

Department of Peace and Nonviolence

Colorado Campaign – Congressional District 6 – Centennial



Campaign Update
2/21/08

Presentation to Mayor Pye, Centennial, Colorado



Presentation to Mayor Pyle Overview

- Introductions
- Purpose of Presentation
 - Express appreciation to Mayor Pye for advice and support during 2007
 - Acknowledge new City Council members
 - Acknowledge Ron Cole's appearance on John Andrews Talk Radio show
 - Review several recent avoidable acts of violence since last presentation
 - Mention our Regional Department of Peace Model Project – youth involvement
 - Solicit suggestions / advice pertaining to a **Centennial City Council Resolution** endorsing the Department of Peace or a **Mayoral Proclamation**



Introductions



- Presenters
 - Residents of Centennial – concerned about its long term future
 - Volunteers for the Colorado Campaign to establish a **U.S. Department of Peace and Nonviolence (DoPN)**
 - Carla Handy, Congressional District 6 Coordinator
 - Not available due to illness in the family
 - Milt Hetrick, Model DoPN Project Coordinator
 - Retired Aerospace Engineer, Lockheed Martin
 - Former DoD and NASA contractor
 - Ron Cole, State Campaign Coordinator (moving soon to Florida)
 - Retired UAL Pilot
 - Former Navy Pilot



Acknowledge Support during 2007

- Express appreciation to Mayor Pye and his staff for advice and support during 2007
- Acknowledge the Mayor's articulate advocacy for a **Centennial City Council Resolution** endorsing the **Department of Peace** at the November City Council meeting.



Acknowledge new City Council members

- Newly elected members
 - Betty Ann Habig
 - Keith Gardner
 - Patrick Anderson
- Solicit suggestions / advice for 2008
 - Campaign volunteers would be willing to meet individually with new Council Members to discuss the proposed DoPN and its benefit to Centennial.
 - Opinion. Has opposition to a City Council Resolution changed in any way as a result of the three new members?
 - Would it be appropriate to brief the City Manager?
 - Lessons Learned from recent violent events. These events were **not** "random acts of violence"
 - Matthew Murray (New Life Church shootings)
 - Charles Lee "Cookie" Thornton (Kirkwood, MO City Council shootings)
 - In each instance there were "Red Flags" that were ignored.
 - Hopefully Centennial has "Training Sessions" for City employees to:
 - be able to recognize unmanaged conflicts and involve appropriate assistance, and
 - take calls from citizens who have observed a situation that has the potential of escalating into physical violence. (Waiting until a law has been broken is often too late to prevent violence.) Mention concept of 912.



Ron Cole's Appearance on Talk Radio

- Ron Cole made an appearance on John Andrew's Talk Radio 710 program on December 30, 2007
- Lessons Learned
 - In the half hour segment devoted to a discussion of the Department of Peace, Ron was provided about 5 minutes to actually describe this initiative
 - Mr. Andrews was courteous, but was and remains a skeptic
 - Mr. Andrews was unable to understand how someone could be Pro Peace and not Anti-War. Mr. Cole did not have time to explain.
 - Talk Radio is not an appropriate format to engage in a meaningful dialog and exchange perspectives effectively



Recent Examples of Preventable Violence

- Matthew Murray (New Life Church shootings – 12/30/07)
 - Review of Murray's childhood experiences indicate he appears to have been subjected to repeated "violent subjugation" **Ref: Lonnie Athens, "Why they kill"** for more information about the **violentization process**.
- Charles Lee "Cookie" Thornton (Kirkwood, MO City Council shootings – 2/7/08)
 - The city had ticketed Thornton's demolition and asphalt business, Cookco Construction, for parking his commercial vehicles in the neighborhood, said Ron Hodges, a friend who lives in the community. The tickets were "eating at him. He felt that as a black contractor he was being singled out," Hodges said.
 - At earlier city council meetings, he said he had received 150 tickets against his business.
 - Sportscaster Doug Vaughn of Channel 4 (who went to Kirkwood High School with Thornton) said Thornton's behavior changed after police cracked down on his parking of vehicles for his construction company outside his home in Meacham Park. He felt harassed, Vaughn said.
 - According to his brother, Thornton was "going to war" with a city that did not respect his rights.
 - 10 days earlier, a federal judge in St. Louis dismissed a lawsuit in which Thornton, representing himself, claimed Kirkwood officials violated his free speech rights by prohibiting him from speaking out at city council meetings.
 - Thornton experienced growing frustration with local leaders over this **unmanaged conflict situation**



