquency but, because there were no service only “at-risk” programs highlighted in the “Blueprint” study there are no apparent examples. Thus, theoretical modeling should be done in order to lay the groundwork and foundation for such programs for future implementation. This groundwork can be established by the development of the “Continuum of Service for “At-Risk” Youth”.

### **“Continuum of Service for “At-Risk” Youth”**

The “Continuum of Service for “At-Risk” Youth” has its basis in Delve, Mintz, and Stewart's 1990 work entitled "Promoting Values Development Through Community Service: A Design" found in Community Service as Values Education: New Directions for Student Services. They outline five phases of student development in relation to service-learning:

1. Exploration--students are bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, eager to explore new experiences.
2. Clarification--students explore various service opportunities, often influenced by friends, appeal and the convenience of the activity.
3. Realization--students learn what service-learning is about, the meaning and worth of their work.

4. Activation--students develop a strong sense of solidarity with the population and cause. Examples are racism (minorities), battered women (women and children), social injustice (people of low socioeconomic status).
5. Internalization – Few students get to this level but those who do, fully integrate service into their lives. They make lifestyle and career changes that reflect a life of service.

The researcher was very interested in how the Delve Model would relate to “at risk” youth as well as defining what activities take place before “exploration”. The researcher developed the “Continuum of Service for “At-Risk” Youth” based on qualitative research, literature reviews and personal experience. The model is described as follows:

1. No Volunteering--Youth does not participate in any volunteer activities.
2. Required Volunteering—Based on organizational membership or court requirement, youth does a volunteer activity, usually with a one-dimensional focus (cleaning a park, washing vehicles, making a product). The youth usually does not like the experience and often sees the required volunteering as a punishment. Statements such as: "Why should I help them? It's not my job," are made.
3. Volunteer Exploration--Through the "required volunteering," the youth develops friendships or enjoys the feeling of helping others. He or she returns to the once-required volunteer site. For those youths who never had a required volunteer experience, this is the time when, through friends, parents, etc., the first contact with volunteering is made. Such contact might be a group volunteer outing. Volunteer exploration is often a pleasant experience for the youth.
4. Service--The youth becomes self-motivated to do the volunteering because he/she feels it is the “right thing to do”. Through personal experience the youth is drawn to serving. Here serving may not be at one location or for one specific cause. The youth desires to “help”. A feeling that doing good is good

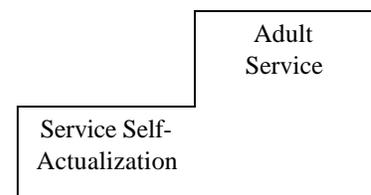
occurs. These are the early stages of bonding to society.

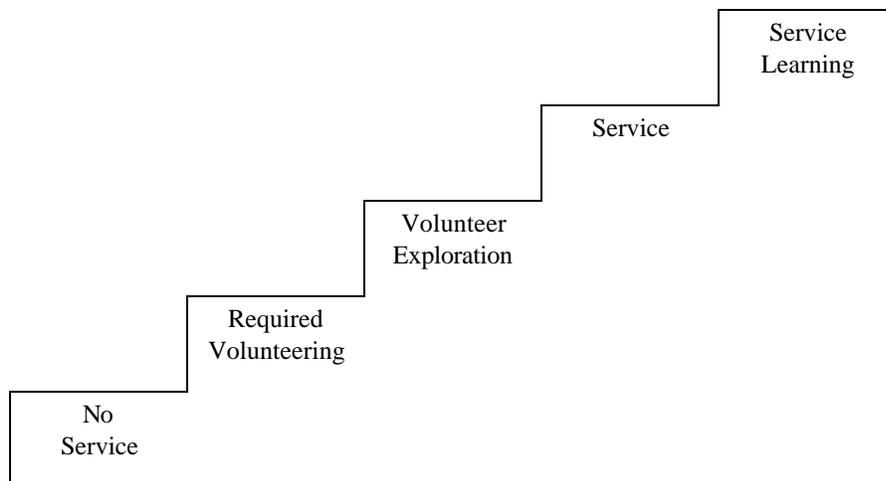
5. Service-Learning--In addition to "service" (as described in #4), an academic component is added. The youth understands, through writing, reading, discussion and reflection the whole picture of what he/she is doing and how it benefits an individual, the community, and the world. The youth becomes an active stakeholder in the neighborhood. Thus, he/she feels empowered. The youth looks for ways in which to better the efficiency and effectiveness of the service he/she is doing. The student desires to have others (peers, family, neighborhood) passionately involved in the service. A bonding to society is cemented in the youth.

