



MY BROTHER'S KEEPER (MBK) ORANGE COUNTY

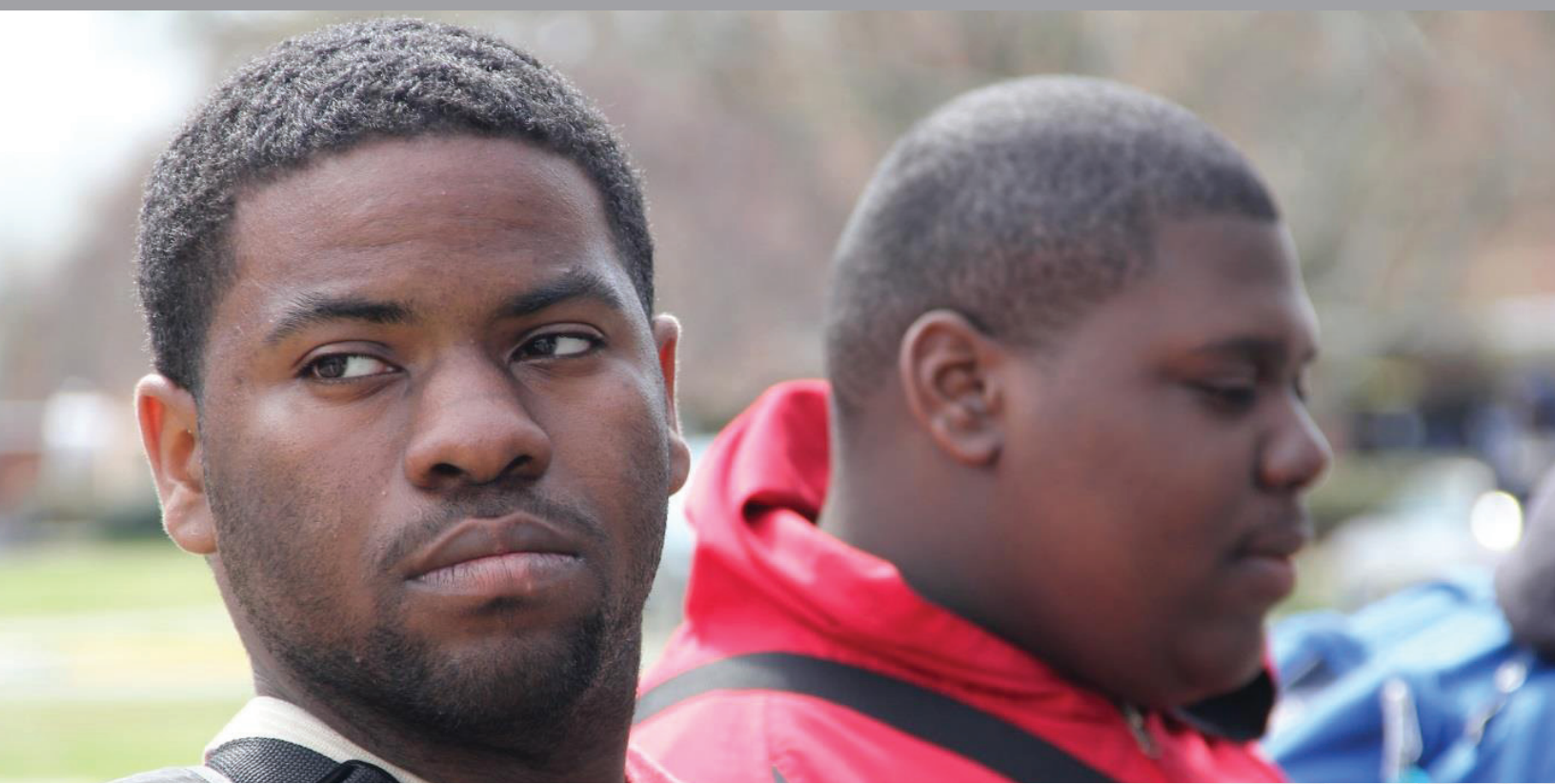
PHASE II ACTION PLAN JANUARY 2017

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THE CHALLENGE



The experiences and decisions that young men of color deal with on a daily basis have a profound impact on their ability to access the knowledge, skills, and resources needed to be engaged, productive 21st century citizens. Consider these facts about the barriers that young men of color face in comparison to their white counterparts:

- Many young men of color struggle because they don't have fathers or other positive male role models in their lives.
- Young men of color are more likely to drop out of school than any other group of Americans and end up underemployed, reliant on government assistance, and facing a lifetime of health problems as a result.
- Many young men of color witnessed violence or experienced abuse when they were young children. The long-term impact of childhood trauma has the potential to create social, emotional and cognitive impairment.
- Young men of color are five times more likely than average Americans to have a parent in prison.

