

MAKING THE CASE FOR ADVANCE PEACE

A Law Enforcement Perspective

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At its core, Advance Peace (AP) is a violence-reduction program that saves both lives and money. It focuses intense resources on the small percentage of individuals who shoot in the community, but whom law enforcement is unable to build a case against. With closure rates of shooting cases under 30% in some cities, there is an immediate need to address the violence that traditional law enforcement practices have had difficulty curbing. AP's response is to use intense, proactive services to change the mindset of the individuals perpetuating the violence. Unless and until police can remove them from the streets, those at the center of firearm hostilities should be pushed toward ending their violent behavior themselves.

After implementing AP's practices, the city of Richmond, CA, saw a 66% drop in gun violence within seven years. While some of the drop-off can be attributed to improved policing practices and the introduction of other anti-violence programs, no other city experienced a similar drop despite the existence of the same improved practices and programs. By addressing violent actors who otherwise avoid law enforcement's reach, AP helps save lives and reduces the life-altering trauma experienced both by people living in these communities and by the service providers who support them (including law enforcement). In each of our partnering communities, AP supports community and law enforcement goals to reduce cyclical gun violence, save lives, and improve the health and wellbeing of impacted neighborhoods.

BACKSTORY

While gun violence nationally has decreased significantly over the last 30 years, the sad fact is that shooting rates remain extremely high in small pockets of communities throughout several major cities in the United States.¹ In certain Chicago zip codes, for example, the shooting rates are similar to those of war-torn countries. Gun violence kills 11,000 people each year and wounds another 70,000, with the associated financial cost reaching over a billion dollars annually. But the damage cannot be measured simply by lives lost or dollars spent. We must also think of it in terms of the resulting trauma felt by everyone—particularly children—who witness and experience it. Doctors have documented cases of post-traumatic stress disorder in multiple communities where gun violence rates remain high, including among paramedics and police officers.² This type of severe stress damages children's development, saps community strength to deal with adversity, and further contributes to the type of chaotic street life that breeds crime.

Rather than treating symptoms of gun violence, AP goes straight to its cause: suspected "firearm offenders." Other anti-violence programs offer some combination of services, community shaming, and threats of prosecution to a broader group of gang affiliates. In contrast, AP deploys its resources more narrowly and to great effect.

AP also goes beyond mentoring to include actual assistance obtaining needed services, multiple other positive intentional contacts with elders and a variety of healthy messengers throughout any given day, and the development of a life plan. Cohorts of young men go through this programming together as Fellows. They are not coerced or required to do it, but rather are offered the opportunity to help themselves and their community by participating.

The AP Fellowship was developed over several years of experimenting with what worked to reduce gun violence. Experience demonstrated that the most effective program included travel outside of the home neighborhoods to expand horizons and build relationships with previously antagonistic rivals. Experience also showed that Fellows who stuck with their respective life plans for six months were much more likely to stay on the road to rehabilitation if they received a monthly stipend as both encouragement to continue to follow their life plan and as a stabilizing factor in what usually are extremely chaotic lives.

¹Pew Social Trends—Cohn, Taylor, Lopez

²www.propublica.org, February 10, 2014; www.policeone.com, April 3, 2017; www.medscape.com, August 8, 2017

WHAT THE ADVANCE PEACE PEACEMAKER FELLOWSHIP IS -----

- Intensely focused program to stop shootings in the most dangerous communities.
- Voluntary. No Fellow is forced or required to be there.
- Mentor-led intervention to stabilize the lives of the Fellows and to incentivize them to stop shooting and move toward productive citizenship. Interventions occur multiple times each day.
- The opportunity to develop a life plan to work towards educational, professional, and other personal goals. Fellows cannot remain in the program if they don't develop a plan and work towards it throughout the fellowship.
- The opportunity for domestic and international travel to open the Fellows' minds to life beyond what they've known and to develop camaraderie among a group of young men who may have been enemies on their home turf. The side benefit is to reduce tensions among individuals who otherwise may engage in violence towards each other.
- Stabilizing. Fellows become eligible to receive the LifeMAP Milestone Allowance ("Stipend") after 6 months of programming. To become eligible for the Allowance, Fellows must have participated in 60% of the activities offered and have achieved no less than three goals associated with their individualized LifeMAP. Once eligible, Fellows can earn up to \$9,000 over the remaining 12 months. Monthly earning amounts (up to \$1,000) range from \$300 to \$750 per month for those Fellows who have become eligible. Monthly earning amounts

are based on a Fellows individual effort and work associated with LifeMAP Goal achievements over the next 12 months. Fellows who don't perform, do not earn. For those who underperform, they earn accordingly.

- At the end of 18 months, an internship to set AP Fellows on a path towards self-sustainability and a life without gun violence.

WHAT THE ADVANCE PEACE PEACEMAKER FELLOWSHIP IS NOT -----

- Payment to stop shooting. The Stipend is awarded for performance of responsibilities articulated above, period.
- A "get-out-of-jail-free" card. If law enforcement brings a case against any of the Fellows, there is no protection against arrest or prosecution. The AP program is designed to fill the gap where prosecution does not occur. While the suspected "firearm offender" is not in custody, AP will continue to work with him or her.
- An anti-gang program. AP is focused exclusively on those at the center of firearm hostilities, not others who may be affiliated with them. Not all suspected "firearm offenders" are members of gangs, and not all gang members are suspected "firearm offenders."
- An investigative arm for law enforcement. AP cannot retain its credibility with the Fellows if AP relays incriminating information to police. However, if AP learns that violence may occur at any given time or place, it will alert law enforcement.
- Free money for violent individuals. As indicated above, Fellows who do not perform, do not earn.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS -----

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