6. Service Self-Actualization--After years of service learning experiences, the participant actively pursues an adult life of service displaying attachment, involvement, commitment and belief with the community. As an adult, he/she may choose a service profession.

The "Continuum of Service for "At-Risk" Youth" is found in Figure 1.. One goal is to have as many "at risk" youth as possible fall in the "service" or above levels. After "volunteer exploration" and "service," the youth becomes transformed from volunteering as a requirement or novelty, to a more mature volunteering as service to others and the community. Such a transformation creates the bonding to the community, which leads to a reduction in crime as discussed by Hirschi (1969).

### **Continuum of Service for At-Risk Youth**





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The “Continuum of Service for At-Risk Youth” is important and useful because it provides a guide for youth workers, agencies, parents, and youth to determine the magnitude of involvement in service. Questions can be asked and answered, such as: Are the youth empowered? Is there an academic component to the service being performed? Are the volunteer outings one-time events? Are the youths made aware of volunteer opportunities in the community? Are the youths made aware of careers in service to their community, the nation, or internationally? From these questions, planning and development can take place to move as many “at-risk” youth as possible up the continuum toward adult service.

### **Findings Summary**

From examination of the Quantum Opportunities Program, Big Brothers and Sisters of America as well as the Boys and Girls Clubs of America seven conclusive statements emerge from the research.

1. *Service takes place in “at risk” programs, but only on a cursory basis.* This important finding is true for all three of the programs examined. The belief of administrators is that service to the community is good but how to effectively measure the good, improve upon the good that is being done and motivate young persons to be actively involved in the development and implementation of service

to the community is unknown. With an understanding of the service literature and assistance on how to encompass service as a discipline, service can be mainstreamed into delinquency reduction programs.

2. *A financial incentive is necessary for youth participation.* As demonstrated in the Quantum Opportunities Program providing youth with an incentive to participate is an effective method to increase involvement and provide funds for higher education or training. Critics of incentive programs claim that persons should not be paid for service. Incentives, unlike pay, are not a one-for-one match of dollar amounts for work performed instead incentives provide stimulation for participation. Such incentives are used today by the United States armed services as well as the Corporation for National Service.

3. *Caring adults are necessary for a specific time period.* In order for programs such as Quantum Opportunities; Big Brothers/Big Sisters, and Boys and Girls Clubs of America to function, it is necessary for caring adults to volunteer their time on a regular basis. Caring adults are necessary to serve as mentors and leaders of youth. These persons can serve as role models for youths who are forming bonds with the community and society as a whole.

4. *In many minority populations, there is a negative association with service to the community.* Structured service is viewed as something unpopular. This belief may have originated from the association of community service with the criminal justice system or as a task performed by low-paid public servants. Ironically, there are many examples of service activities being performed in minority

communities. Such acts of kindness take place in churches, families and in conjunction with neighbors. Changing the negative association of structured service remains a challenge in minority communities.

5. *Problems exist in recruiting adult volunteers who come from the same gender, environmental and racial background as the youth.* All three programs indicated that there is a problem finding adults who have experiences common to the youth in need of mentoring. Each program desires these adults so that the adult can serve as a role model who has overcome many of the hurdles that the children and youth are currently facing.

6. *A central location is necessary for a program's identity and success.* An important issue for BBBS was the lack of a central location to serve as the focus of the program. Because the activities of BBBS take place through informal interaction, program recognition was thought to be less than organizations that have a building or specific site where children, youth and adults attend. Having a central location was seen as very beneficial for B&GCA because it allowed for a safe and central location for people in the community to attend.