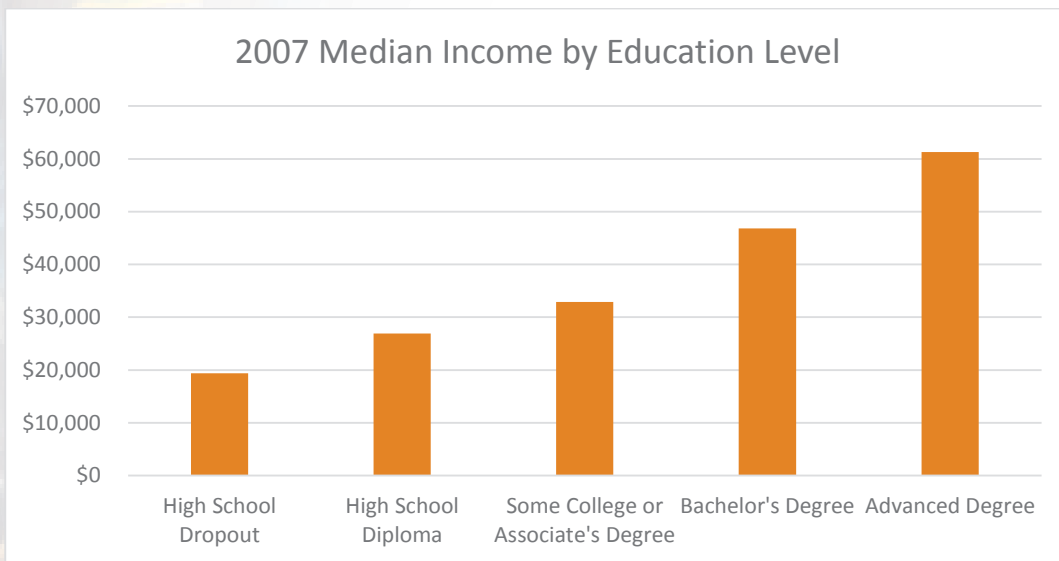
In addition, actions that would be treated as youthful mistakes for young white men are often judged and punished more severely for young men of color. For example, according to Human Rights Watch, although whites are more likely to violate drug laws than people of color, in some states black men have been sent to prison on drug charges at rates 20-50 times greater than white men.

While these challenges are by no means new, as we have seen through recent events, they are just as relevant and pressing to address as they have ever been.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Poor outcomes for young men of color has severe economic consequences for the state and the nation. A large percentage of black males are essentially unprepared for today's rapidly changing market place, especially as America faces stiff competition from abroad. In 2010 the unemployment rate among black males ages 20 and over (17.3%) was twice as high as the unemployment rate among white males of the same age (8.6%).

Dropouts represent lost tax revenue because of their reduced earnings potential. Individuals who lack a high school education will have lifetime earnings that are only about 60% of those with that education, a difference in lifetime salary of approximately \$300,000. *The Alliance for Excellent Education*¹ reported that "if the students who dropped out of the Class of 2009 had graduated, the nation's economy would have benefited from nearly **\$335 billion** in additional income over the course of their lifetimes."



The economic benefit to North Carolina would have been more than **\$12 billion** over the course of their lifetimes. If half of the individuals who dropped out of the Class of 2010 had earned their high school diploma, North Carolina would likely have seen a \$28 million annual increase in tax revenue because of increased wages and higher levels of spending by these individuals, a \$655 million increase in home sales, a \$30 million increase in auto sales, 2,600 new jobs, and an increase of \$376 million in the gross state product by the time the students reached the midpoints of their careers.²

Dropouts also mean rising costs for social programs and prisons. The Alliance for Excellent Education³ estimated that the nation would see an annual savings of \$4.9 billion in crime-related costs if the male graduation rate were increased by only five percent. As reflected in the following table, North Carolina

¹ The Alliance for Excellent Education, Issue Brief, August 2009

² The Alliance for Excellent Education, Education and the Economy (North Carolina Report), March 2011

³ The Alliance for Excellent Education, Issue Brief, August 2009

THE CALL TO ACTION

spends 150%-260% per year more incarcerating an individual than it spends educating a student in the public schools.

