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Giving
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Back to the Community

The One Percent Club News
Edition #73 September 2005

11%

The mission of the One Percent Club is to increase charitable contributions in our community by engaging people to commit to a minimum standard of giving: the greater of 1% of net worth or 5% of income annually.

The One Percent Club

Annual Dinner Event
Wednesday, September 28, 2005
5:30 – 8:30 P.M.
Minneapolis Club

Richard D. McFarland
Keynote Speaker on

“Will We Pass the Torch
of Drop the Torch?”

5:30	Social Hour
6:30	Dinner
7:30	Talk
8:00	Q & A
8:30	Adjourn

Please RSVP by September 15.
612-455-5198



Commentary

A forum for opinions, reactions, dialogue and disagreement

Toward 'the perfect peace' with gangs

By Joe Selvaggio

Funders and nonprofits can help to solve gang problem

More than 4,000 African-Americans kill each other each year because of gun-gang violence. I was shocked to hear (from Hakim Hasan, a longtime inner-city activist from the Urban Institute at Metropolitan College of New York) that it took the KKK 80 years to kill that many blacks.

No wonder Tyrone Terrill, director of the Human Rights Department in St. Paul, in a letter to the black community published in May this year, called on his fellow African-Americans to take responsibility for the problem — not to wait for the police, the media and mainstream society to try to solve it.

Even though Terrill has taken heat from some in his community for his strong call to get control, a clear majority has rallied

behind him. Now it's time for the members of the broader community to get off our duffs and support anyone willing to take on this gun-gang violence.

Too many innocent victims (even preteens) have died. Too many neighborhoods have been destroyed for us to be complacent. We have an excellent opportunity today for success with African-Americans leading the charge.

The problem is of a manageable size, and grass-roots groups such as the Urban Youth Conservation (in Partnership with the Peace Foundation) have contacts with some 300 gang members in Minneapolis — a number of whom say they'd get out if they had the opportunity for work or education. An agreement exists

with the gangs that members may leave the gangs without recrimination if the proper procedure is executed — a saner policy than the "leave and get whacked" policy of the Mafia.

For those members who choose to remain, Minneapolis and St. Paul have chosen to strengthen their police forces.

Gang members should be forewarned: They will face no mercy and long prison terms should they decide to continue their violent behavior.

There are three basic forces for a solution:

► People on the "front lines" negotiating with the gang members must be of the ethnicity of the particular gang: blacks with blacks, Latinos with Latinos, Asians with Asians. They should

be paid well for their dangerous work.

► There must be a seamless web of capable agencies or schools ready to take on gang members willing to leave the gang. An immediate job site must be available (like PPL Industries). In addition, a medium-term school or work site (like Summit Academy OIC) must be the next rung of the ladder.

► A long-term educational or job-training site (like Twin Cities RISE! or our community colleges) must be part of the working plan. Supportive housing and counseling would be necessary in many cases.

The three-pronged plan needs to be funded with \$1 million or more of new money each year for at least five years.

Already eight funders who attended presentations by 10 community nonprofits dealing with the gang problem have expressed a strong interest in funding this effort.

More funders, large, medium and small, are needed. Many more nonprofits (with capacity) and churches should be enlisted to take a portion of the master plan.

We hear of the "perfect storm" that creates enormous problems in our world. I see the situation here as the opposite.

The time is ripe for the "perfect peace" if we take the proper steps to deal with our gang problem.

The ethnic minorities are angry at the violence in their own communities, the non-

profits and government forces are ready to engage, and the funders — if they see the right plan — are ready to stand with them by putting some real cash out there for measurable results. And what could be more measurable than a reduced death rate, flourishing inner-city neighborhoods, and productive tax-paying citizens with good careers?

Minnesota has always been known as a "can-do" state, meeting its creative challenges with energy, plans and actions. Can we make this our next big success story?

Joe Selvaggio, Minneapolis, is executive director of the One Percent Club and found of the Project for Pride in Living. Last month he helped convene a forum to connect philanthropists with nonprofits that are combatting gang violence.