



*STK is a fully-volunteer national grass-roots organization building a movement dedicated to alternatives to and the end of the incarceration of all youth and the school to prison pipeline.*

**HISTORY OF SAVE THE KIDS:** Save the Kids (STK) grounded in Hip Hop activism and transformative justice with over ten chapters across the U.S. is one of the leading national grass-roots organizations dedicated to alternatives to and the end of the incarceration of all youth and the school to prison pipeline. STK emerged in the summer of 2009 by four African-American youth (Jason, Ali, Jarir, and Amond) in Hillbrook Juvenile Detention Facility, Syracuse, NY who chose "Save the Kids" and its mission, while participating in a group discussion about the need for an organization to keep them from being trapped in the juvenile justice system. They needed, as one kid stated, "to be saved instead of thrown away as trash." That statement speaks volumes. STK does not claim to have all the answers, nor are we outsiders coming in to "save" anyone. We are individuals who have and had family members incarcerated in youth detention facilities and/or adult prisons and jails. We are made up of formerly incarcerated youth and adults, judges, lawyers, detention staff and administration, youth advocates, teachers, activists, friends, and community organizers.

**FOCUS:** Save the Kids focuses on supporting all oppressed youth, but specifically four groups that are the most targeted and stigmatized by the school and juvenile justice systems – (1) Youth of Color, (2) Youth with Disabilities, (3) LBGTQQIA Youth, and (4) Youth who are economically disadvantaged.

#### **COMMUNITY PROBLEMS IN THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON-PIPELINE**

1. Unhealthy Food and Environmental Pollution is the addiction of drugs and alcohol, lack of a balanced diet, healthy food, parks, nature, and clean air and water for those that are economically disadvantaged.
2. Economic Poverty, Lack of Social Resources, and Access to Politics is the socio-political and economic systematic marginalization and effort to oppress a group of people so they lack quality shelter, transportation, voting rights, policy-making, community centers, museums, theaters, libraries, hospitals, schools, technology, and trash and sewage disposal.
3. Repression of Culture and Identity of marginalized groups of people, which do not allow them to have the freedom to express or practice who they are.

#### **SCHOOL PROBLEMS IN THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON-PIPELINE**

1. Oppressive Monolithic Education is the curriculum, pedagogy, and practices that promote and are grounded in the dominant identity and culture.
2. Punitive Discipline of Youth is the punishment of youth which includes detention, sitting in the hall or corner, involuntary labor, and in and out of school suspension.
3. Non-Diverse, Under-educated or Non-Representative Personnel is the overwhelming number of employees in both the juvenile justice and school systems that do not relate, understand, or identify with marginalized identities.

#### **JUVENILE JUSTICE PROBLEMS IN THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON-PIPELINE**

1. Criminalization of Youth is the stigmatization of youth through laws and norms that are based on their behavior, dress, ability, socializing, identity, and community in which they live in.
2. Policing of Youth is the surveillance and social control of youth by law enforcement and those in disciplinary roles.
3. Incarceration of Youth is the punitive disciplinary act that is taken by the criminal justice system if a youth breaks the law and is found guilty.

#### **COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS IN THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON-PIPELINE**

1. Food and Environmental Justice to develop farmers markets, community cooking classes/workshops, urban gardens, development of parks and natural spaces, healthy food kitchens and food-banks, clean air and water, and environmentally sustainable and healthy buildings, factories, and businesses.
2. End of Oppression will systematically eliminate barriers, disadvantages, and unearned privileges, along with ending domination and supremacy through community organizing rallies, protests, teach-ins, lectures, workshops, conferences, lectures, boycotts etc.
3. Community Building is critical in creating an alternative and safe(r) place such as community centers, potlucks, picnics, socials, mutual aid economies, free spaces, and infoshops to foster a non-dominate narrative of collective memory and experience that is built by members of the effected community and not by nonprofits, government, or other outside entities. Community building is inclusive, self-determining, autonomous, and based on freedom to express one's identity and to practice one's culture without limitation or silencing.

#### **SCHOOL SOLUTIONS IN THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON-PIPELINE**

1. Social Justice Critical Pedagogical Inclusive Liberation Education challenges monolithic high-stakes, standardized, segregated, corporate education that uses social control by punitive discipline, and advocates for liberation emancipation, and empowerment, based on interdependence. This type of education is essential to be trained to staff and teachers and implemented in the curriculum for addressing the needs of diverse cultures and for emancipating internalized oppression.
2. Conflict Transformation is based on building people up in a voluntary transformative collaborative interpersonal communal process to address harms and conflicts through community circles, peer-mediation, peace circles, and having peace and conflict studies classes. Schools and education should not be a place or experience based on fear and punishment, but one that is based on transformation, learning, and liberation.