Expenditures	2000	2009
Public School Per Pupil ¹	\$6,280	\$8,663
Prison Incarceration: Minimum Custody ²	\$19,170	\$21,597
Prison Incarceration: Medium Custody ²	\$24,867	\$27,992
Prison Incarceration: Close Custody ²	\$27,492	\$31,273

¹ NC Department of Public Instruction website
² NC Department of Correction website

The Call to Action

With the implementation of My Brother's Keeper (MBK) Orange County, the organization would scan current programs in Orange County and provide recommendations with the goal to *ensure career readiness, successful entry into the workforce, and job stability for all youth, particularly boys and young men of color.*



THE CALL TO ACTION

The My Brother's Keeper Task Force Report presented to the President identified six (6) milestones for local responses to consider in designing and developing their individual action plans so that all young Americans have the tools and opportunities to reach their full potential. Recognizing that youth programs and mentoring resources are in progress and available in Orange County, the Orange MBK Community Challenge team narrowed the focus and adopted the following 3 priority areas:

1. **Ensuring all youth graduate from high school**
2. **Ensuring all youth complete post-secondary education or training**
3. **Ensuring all youth out of school are employed**

In addition, the guiding framework of MBK Orange County will be one that promotes **Racial and Ethnic Equity + Social Inclusion**. *MBK Orange County will work to ensure that distinct groups of people are not excluded from access to programs and initiatives, basic security and human rights.* This includes indigenous peoples; people of African descent; women; lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) persons; youth; and people with disabilities.

If we are to break the pattern of declining social, economic, and educational status of males of color in our society, it is imperative that a focused, coordinated initiative be organized to identify and support those boys who can be successful when given the opportunity to pursue the best lives possible. The intent of MBK Orange is to augment or intensify the work in progress, as opposed to starting a new program, based on data and findings. A backbone organization will leverage stakeholders, manage workflow, and capture outcomes to ensure progress towards goals (illustrated below).



Backbone Organization

Movement of Youth (MOY) is a youth-centered mentoring organization that empowers diverse students that want to achieve and advance towards a successful life. Targeting only 11 students in 2006, MOY has grown to impact hundreds of middle and high school students annually and is in the process of scaling nationally.

MOY encourages diverse students in grades 5 through 12, who have demonstrated academic promise, to pursue higher education. The program is designed to enhance academic performance, develop strong interpersonal skills, build leadership skills, and establish a positive support network — all to assist students in their desire for higher education.

MOY exposes students to a number of opportunities, including Leadership Academy, Team Mentoring, College Tours, Summer Enrichment Academy, international travel via the J.U.S.T Global Fellowship, and scholarships through the Tyreic E. Hemphill Memorial Scholarship Fund. Through this dynamic design, participants receive intellectually challenging programming, positive role models to help set long-term aspirations as well as the support required to nurture and fulfill those aspirations.

MOY also provides professional development opportunities to college students by empowering them to make a tangible impact on their campuses and in the lives of others by operating local MOY sites. A MOY Site is comprised of a group of highly influential college students (undergraduate) that work together in partnership with teachers, counselors, administrators, and families to ensure all students are college and career ready.

An effective Backbone Organization for MBK Orange County would do the following (see Backbone Effectiveness handout):

1. Guide Vision and Strategy
2. Support Aligned Activities
3. Establish Shared Measurement Practices
4. Build Public Will
5. Advance Policy
6. Mobilize Funding

As a neutral third party convener, MOY could be leveraged to bring diverse stakeholders together in a positive and productive frame of mind to engage in addressing systemic change and the methods to achieve it.

Priority Areas and Strategies for Achievement

To ensure career readiness, successful entry into the workforce, and job stability for boys and young men of color, My Brother's Keeper (MBK) Orange County will have the following priority areas:

Priority A – All Youth Graduate from High School

Ensure that all youth meet the requirements to graduate from high school in order to enter into careers or to pursue higher education.

PRIORITY AREAS AND STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVEMENT

Strategy 1. Identify career clusters and specific job pathways to identify key knowledge and skills that students need to perform in defined career areas.

