

Officers

William A. Serrao
Chair

Robert J. DeSena
President and Founder

Douglas Perlman
Vice Chair

Directors

Henry C. Beinstein

Kery Davis

Louis J. DiBella

Gregory Floyd

Keith Hamlin

Lee Lazarus

Frank Lieberman

Alan Lubin

Hon. Doris Ling-Cohan

Reinaldo Perez

Jennifer Robbins

Hon. Rose Sconiers

Lewis B. Spann, Jr.

Mark S. Thomas

Saundra P. Thomas

Frank Volpicella

Randi Weingarten

Gale V. Barrett
Chair Emeritus

Hon. Arnold I. Burns
Chair Emeritus

Mission

Council for Unity (CFU) is a not-for-profit organization that specializes in reducing violence in schools and communities. Our mission is to empower young people, individuals and groups with the skills necessary to promote unity, safety and achievement in schools and communities. By engaging youth to take ownership of the problems of violence and bias that confront them, they themselves can play a major role in developing non-violent solutions to improve the environments in which they function. For over thirty-five years, CFU has reclaimed some of our most violent and disenfranchised youth.

Operations

CFU provides customized curriculum, training and technical assistance to schools and community organizations. CFU's service model helps provide at-risk youth the critical foundations they often lack: family, safety, self-esteem and responsibility – needs they often seek through anti-social peer groups. CFU students successfully take ownership of problems affecting them and their communities. The CFU model teaches essential interpersonal and life skills such as: leadership, self-expression, mediation, conflict resolution, and advocacy skills to resolve and reduce gang fights, personal conflicts, racial insults and even students' problems with the school administration.

The results have led to significant reductions in violent incidents, academic improvement within student populations prone to failure, a reduction in cutting and truancy and greater ownership of problem solving strategies from all partners affected by the challenges confronting our communities today. These unity and asset based strategies inherent in the CFU model also create an atmosphere of tolerance that reduces bullying and acts of bias.

Location

In New York State, the CFU curriculum is taught as a high school elective five days a week under the authority of the Department of Education in New York City, Long Island and Albany. The elementary and junior high school curriculum functions as a club or co-curricular activity in which participants meet one to three days a week. CFU members who are now in college have begun to establish chapters on their college campuses where the same issues need to be addressed.

Success

Pre- and post- attitudinal surveys on all programs and participants, and reviews of school and teacher data on all participating students are conducted. Recent evaluations found participants have a 90% high school graduation rate and 80% showed improved attendance. There is a 50% to 70% reduction in violence and gang related incidents in schools, communities and correctional facilities. College placement among CFU program participants remains at 83%, surpassing the 2008 national average of 68.6%.

Wherever the Council has established a program, it has been welcomed by school and community center administrators and students, but the true result of the program's efforts take on a life of their own when students, parents, educators, school administrators, local law enforcement and community members see living proof in the positive changes and increased civic participation of our youth.

To Find Out More, Contact: Lisa Wright, Director of Programs
(212) 701-9440, lwright@councilforunity.org

When everybody is together there is nobody left to fight.