



SAVE THE KIDS OFFICIAL STATEMENT ON JUSTICE TO POLICE MISCONDUCT

AUGUST 5, 2015

The international movement to demand an end to police brutality against People of Color in the U.S. is not slowing down; rather, it is increasing in scope and volume. Save the Kids (STK), a fully-volunteer national U.S. based grass-roots organization with over ten chapters throughout the U.S., has been a strong voice in this movement for the past several years against police brutality and misconduct in the criminal justice system. The call for justice against this misconduct and brutality has been raised in a way not seen for many years, and there are signs of change in the current U.S. criminal justice system. For example, South Carolina cop Michael Slager, who shot and killed a fleeing Walter Scott, has been charged with murder, as were the two officers in Albuquerque caught on video gunning down James Boyd, a homeless man. In another case, Virginia officer Shaun Jergens brutally tased and pepper sprayed a man in obvious medical distress, David Washington. Jergens has since resigned because of that incident. President Obama is calling for body cams, special prosecutors, resignations, criminal charges, and police training and activities to “improve community relations.” An example of striving to improve community relations is National Night Out on August 4, 2015 organized by a network of “law enforcement agencies, neighborhood watch groups, civic groups, state and regional crime prevention associations and concerned citizens.” This event, while it has a great amount of time and resources dedicated to it, is not developed or led by the community and will not address the fundamental problems with the criminal justice system. The question remains: What do we (STK and the community) mean by justice? Can any of these reforms bring about justice? None of these measures can bring wholeness to the families and communities whose lives have been shattered by harassment, brutality, and murder. None of these measures can address the classism, heterosexism, sexism, ableism, ageism, and racism that lay the foundation of the current U.S. criminal justice system. While these police officers might in a punitive society deserve to be imprisoned or face the death penalty, these punishments do not address the fundamental issue of justice in our society. What these measures do have is mass public and many activists supporting the current punitive justice system in the U.S. and even chanting in the streets: “No Justice, No Peace, Prosecute the Police.” Rather, the community and activists need to be chanting “No Justice, No Peace, No More Police” and demanding that control of alternative justice methods are put into the hands of communities, where it belongs. There can only be real justice when communities themselves have complete control over all the resources that impact their lives, from safety to jobs to education. No body cameras can replace a community that is empowered to watch out for each other and intervene with transformative justice to restore and improve relations between families and neighbors. No police training can replace using those funds for job skill programs, and sports, art and music programs in schools. STK believes that no child should be behind bars, that the addicted and mentally ill should receive appropriate community based treatment, and transformative justice should be used whenever possible. This movement has proven that our motto is truer now than ever – Education Not Incarceration!

This statement is endorsed by Save the Kids, Poetry Behind the Walls, Wisdom Behind the Walls, Education Behind the Walls, Save the Kids Radio, Institute for Hip Hop Activism, The Journal of Hip Hop Studies, and Transformative Justice Journal.