

BOOC, Inc. (Building Our Own Community)
Project: RESTORATION 3-7-8

Reclaiming the Human Spirit by Acknowledging and Redressing the Human Suffering Among
African American Youth and Young Adults in COOK COUNTY - ILLINOIS

"To be born in a free land and not be born free, is to be born into a lie." James Baldwin

The BOOC organization has been providing social and support services in the south suburbs of Chicago since 1999. BOOC initially started out as an organization that offered a variety of programs and activities for adolescents and youth. Eventually, BOOC began serving families and adults by opening one of Cook Counties largest food pantries.

Today, BOOC provides general counseling, anger management courses and grief counseling to children and adults who have been or are currently under DCFS care. Additionally, BOOC has partnered with the Law and Civic Reading and Writing Institute (LCRWI) to research the social and psychological impact that the role of longterm and sustained AntiBlack Male and Female sentiments has had on the development, growth and safety of young African American youth and young adults in America: specifically, the State of Illinois. BOOC further endeavors to develop and execute key strategies for improving the lives of African American Youth and Young Adults and thereby:

- Reduce incidents of truancy
- Reduce illicit drug use
- Increase academic preparedness/readiness
- Decrease the negative impact of "trap" and "gangster" music
- Reduce the number of Black Boys and Girls entering the world of America's prison industrial complex
- Increase the number of Black youth who graduate high school and successfully earn trade certification or degrees through higher education

THE PROPOSAL:

The Organizationl seeks \$1,780,000 over a three year period to develop a soul and heart restoration program for African American Youth in the State of Illinois entitled "Project Restoration 3-7-8". BOOC, through its Family Advocacy Program and under the auspices of its Youth Leadership Development arm, would produce P.O.D.S. in eight targeted communities throughout Illinois with high concentrations of under-served and under-privileged African American youth. (The Austin, North Lawndale, Englewood, Roseland, Dolton, Calumet City, Chatham, and Harvey communities)

The BOOC P.O.D.S would develop peace and processing circles, after school activities that utilize S.T.E.A.A.M.M. -based curricula (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Agriculture, Music and Mathematics), implement Life Skills Training models, host Tolerance and Equality forums, and facilitate hearing-centered and trauma informed listening/healing sessions for its participants. BOOC would use its Three Functional Goals of *Bring, Study, Develop* to identify and develop those who would participate in the P.O.D.S. learning circles. BOOC would further utilize the Seven Principles of Nguzo Saba Principles of Kwanzaa (Umoja, Kujichagulia, Ujima, Ujamaa, Nia, Kuumba and Imani) to provide a cultural context for personal growth and development. BOOC will initially operate in Eight community-based P.O.D.S. as guiding

instruments for the PODS's operations and sustainability. The 3-7-8 Initiative of Project Restoration.

BOOC maintains that the well-being of African American youth is at odds with the status quo of much of Western society. Through its research efforts, BOOC has concluded what most organizations that claim advocacy for Black youth have; "Due to the high rate of fatherlessness, hyper-penalization in schools, negative inherent biases, and a well organized and well funded "trap" and "drill" music culture that rewards and glamorizes criminal behavior have all left African American young men with uncontrollable rage and African American young ladies with a misguided sense of beauty and self-worth.

BOOC seeks to redress the ills befallen African American youth by producing P.O.D.S. (wherein the social and communal safety created by the learning communities of the P.O.D.S. -*not the cells* - present the Problem, propose positive life Options, Develop learning, leadership and leaving skills and Shape character) in eight key communities within Cook County and serving 18 to 38 participants per pod. After three years, BOOC will evidence improved academic performance, personal drive and social behavior among nearly 85% of its participants. Additionally, the transformed participants will foster safer communities and homes. Notwithstanding, BOOC will have concurrently achieved its missional goal of improving the quality of life for African American youth in the State of Illinois.

A healthier, wiser and balanced youth today ensures a safer and more productive community tomorrow. Therefore, the lie into which they were born is named, destroyed and replaced with the truth of the power of the Human Spirit and the joy of human connectedness.

Each POD will vicariously have strategic partnerships with:

- GOOM Productions for drone pilot training and certification
- Local Area Networks of the Department of Children and Family Services
- Sankofa US - for Rites of Passage travel, training and facilitation
- The Divine Nine of West Africa- all nine Black Fraternities and Sororities for mentoring and support
- The local school districts of South Chicago
- Ghana Central Development Corporation- exchange learning and Rites of Passage support
- WIN Recovery and Supportive Services - substance abuse and use counseling and intervention.
- The Illinois Black Legislative Caucus - Statewide knowledge and support of the initiative
- The African Global Chamber of Commerce - global exposure to the initiative
- Local Churches and the Evangelical Covenant Church denomination- providing volunteers for implementing the Elements of the P-Principle (police, press, pastors, parents, principals, philanthropists, etc.)
- Local village/town councils and boards
- Black Oaks Farms - Agricultural exchange program instructors/facilitators

At the conclusion of the program, the participants will be incentivized to complete the learning/training program by traveling to Ghana West Africa to commemorate and celebrate their accomplishment of completing the program.

Financial Supporters: Cook County Department of Health, philanthropist, the Wayfarer organization, the Rockefeller Foundation, etc.