7. *The "Continuum of Service for "At-Risk" Youth" is useful to gauge where children and youth are involved in service.* Having a model such as the "Continuum of Service for "At-Risk" Youth" is necessary to address the issues of how to improve service performed by youth. The cursory use of service to the community can be better understood through gauging the level of involvement and commitment displayed by the youth.

Service alone does not reduce delinquency. Service does inspire, promote, and support delinquency-prevention activities. There are several examples of community programs that encompass some aspect of service, but no one program existed which encompassed service to the community as the only methodology to reduce delinquency. Thus, this research can only address the partial effect of service to reduce delinquency. This effect was strong. The service component of those programs that did have service in their methodology was considered to be a positive effect in the overall reduction of delinquency.

### **Recommendations**

From the findings, the researcher makes five recommendations:

1. The development of the Center for the Reduction of Delinquency Through Service. This center can be an arm of the Corporation for National Service in order to serve as a clearinghouse of information on how to reduce delinquency through service. Such a center would have postings on the Internet, conduct conferences, and provide the most up-to-date information on what works, why it works, and how it works.
2. Human resources are necessary to assist organizations involved in reducing delinquency through service. By teaming VISTA, AmeriCorps, Foster Grandparents, and other Corporation for National Service members with nonprofit and government agencies that have demonstrated a program that reduces delinquency a pool of human resources can be dedicated to this field.
3. Development of National Student Service Accounts (NSSA). Accounts would exist for persons 15 – 20 years of age for volunteering at an approved NSSA site. Students could volunteer up to 500 hours per year at a rate of \$10.00 per hour. The money would be placed in an account under the student's name. A student could earn a maximum of \$25,000 for college, trade school, or another approved educational program. Students would have to use the money by 30 years of age. Students would forfeit all money if ever convicted of a felony offense.
3. Strengthen the Corporation for National Service's public safety initiative. A Public Safety Division could be established whose duties would be to find ways to:

1. Implement crime prevention through environmental design.
2. Get citizens involved in neighborhood safety.
3. Implement community policing
4. Conduct home security surveys.
5. Use personal (nonphysical) defense tactics.
6. Implement anti-drug techniques.

A public health model of preventing crime from occurring would be used. The focus would be on prevention in high-risk populations and reducing the cost of crime among those already affected. All of this would be accomplished through acts of service in the community. The intent is to involve all members of the community through the various Corporations for National Service programs.

5. Use the power of the federal government to assist in the self-identified needs of communities. Through the assistance of specially trained VISTA staff, called Community Development VISTA (described below) communities would be better able to help themselves. This would aid in the communication between those with the service and those needing service. Federal government resources exist in the military, social services, human resources and equipment.

### **Implementation**

Bonding youth to the community through service involves the active participation of youth and family, incentives through NSSA and the deploying of Community Development VISTA.

**Youth/Family.** The unsupervised time of 3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. for children and youth is an optimum time for service activities to be conducted. With the encouragement of family members, children and youth would go to pre-certified, nonprofit, government and educational sites to volunteer their time. Such activities would build and strengthening neighborhoods. Youth would accumulate hours. Each hour

would represent a dollar figure to be placed in their National Student Service Account (NSSA) (see below).

**National Student Service Account (NSSA).** The NSSA would be a Corporation for National Service program designed to inspire service in young persons aged 15 to 20. Each year, young persons could volunteer up to 500 hours to a certified NSSA site. Certification would be obtained by undergoing training as directed by the Corporation for National Service. Ten dollars per hour worked would be placed in the young person's NSSA. The young person may use that money for higher education, trade school, and/or technical school training. The money in the account must be used by the recipients 30th birthday. Any felony conviction would forfeit all money in the account.

The NSSA will:

- \* Inspire service in the neighborhood to promote bonding.

- \* Provide up to \$25,000 financial assistance for young persons' higher education or technical or trade school.

- \*Provide a new workforce for non-profit, government and educational entities.

**Community Development VISTA:** have the same obligation as regular VISTAs, but are specially trained and deployed in targeted areas. CDVs would work in teams of five (see figure 2.).

Each team would consist of a team leader, assistant leader, trainer, project coordinator, and evaluator.