3. Equity is the required principle to ensure that all youth are given what they need from teachers, staff, administration, and resources within the school and juvenile justice systems; rather than being marginalized, stigmatized, and criminalized by outsiders who do not relate to the youth they serve because of socio-political factors, economics, or identity. Another important issue is addressing the barriers that limit this issue for being possible such as class size, funding, number of staff and teachers, number of students in a school, and adequate food and transportation.

#### **JUVENILE JUSTICE SOLUTIONS IN THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON-PIPELINE**

1. Hip Hop Activism privileges youth expression and culture rather than stigmatizing/criminalizing youth.
2. Support Groups will eliminate the external third party need to secure and surveil those in the communities that are needing guidance, accountability, mentoring, advising, counseling, and interventions.
3. Transformative Justice is a holistic, voluntary, liberatory, community-based justice system that wants to abolish prisons and punitive justice, while respecting individual's identity and experiences. This would include ending suspensions, detention, SROs/police in schools, involuntary labor, shaming, and stigmatizing and punitive rules and discipline.

#### **TEN POINT PRINCIPLES**

1. We believe that all youth need support, love, and skills in order to achieve their goals.
2. We believe that all youth are amazing and wonderful, no matter the actions they have committed.
3. We make a clear distinction between actions and youth; actions can be bad, but not youth.
4. We are committed to helping youth because they are our future and if we do not help them, we will not have one.
5. We believe in respecting all genders, disabilities, races, economic statuses, sexualities, religions, ethnicities, ages, or nationalities.
6. As a Hip Hop activist organization, we work towards both social justice and the end of all forms of oppression and domination, specifically the school-to-prison pipeline.
7. As an organization based on transformative justice principles, we strive to promote and analyze alternatives to incarceration, such as community-based programs, rather than institutionalization.
8. We believe in peace and nonviolence in resolving and transforming all conflicts.
9. We reject the stigma created by labeling and are inclusive in all of our activities.
10. We promote interdependence, that everyone in the community should work together in making a peaceful world and not to exclude anyone. STK will work with everyone and anyone in order to achieve that goal.

#### **WHAT SAVE THE KIDS IS NOT**

1. Many people ask if we are religious because of "Save" in our name. We are not religiously affiliated.
2. We are not a nonprofit or a 501 c 3 because we do not believe that it takes money to make change and we critique the nonprofit industrial complex that surrounds services for youth. This prevents us from accepting money from corporations, governments, or foundations. We can only accept money from individuals.
3. We do not provide mentoring to youth, we provide empowerment through friendships with youth. To do mentoring one should have insurance and be incorporated. There are many nonprofits providing this service, so we do not want to duplicate services within the community.
4. We do not work with all youth. We only work with youth that are targets of or currently in the juvenile justice system.
5. We are not a reformist organization in relation to schools and the juvenile justice system.
6. We do not work on "violence prevention," "anti-bullying," "cultural competence," or "closing the academic achievement gap." These are reformist initiatives that put blame on the youth and do not address larger systematic forms of socio-political and economic oppression rooted in sexism, ageism, racism, anti-LGBTQQIA, ableism, and classism.

#### **STK CHAPTER PROGRAMS**

1. Education Behind the Walls - Facilitate youth workshops in juvenile detention facilities that focus on group-building skills, expressive skills, and life skills.
2. Activism – Protest once a month at a courthouse for alternatives to the incarceration of all youth.
3. Administrative – Organize a chapter monthly meeting and attend monthly national meetings

#### **NATIONAL PROGRAMS**

1. Poetry Behind the Walls – The only ongoing book series dedicated to writing and art by incarcerated youth.
2. Annual National Week of Action Against Incarcerating Youth
3. Annual International Transformative Justice Conference
4. Annual International Hip Hop Activism Conference
5. Wisdom Behind the Walls – is a writing program by adult prisoners giving advice to youth that are caught in the juvenile justice system.

#### **BECOME A PARTNER, VOLUNTEER, OR START A STK CHAPTER**

1. Are you a community-based grass-roots organization (501c3 or otherwise) that wants to build their network with fellow social and youth justice organizations dedicated to ending the incarceration of youth and the school to prison pipeline? If so, become a partner.
2. Do you agree with STK's principles, mission, programs, and engage in activism and education? If so, become a volunteer.
3. Do you know a few people in your community that want to dismantle the school to prison pipeline and end the incarceration of all youth? If so, start a STK chapter.