



MAYOR'S VILLAGE INITIATIVE

The Mayor's Village Initiative is a City of West Palm Beach initiative which focuses on the plight of African American boys and young men. The goal of the initiative is to prevent and reduce youth violence and to improve the outcomes of African American boys and young men in targeted areas of the city. The "village" consists of government agencies, businesses, concerned citizens, the faith community, non-profits, philanthropy, and schools. The City will act as an umbrella and pull its vast resources together to help address this issue. At this time, we are focusing primarily on the North End of the city.

The Mayor's Village Initiative is part of a larger national initiative called *Cities United* - (www.citiesunited.org) sponsored by the National League of Cities.

Here are the current programs under *The Mayor's Village Initiative*:

Community and Police Dialogues – The dialogues consists of four to five week conversations between police officers, community residents, and community social service providers. These dialogues create a safe and non-confrontational space for these individuals from diverse cultures, backgrounds, and experiences to develop trust, better understand each other's experiences, and work together on solutions to build positive relationships between law enforcement and residents. We use the *Everyday Democracy's* discussion guide for this dialogue entitled "*Protecting Communities, Serving the Public: Police and residents building relationships to work together.*"

Kids & Cops Workshop – This workshop is a discussion between African American teenaged boys and police officers. It is an opportunity for the youth to express their thoughts and feelings about their relationship with law enforcement. Additionally, it allows the young men to hear from police officers about their roles in the community. The goal of these workshops is to build relationships and improve communication between youth and law enforcement.

Neighborhood Accountability Board (NAB) – This program is geared for youth between 12-18 years of age and is being facilitated out of the Pleasant City Youth Empowerment Center. The NAB is based on the principles of Restorative Justice. The goal is for the youth to repair the harm that was caused in the community. A child that commits a first time misdemeanor offense qualifies for this program. They must be referred by the Police Department or the State Attorney's Office. The conference consists of the offender and their parents, the victim (if they want to attend), and a board that is comprised of trained neighborhood volunteers. They talk about the offense and agree on appropriate sanctions. The youth have approximately 90 days to complete their assigned sanctions. If they complete the

sanctions, the offense will not be on their record.

Operation Youth Violence: Reduction, Intervention, and Prevention: The West Palm Beach Police Department developed this program in response to the high number of arrest concerning our inner city youth. The program is geared toward first time felony offenders between the ages of 13-24 years of age. The goal is to provide them with the necessary resources and mentoring in hopes that they will become productive members of the community. This is a collaborative effort between government agencies, the faith community, and other public private entities. These youth are offered the opportunity to enroll in GED programs, job readiness courses, counseling, and subsidized employment. These services are provided through the Urban League of Palm Beach County and the Pleasant City Youth Empowerment Center.

Workforce Development Program: The goal of this program is to connect residents to employment. The goal is also to assist them in overcoming any barriers to obtaining employment. We have educational institutions, community groups, and the private sector at the table supporting this program. Many of the jobs require training and it is our goal that we make training available for the residents knowing that, at the end of their training, a job is waiting.