

GOOD
Doing ~~Time~~:

*A Working Paper on Service Learning and the Transformation of
Juvenile Justice Intervention*

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The United States does not have a clear and enduring public policy for dealing with criminal or juvenile wrongdoing. In the past century, we have responded to wrongdoing with a variety of measures, none of which have gained long-term public understanding and support. We have shifted from a belief that offenders should undergo a secluded period of repentance, to a practice of imposing harsh physical conditions in prisons, to a period of practicing rehabilitative intervention, and then to a practice of imposing swift and certain forms of punishment!

As we made the transition from one era to the next, it would be inaccurate to conclude that we evolved previous practices; rather, we have maintained most of the trappings of prior eras, while often testing new ways of doing the same things differently. Thus our contemporary responses are often fraught with confusion and even internal contradiction. While there is little that is coherent about our current policy, one thing is certain: there is little to be satisfied about. Whether a crime victim, a community ravaged by crime, an offender, or an offender's family, no one reports that the criminal justice experience is productive and meaningful.

The purpose of this concept paper is to offer a strategy that may hold hope for developing a new consensus about what should be accomplished in the aftermath of an incident of criminal wrongdoing.

GOOD **A Rationale for Doing ~~Time~~**

When one member of the community intentionally harms another through theft, assault or other means, this incident is more than a simple act of lawbreaking; it is a breach of trust and community peace. Nothing *good* can be said of such acts of peace breaking and harm to individuals and communities. The question is, “can something *good emerge* from something bad? Or do we settle for responses that allow bad and harm to prevail, leaving the victim in a damaged state, allowing the community to become a more dangerous and less peaceful place? Do we settle for doing something bad and harmful to the offender in return for the bad and harm done to us? A higher plane of justice should lead to a more satisfying response: one which creates opportunities for good to occur in the aftermath of bad acts.

If breaking the peace is a primary outcome of a criminal incident, then restoring and advancing peace should be a core outcome of the criminal justice response. When a case is closed, we should be able to ask a new set of questions to determine if we met this primary obligation to do justice:

- Did the offender bring some sense of peace to the crime victim?
- Did the community become a more peaceful and harmonious place because of our interventions?
- Did the community play a role in facilitating repair of harm to victims and supporting the offender?
- Did the offender become more peaceful, active community member as evidenced by their responsible and productive community participation?

These questions are just as important to ask of offenders placed on probation as they are of those serving long sentences in correctional facilities. If the answer to each is yes, we have achieved a very noble goal. Today, unfortunately, at the end of the correctional experience the answer given by most victims, offenders and communities is no.

GOOD **Principles for Doing ~~Time~~**

If we are to pursue justice on this higher plane, our response to wrongdoing must be guided by a set of principles, principles that shape practice.

Principle I-REPARATION: Crime harms and breaks the peace of the victim and the community. The corrective response should focus on the obligation to repair this harm. The offender, with support from the community, carries the primary burden for repairing the harm.

Principle II- EARNED REDEMPTION: Fulfilling reparative responsibilities can be an honorable process. Offenders who have worked to repair harm to both victim(s) and the community and who have curtailed their offensive behavior, should be afforded the opportunity to participate as members in good standing in the community.

Principle III- PARTICIPATION: Participation builds investment. Investment builds a sense of personal responsibility. Citizens, crime victims and offenders who participate in decisionmaking about repairing harm, restoring and furthering community peace will increase their sense of responsibility and in turn, their strong commitment to ensuring that their efforts succeed.

Principle IV- BUILDING A SENSE OF COMMUNITY: People who share a strong sense of community are far less likely to violate the trust of others. Strong relationships, both formal and informal, are the basis of community and the foundation of peaceful living. Therefore preventive and corrective measures should result in building a stronger sense of community. It is in the best interest of the community to participate with those who have violated trust in ways that develop that person's sense of connection to the community and develop a set of significant sustainable relationships for the offender.

Principle V- BUILDING CAPACITY: As offenders participate in a process of repairing harm to victims and communities they should gain skills and build assets that contribute to their responsible and productive participation in the community. Furthermore, as citizens and communities resolve conflict and address harm, they should be able to apply these skills to a broader range of community issues.

If a systemic transformation towards an approach to crime based on doing good were to occur, these principles would be self-evident in the work of criminal justice and would be transparent to the public that justice professionals serve. Moreover, the set of principles would be viewed as interdependent, resonating with each other in a seamless response to crime. In moving toward the new approach, a general overarching question can be asked in order to ensure that the criminal justice system is living the principles:

When wrongdoing occurs, how can we engage the victim, the community, and the offender in a process that allows the offender to repair harm and restore peace in a way that meets the victim needs, develops the offender's sense of connection to the community, and builds community capacity in a way that reduces the likelihood of further victimization?

