

Presentation: END DISCRIMINATION AND REDUCE PREJUDICE; Successful Practices in Co-curricular Education by:-Mrs Jessica Estévez, Director of Programme, Community Tampa Bay, 2011

The most meaningful vehicle to end discrimination is relevant, consistent and sustainable cultivation of inclusive leaders in each community we serve. These are leaders with varying degrees of strengths and talents whom are required to effectively reduce prejudice and minimize discriminatory practices. Inclusive leaders are committed to a lifelong focus to reduce prejudice and stereotype and end discrimination. Furthermore, inclusive leadership is a personal commitment to the implementation of systemic techniques which end these practices and behaviors. Therefore, how can our nations accomplish the development and integration of inclusive leadership in co-curricular education? Humbly, I submit to you a model of a successful practice in the United States where the focus is the development of inclusive leadership that ends discrimination in our communities.

Throughout history, individuals, institutions, and nations have made major strides to combat the social ills previously mentioned. The alleviation of these social toxics has been addressed through the creation of policies, organized community-based activities, and grass-root public awareness campaigns. All these efforts, in design and intent, are birthed with the goal of creating a more inclusive and just society. In the United States, we can draw from examples such as the Civil Rights Movements, inclusive of policies such as Affirmative Action, The Americans with Disability Act and the recent repeal of Don't Ask Don't Tell. Yet, much like the rest of the globe, examples of intolerance, discrimination and hatred continue to widen the gap and fracture our communities. Individuals who report experiences with discrimination report negative emotions which ultimately lead to disastrous circumstances. Unchecked bias, prejudice and uniformed stereotypes have impacted our communities in ways we have been unable to quantify in its totality. This is particularly true, for example, with Slavery and Apartheid.

As these social ills are addressed, it is vital to recognize that discrimination alienates, excludes and minimizes the opportunities and access for others to achieve, succeed and live productive and meaningful lives. The accumulation and perpetuation of these social toxics have a collective negative impact on all individuals in our communities, as it is not simply reduced to only those impacted by the negative experiences. Research shows that the primary causes of prejudice are cultural differences and lack of education. The rejection of others based on these differences leads to prejudice and negative interaction between groups.

Therefore, prejudice reduction programs that focus on intergroup contact, transformative dialogue, cooperative learning and increased self-identity cultivate inclusive leaders who will recognize prejudice and how to reduce it. Inclusive leaders actively implement personal techniques which minimize discriminatory practices and develop sustainable systems. These interactions require safe and genuine opportunities to create friendship and meaningful relationships. Superficial interactions and exchanges can have an adverse effect on reducing prejudice and discriminatory behaviors. The presentation will outline successful leadership education models such as Anytown, Be Intentional Institute, Hillsborough Youth Collaborative, Facilitating the Leadership of Youth and Community-Wide Dialogues taking place in the southern state of Florida in the United States. Through these examples of co-curricular educational programs which cultivate lifelong inclusive leaders who live with conviction and cooperatively work to develop tools to achieve a community free from all forms of discrimination, inclusive leadership is demonstrated.