In the National Association of Manufacturers 2005 Skills Gap Report, “technical skills” was the top response to the question, “What types of skills will employees need more of over the next three years?”⁴ While many career opportunities include a strong element of on-the-job training, some of these technical or industry-based skills must be acquired in advance. For example, technical skills are required for licensure in many professions, such as in most health care fields, or for broader industry certifications, such as the American Welding Society’s Certified Welder credential.

Through the States Career Clusters Initiative⁵, business and industry leaders have identified key knowledge and skill statements across 16 career clusters and 79 more-specific pathways. These statements represent what students need to know and be able to do to be successful in the specified career area. Locally in Orange County, action steps could include

1. Working closely with employers to assess labor market needs of employers, including the development of an Orange County Career Clusters Initiative
2. Developing a broadly focused career and technical education program to support foundational knowledge and skill building; and
3. Connecting youth to existing organizations and programs that support the development of specific pathway-level skills to hone students’ abilities in more defined career areas

Strategy 2. Expand the capacity of organizations and programs that support the development of 21st Century Skills (also referred to as the New Basic Skills).

In Teaching the New Basic Skills, authors Richard Murnane (Harvard University) and Frank Levy (MIT) researched the skills required for entry-level jobs at most American companies, and found that they go beyond what the SAT tests for. These skills include:

- Oral Presentation: The ability to speak to an audience with confidence using eye contact and body language, developing coherent and well-organized content.
- Teamwork: The ability to work effectively and solve problems in a diverse team by working in groups, encouraging others, and giving and receiving feedback.
- Leadership: The ability to make decisions, establish goals, volunteer to help others, and be a role model.
- Data Analysis: The ability to solve problems using data (qualitative and quantitative), test hypotheses, draw conclusions, and interpret and communicate data.
- Advanced Literacy: The ability to use new vocabulary, communicate effectively in writing, use critical reading skills, and make inferences from what is read.
- Technology: The ability to identify and use technology as a tool.

In addition to foundational academic knowledge, students will need 21st Century Skills to foster the ability to apply academic knowledge to authentic situations they may face in their careers. We recommend

⁴ National Association of Manufacturers, “2005 Skills Gap Report – A Survey of the American Manufacturing Workforce”

⁵ States Career Clusters Initiative, www.careerclusters.org.

PRIORITY AREAS AND STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVEMENT

connecting students to existing Orange County organizations and programs that provide these types of services and providing selected organizations with resources that support capacity building.

Strategy 3. Develop a youth one-stop-shop to provide young people with information about how to access relevant services.

Orange County has a number of youth service providers. The development of a youth one-stop-shop (in way of a website or convening organization) could ensure that youth can find most of what they need, including information, in one place.

Priority B – All Youth Complete Post-Secondary Education or Training

Ensure that youth have access to post-secondary educational options or work-based learning options that lead towards job placement.

Strategy 1. Increase local business and nonprofit participation to expand work-based learning programs (e.g. Institute of Civic Engagement for Emerging Leaders, Public Allies) to serve greater numbers of Orange County Youth.

Work-based learning options for workers and employees will be an important activity that can be a win/win situation and get youth engaged and exposed to work. Orange County could leverage a few offerings to support additional youth, including but not limited to the following:

The Institute of Civic Engagement for Emerging Leaders is an intensive two-week summer enrichment academy designed to empower diverse high school students to impact communities in the Triangle through socially conscious thought and action. By exploring the root causes of social issues, working with nonprofit agencies, and formulating service projects, students will develop a combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to help shape the future of the Triangle and beyond.

The **Public Allies** signature AmeriCorps Ally Program identifies diverse young adults and prepares them for leadership through full-time, paid apprenticeships for 10 months (in some cases participants can apply for a second consecutive year with the program). Allies attend regular skill-building and leadership development sessions with their cohort and receive life and professional development coaching along the way. Public Allies North Carolina is operated by the NC Institute of Minority Economic Development.

Strategy 2. Expand the capacity of organizations and programs that support college access and readiness.

According to the National College Access Network, the faster that schools and communities can grow effective college access and success supports, the faster college enrollment and completion rates will rise. To that end, MBK Orange County advocates for the growth and development of Orange County college access and readiness organizations so they can serve more students more effectively and efficiently.

Beyond Expectations is a nonprofit organization founded in 2009, by parents yearning to fill the void of advocacy and mentorship for adolescents in the triangle and surrounding areas. Beyond Expectations strengthens family relationships through activities, speakers and social outings. They work closely with administrators, teachers, parents and community organizations promoting healthy relationships for youth in grades 6 through 12.