Asking this general question challenges contemporary practice because much of what we do today fails to engage the key stakeholders in repairing harm, does not meet victim's

needs, weakens the offender's already vulnerable sense of community connection and may even diminish community capacity to control and prevent crime. Indeed, we have built an entire matrix of sentencing practices that banish people from the community, ignore victims and disempower citizens and communities as potential resources. We need nothing less than an entirely different set of strategies for shaping criminal justice policy.

GOOD **Programmatic Strategies for Doing Time**

"It is easier to act one's way into better thinking than think one's way into better acting." Reverend Charles See

The challenge is to discover ways to ensure that the juvenile offender becomes accountable for wrongdoing and to do so in a way that builds, not diminishes their sense of connection to the larger community. Given the set of principles offered here, and given the policy implications discussed, we then search for a programmatic theme to realize the benefits of Doing Good.

Fortunately, the title of this paper reveals the single most powerful strategic framework we could hope to find: when a member of the community commits a crime -- does something *bad*-- we are going to arrange for that person to do something *good* as his or her primary obligation. The goals for offender intervention can be stated as follows:

- To learn about the effect of their behavior on the person they harmed, to determine a way to quantify that harm, and to earn money to pay the person back for disturbing their sense of peace and loss of property. That is good.
- To learn about the effect of their behavior on the community and to work to bring some form of reparation back to the community for their part in eroding the community's sense of peace. That is good.
- To become involved in meaningful community building activities and to become a productive, responsible member of the community. The community is expected to create the context for this participation, and with support and guidance from the justice system, to create new opportunities for the offender to become an integral member of the community. That is good.

When considering the group of intervention approaches we have come to know in our journey to find out "what works" in this business, one stands out as the

best hope for a systemic transformation toward Doing Good. In essence, doing good can be boiled down to *accountability based service learning or Service in the Interest of Others*.

Through developing a national/international strategy to utilize *Service in the Interest of Others* as a primary context for working with those who have harmed individuals and community, we can repair harm, reduce risk and build community on a scale not previously known in our work.

Service in the Interest of Others then becomes the primary focus of the justice response. Other forms of intervention or treatment would be viewed as processes that may be necessary to bring offenders to a place where they can indeed make effective and sustained contributions to community. Service is first and foremost voluntary work which the juvenile offender willingly provides which meets the needs of victims, other individuals and the community as a whole. Compensation for service can also be obtained through contracts with public and private recipients of the service, and such compensation can provide funds for restitution or other forms of reparation.

Service in the Interest of Others becomes what justice professionals profess, what we plan for, what we do, what we use to gauge our impact and what we become known for. If done systematically and comprehensively enough, our public would begin to see this new policy of accountability based service and learning as outweighing the policy of banishment and punishment.

In a system committed to *Service in the Interest of Others*, a new set of questions emerges that guide intervention:

- What does the community need to become a more peaceful place?
- What service does the victim want or need?
- What important community projects are planned or currently are underway that could benefit from the offender's contribution?
- What skills or expertise does the youth have to contribute to the community?
- What career interest does the offender have and how can service be linked to those careers and to appropriate skill development?
- What behaviors or addictions stand in the way of the youth contributing to the community and what treatment is required to effectively address these issues?
- How can service best complement that treatment and build relationships that reduce the likelihood of recidivism?
- What type of service can be performed to allow the youth to earn money to pay back their crime victim?

This approach is constructive. It is participatory. It is reparative. It builds individual and community capacity. *It allows for graceful, earned redemption.* It builds a stronger sense of community for all involved. Service in the Interest of Others then adheres to all the previously discussed principles and in that inherence is significantly different than any other programmatic intervention. This model of accountability based service learning prepares youth to become working, productive members of the community.

Thinking Big About Doing Good

“The work we do for ourselves follows us to our graves. The work we do for our community lives on forever.” Theodore Roosevelt

*“ We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.”
Winston Churchill*

“ The single most enduring and persistent question is, what are you doing for others?” Martin Luther King, Jr.

If these and many other great world leaders discovered the ageless value of serving others, then doesn't the virtue inherent in service fit for the common man, particularly, those who have not yet demonstrated a sense of connection to others?

Currently, it is possible to observe isolated examples of how “doing good” has been adopted in criminal justice systems. The problem is that they *are isolated*: for the most part, they are marginal, add-on activities with little relevance to the intervention enterprise. This paper calls for a planned transformation of the entire justice experience so that “doing good” becomes the central focus, and other correctional measures are viewed as a support for this focus.