Team Leader—would assume overall responsibility for the program and the other CDVs on the team. The Team Leader would report directly to the Corporation for National Service representative.

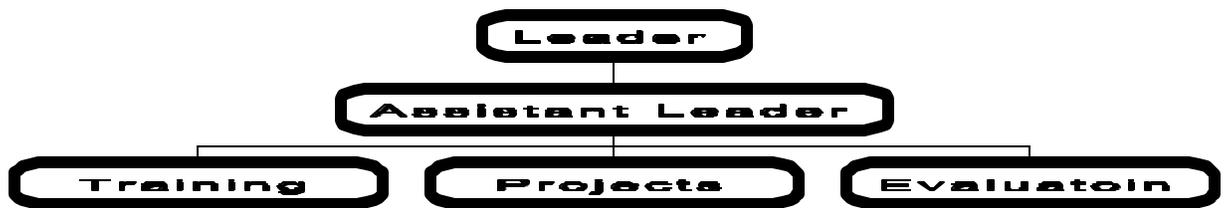
Assistant Leader—would assist the leader and assume responsibility for all communications (letters, fliers, e-mails, advertisements, etc.); as well as researching funding sources for community programs.

Trainer--would conduct all training required in the community.

Project Coordinator--would develop, research, and implement projects in the community.

Evaluator--would conduct assessments as well as compile monthly reports and data required by the Corporation for National Service. Additionally, the evaluator would write historical reports monthly on the progress and effectiveness of the team.

**Figure 2. “ Organizational Chart of Community Development VISTA”**



The desire is that these five persons come from the community. They are trained just as regular VISTAs, but after standard VISTA training they receive additional training in their specific area. Through leadership, communication, training, coordination and evaluation, a synergistic effect can be created to better serve the community.

### **Community Development VISTA Youth Component**

CDVs would spend approximately 15 hours per week doing their specialized jobs as described above. The remaining 25 hours would be served as mentors under Big Brothers/Big Sisters. Each CDV would be assigned four youth for one year as prescribed by Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America. Thus, twenty youths would be served. CDVs would undergo BBBS training, pre-certification and program guidance from BBBS. The goal would be five hours a week of one-on-one mentoring per youth. Activities would include:

Promoting and participating in community service activities

School attendance with youth.

After school tutoring and mentoring.

Visiting museums, cultural activities, sporting events and libraries.

### **Reduction of Delinquency Through Service Model**

The Reduction of Delinquency Through Service model consists of eight premises.

The intent of the model is to provide the basis for service, community involvement, bonding and delinquency reduction. The premise statements of the model are found below.

- 1. Service is good for the individual, community and the nation.**
- 2. A positive role model is necessary for the development of youth.**
- 3. Resources from government agencies are available to promote service in the community.**
- 4. Youth should be empowered when serving the community.**
- 5. Incentives increase service while providing benefit to the youth and the community.**
- 6. Service is beneficial when it takes place by all people in the community.**
- 7. Service bonds persons to the community.**
- 8. Therefore, service has an effect of reducing delinquency and crime.**

Summarized the Reduction of Delinquency Through Service model states:

*Through structured service opportunities in their own community, youth can be empowered to serve the community. Such service facilitated by caring adults in the community, and aided by government resources, will bond the youth to the community, accomplishing a reduction in delinquency and a healthy appreciation for service during adulthood.*

Overall the model holds that community members have the power to make and choose their own direction. That direction is assisted by the resources of government. All members have an active part to

play in service to the community. Through the examples of involvement modeled by adults in the community, youth learn the value of service. Understanding the greater good of service allows youth to move up the “Continuum of Service for “At-Risk” Youth. When this occurs, bonding to the community occurs thus producing a reduction in delinquency.

The Reduction of Delinquency Through Service model is a theoretical model based on empirical findings, literature in the field and findings of this report. The model is limited because it has not yet been tested in the field. The researcher desires to implement this model in order to evaluate its effectiveness.

Although, juvenile crime has recently decreased, it is imperative that new and innovative strategies are developed to continue this downward crime trend. The Reduction of Delinquency Through Service model presents the basis to unleash the potential of service in the community to effectively bond youth to the community thus, producing a reduction in delinquency.

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