PRIORITY AREAS AND STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVEMENT

Based at UNC, the **NC Scholars Latino Initiative** is a comprehensive leadership development and college preparatory program for first- and second-generation immigrant students in North Carolina's public education system.

Rising sophomores from participating high schools apply to become Sli Scholars. Beginning their sophomore year, Scholars participate in a 3-year program that helps explore and grow their cultural, college-going, and leadership identity. Throughout the program, they engage with their own personal development as well learn the "nuts and bolts" about the college admissions process. Ultimately, Sli Scholars engage in a transformative experience that reframes how they think about themselves and the world.

Priority C – All Youth Out Of School Are Employed

Ensure that youth out of school have access to jobs that provide a livable wage.

Strategy 1. Refine NCWorks Online job matching system and ensure its usability and access to employers and job-seeking youth.

NCWorks Online is a one-stop online resource for job seekers and employers in North Carolina. Job seekers can search for jobs, create resumes, and find education and training. Employers can find candidates, post jobs, and search labor market information.

Strategy 2. Increase annually the number of employers who adopt 'ban the box' practices.

There are over 1.6 million people in N.C. with a criminal record. The prison population has risen to about 40,000. 98% will eventually be released. 50% of ex-offenders are sent back to prison for new crimes.

Nearly 45% of those under Department of Correction supervision are African American; this disparity is a significant challenge to communities of color. As of September, 2010 there were nearly 4,000 people in Orange County County on probation or parole; add to this the thousands who have criminal records but are not under the supervision of the Department of Correction.

These statistics demonstrate the tremendous number of people who face employment barriers as they seek honest, legal employment.

"Ban the Box" practices would remove questions from the application inquiring about criminal history at the initial stage of the employment process so that those who are responsible for making hiring decisions first get an opportunity to learn about the candidate's experience, skills and personality as they relate to the position to be filled.

Guiding Framework – Racial and Ethnic Equity + Social Inclusion

Ensure that Orange County employers work toward creating racially and ethnically equitable organizations to decrease disparities and disproportionality over time.

Strategy 1. Provide ongoing Racial Equity Training to Orange County employers and youth.

Even 50 years after significant civil rights' gains, the impact of race continues to shape the outcomes of all institutions. Helping individuals and organizations develop tools and processes to challenge patters of institutional power and grow institutional equity will provide the scaffolding for long-term, sustainable improved outcomes for all populations in Orange County.

According to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, there is a well-documented empathy gap in how Americans commonly perceive young men of color and the barriers they face. Through their research, they found that Americans generally see young men of color as “others” or a “them,” rather than as part of a greater “we.” This attitude suggests that overall our society lacks empathy for young men of color. Shared identity helps to facilitate empathy, and race or ethnicity is one important shared identity. When that shared identity is absent, though, people make decisions with more judgment than empathy.

Because biased messages about people of color permeate our media, culture, schools, and courts, we are all susceptible to implicit bias, and research has demonstrated this includes people of color themselves⁶.

Systems contribute significantly to disparities, and Racial Equity Training for Orange County employers could:

1. Help prepare organizations to receive young men of color as viable contributors to the workforce and;
2. Help organizations examine institutional policies and procedures that could be contributing to poor outcomes for young men of color and develop a plan for change

Racial Equity Training for young men of color could help them:

1. Understand how structural and institutionalized racism creates inequalities across all systems
2. Understand how internalized racial inferiority creates feelings of lowered self-esteem, lowered expectations, and limited potential for self
3. Develop strategies for healing and self-empowerment

Strategy 2. Assist organizations in creating structures that will guide and sustain institutional efforts toward racial equity, including specific goals and an action plan.

A comprehensive institutional analysis that includes periodic reflection and evaluation could help Orange County institutions change thinking, reduce disparities, and improve outcomes for all populations.

Conclusion

Over the past decade there have been numerous reports sounding the alarm about the plight of boys and men of color. These reports have projected a clear message that greater efforts are needed to develop policies, programming, and community-based strategies to address the ever growing and alarming circumstance surrounding and impacting the lives of this community. It is our hope that the strategies presented in this report will help remove barriers and create the opportunities these vulnerable boys and men need to succeed.

⁶ Nosek, B.A., Mahzarin B., & Greenwald, A.G. 2002. Harvesting implicit group attitudes and beliefs from a demonstration website. *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice*. 6:101-115.

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