The last time a nationwide effort of this scale was attempted was President Franklin Roosevelt's Civilian Conservation Corps that enlisted nearly a three and a half million unemployed young men over a nine year tenure to “do good” in response to the Great Depression. This program literally changed the face of America and proved that many “at risk” young people, including alcohol and drug users, those believed to be mentally ill, and offenders, could make valuable contributions to their country and continue to be productive citizens. These young men built over forty thousand bridges, 800 state and national park facilities, planted three billion trees, and restored nearly 4000 historic monuments. While every state has visible testimony to their accomplishments,(see attachment) the long term economic impact of their work

is almost too profound to measure. According to many accounts, the Civilian Conservation Corps was the most successful government program ever launched.

In more recent times, President Kennedy's Peace Corps, the Vista Program and Americorps have embodied the same values with similar projects being completed here and abroad, while, Habitat for Humanity International continues the legacy with a particular focus on housing the world's poor.

Today, there are approximately one million youth under court sanction on any given day and a much larger pool of youth who are in diversion programs, treatment programs following sanction or at high risk of harming others. This paper suggests that we no longer view these individuals as tax consuming recipients of justice services, but rather as an army capable of doing something significant to build better and safer communities. Our population of youth under justice supervision is much larger than Roosevelt's Civilian Conservation Corps. If even 50% of them were deemed appropriate for *Service In the Interest of Others*, this would represent perhaps the largest pool of Americans available to be enlisted in a major service effort and then prepared for adult life as purposeful, productive citizens.

It doesn't take much imagination to consider what could be accomplished if our nation's community corrections and prison system focused on service in the interest of others as its primary intervention mission. Had this been a core aspect of our work in the past, tens of thousands of poor families could be in homes constructed by offenders, our nation's transient poor could be staying in safe clean shelters, neighborhood clinics could be operating throughout the country, children could be playing baseball on well-groomed fields, and seniors could be enjoying the company of others and nutritious meals in community senior centers. Even if Service in the Interest of Others had no significant impact on recidivism, (which is unlikely), those benefits alone make the proposed shift in focus more than worthwhile. We really have to ask: what have been the clear and measurable benefits for communities of the current corrections system? The claim of its impact on crime has been debated for years with little consensus. And criminal justice professionals certainly haven't convinced the public that probation, community corrections and parole are highly productive public safety measures.

In considering the two approaches one could reasonably conclude that if we are going to spend billions housing, guarding, and supervising those who commit criminal wrong doing we might as well do so in such a way that communities receive the benefits inherent in the Service in the Interest of Others approach. Furthermore this approach allows us to demonstrate the good that people can do when provided the opportunity. Such a demonstration could also be our best hope to change public opinion about the value of banishment as our most widely implemented correctional strategy.

We predict that both conservative and liberal constituencies will support the idea of offenders making significant contributions to their communities and repairing the damages of crime. Jails and prisons would become centers of activity to begin community improvement projects that could be completed by probationers in the community. Such projects could include low income housing components, public art projects, park equipment, and other similar projects. For those in prison, the service experience is perhaps the best way to develop credentials attractive to community organizations and employers, while also laying the foundation for building positive relationships in the community. That will ultimately ensure re-entry success. Finally, when comprehensive service--in the context of new relationships with law-abiding citizens and connections with positive community organizations--is viewed as a primary means of structuring the time of offenders, a much greater proportion of the offender population could be managed in the community without increasing risk.

Thus Service in the Interest of Others:

- Provides immediate opportunity to bring needed service and restitution to crime victims.
- Delivers important tangible and visible benefits to communities on a very large scale.
- Contributes to the development of a better workforce for employers.
- Builds a sense of community among those who have not yet felt connected and builds new positive relationships between offenders and other citizens.
- Engages volunteer participation in exciting community projects and develops in an appreciation in these community members for those offenders who serve alongside them.
- Demonstrates the capacity of offenders for doing good.
- Offers perhaps the best and most productive form of surveillance and guardianship for those under court-ordered supervision.
- Serves as a catalyst to rally communities to address capital improvement needs.
- Challenges the need for continued prison building.
- Brings out the best for all involved.

To launch such a major transformation in thinking, policy and practice, will require a working group of national leaders with broad expertise in economics, housing and community development, faith community involvement, engaging communities of color and disproportionate minority confinement, urban and rural conservation, workforce development, and criminal justice. Such a group would gather to further study the full potential of a service-centered approach to dealing with criminal activity. Those gathering should be leaders not bound by the limits of traditional policy lenses. Rather, they should reflect the scale of thinking that

must have been present when FDR gathered his work group to form the Civilian Conservation Corps.

A Strategy Warranting Consideration

The reform suggested in this paper can not be accomplished with single program imitative. Rather a complete re-ordering of purpose, mission and outcomes sought by the community corrections and prison system is required. That said, prompting such a change on a national or perhaps even a state level is too daunting a task. A more reasoned approach might be to identify several communities or jurisdictions led by political, community and justice professional innovators courageous enough to make the shift. Those people would be afforded the financial, technical and moral support to feature Service in the Interest of Others as the primary intervention response of the criminal justice system.

These selected sites should have access to federal, state and private sector resources to plan, develop, and complete community-building initiatives with a labor force of current and ex-offenders. From the outset, the initiative would feature the accomplishments of their efforts in local and national media. Daily logs of their service would be recorded and citizen surveys would be deployed to determine if a shift in public opinion was being achieved.

Following the examples of the Roosevelt and Kennedy Administrations a positive name and identity would be assigned and promoted. Possible titles discussed thus far are the Community Justice Corps, The Civic Justice Corps, and the Civic Responsibility Corps. Participants should feel that a positive image comes with the name and be proud of their enrollment. Participation in the Corps should include a modest level of pay and opportunities for advancement. Initial pay would be dedicated in significant measure toward the payment of restitution. Similar to the CCC, mandatory savings and education accounts would be established with a portion of the members' pay. The Corps members would matriculate through a series of training requirements to include employability skills, personal finance, and home management skills. They would also participate in planning meetings to design community projects thus building a stronger stake in their work. Corps members would be coached and guided to complete community college, technical training and higher education requirements.

Corps members from different parts of the county might also gather to complete nationally significant service projects. One intriguing suggestion has been made to provide Corps members an opportunity to perform international service projects and meet others who are involved in similar work abroad. As the work of the corps is completed, there will be a purposeful effort to have the community celebrate and recognize their accomplishments. Community volunteers who work with the Corps members will be asked to mentor and advocate for the Corps members in the community.

The overarching goal is to develop responsible, productive citizens with meaningful relationships in the community, who can make lifelong contributions to their fellow community members. The leadership development potential of these ideas is profound and would certainly surpass the value of an almost any current correctional experience.

In summary, the criminal justice system has been focused on eliminating behaviors that we don't want. We have relied on a policy of banishing those who violate the law as our primary means to extricate those we don't want. In many ways, we are trying to make people become good by doing bad things to them. The concept of the Service in the Interest of Others is about encouraging those behaviors that we desire: *doing good*.

This paper calls for a response on a much higher plane of thinking and acting. This paper suggests engaging the very people who have committed wrongdoing in a process that enlists their help to build healthier and safer communities. The results will be better for victims, communities and offenders. We will then be about the work of Doing Good.

Civilian Conservation Corps



Many people travel throughout the United States enjoying our national and state parks, have formed hiking clubs to walk our natural topography and enjoyed natural resources such as rich farmlands and timber never realizing that they are most likely enjoying the works of the CCC boys. Although the 1930's saw numerous programs, the Civilian Conservation Corps was unique being that it was comprised of young men between the ages of 18-25. In many cases, as was learned at the Shenandoah reunion, some young men sort of "twisted the truth" and actually started their term at the grand old age of 16. They went to school while building the country's infrastructure and learned to read maps, execute blueprints and obtained other skills, which would aid them in their adult lives and careers. So when the news reports the loss of lumber, land and homes to forest fires, there may seem to be too many roads to be repaired and rumors that our farmlands are diminishing, remember the CCCs. Perhaps they are needed today more than ever.

Did you know that while the CCCs were in service....

- 46,854 bridges were constructed.
- 800 state parks were created. Before this, many states, including Hawaii, Alaska, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands had no state parks.
- 85,000 American Indians enlisted in CCC programs.
- 4,622 fish rearing ponds were created.
- 3,980 historic structures were restored. The Gettysburg Battlefield was among them.
- 5,000 miles of water supply lines were laid.
- 3,462 beaches were improved.
- 45 million trees and shrubs were relocated for landscaping.
- 3 BILLION trees were planted.
- Millions of acres and thousands of lakes were, for the first time, surveyed and mapped.

- 1,865 drinking fountains were installed.
- 27,191 miles of fences were constructed.
- 204 lodges and museums were established.
- 201,739 man-days were spent fighting coal fires. Many of which had been burning since the earliest recorded American history. In Wyoming alone, the CCC boys saved billions of tons of coal.
- Hundreds of thousands of man-days were spent in fighting forest fires.
- 3,116 lookout towers were constructed in Parks and Historic sites.
- 8,065 wells and pump houses were built.
- Thousands of man-days were spent in flood control.