Regional DoPN Model Project

- Several Campaign Volunteers are focusing on **“What specifically will the DoPN be doing that we will be of value to my family, neighborhood, community, city & state?”**
- To answer this question, we are constructing a **Regional DoPN Model** to begin to understand how it operate and assist / complement ongoing programs as well as initiate new violence prevention and opportunity enhancement programs
- The objective of this project is to start with H.R. 808 as the “authorizing legislation” to form the DoPN and then envision a Regional office that would support our local area in a few specific key areas involving prevention of youth related violence (child abuse, bullying, gang violence, lack of positive development opportunities for specific youth, etc.).
- When we brief people on the DoPN mission, we often get the response, “The DoPN sounds like a duplication of effort – we (Dept of Education, Department of Justice, etc.) are already doing this. We don’t need another layer of government.”
- The critics are generally correct – each of the “partner” Departments have a number of programs designed to address youth violence. Our Project’s website (<http://www.dopmodel.info/wiki>) has started to list these various programs.
- We can identify hundreds of programs currently in place to prevent youth related violence, yet the cost of domestic violence (violence internal to the U.S.) is still estimated by the World Health Organization to be over \$300 **Billion** dollars a year. (Approximately half that cost is related to youth violence). **Obviously our current approach is not working very well.**
- We want to illustrate how the DoPN can take a broader perspective and “integrate” the diverse, often narrowly focused intervention programs and fill in the gaps that currently exist.



Regional DoPN Model Project

“Peacefulness” is both a lack of violence and an abundance of opportunity.”

- The DoPN will take a broad perspective of the concept of violence and use a definition similar to that used by Johan Galtung –

“Violence is any action that prevents a person from reaching their potential.”

- This broad definition of violence allows the DoPN to take a more holistic perspective than the perspective of the Dept of Education or the Justice Department, etc.
- The DoPN will not just address physical violence, but also emotional, verbal, **and** subtle (and legal) actions that are forms of violence embedded into our social structure (structural violence).
- The DoPN will focus on “root causes” of youth violence – there are multiple reasons why youth in Northeast Denver are more likely to be involved in “gang violence” than youth in Centennial.
- There are many ways to explain the difference in the environments these youth experience (Northeast Denver vs. Centennial) – including the perspective of “assets” that responsible adults provide (or don’t provide) for positive youth development.
- With these assumptions of what the DoPN can & will do for local communities such as Centennial, Denver, etc., we are trying to envision specific ways the DoPN can avoid duplicating existing programs and add value to these local communities.



Regional DoPN Model Project

Youth Involvement.

- One way to envision what the DoPN can do is to create a working “Model.”
- We can do this in several ways, but one exciting prospect is to engage youth who are in the thick of it,
 - discuss “root causes” of youth related violence, identify and discuss the various forms of structural violence
 - e.g. responsible adults do not prepare preschoolers for entering public schools; or
 - parents do not have adequate vocational/professional skills to command high enough wages to provide adequate development assets for their children; or
 - there is lack of affordable housing in the community; etc., and
 - brainstorm new ideas, new approaches, and new far reaching services for the community – not unlike Denver’s 10 year plan to end homeless.
- We could create a Regional Conference where youth in the area/state come together and model the operation of a Regional DoPN.
 - Each delegate could take a specific key issue, do their research on that topic (we could provide resources), and then come together in Focus Committees (Representing DoPN Departments) to collaboratively create a new comprehensive intervention strategy (to reduce all forms of violence related to their key issue and increase opportunities for growth).
 - The Focus Committees would then bring these ideas to the Full Assembly (representing the Regional Office Staff) for consideration.
 - There would be a brief discussion of each key issue, time for comments and recommendations for further study and implementation, etc.



Additional Resource Material



Would the DoPN have made any difference about the two church shootings today – one in Arvada – the other in CO Springs?”



Answer:

- There are few (if any) random acts of violence
- Profiling is coming into its own – it is becoming a science – criminology continues to provide more insight into why certain people develop into violent criminals.
- The Department of Peace and Nonviolence will focus on recognizing “red flags” because shooters commonly signal their intentions long before they act
 - buying 1000 rounds of ammunition and 4 guns was legal, but today’s “background” checks are obviously ineffective.
 - The background check currently does not demand any significant amount of investigation to determine the gun buyer’s emotional /mental state – so the public has no way of determining if this person is buying the weapons and ammo with the intention of shooting at paper targets, or at people target.
 - Since this purchase can endanger the public, doesn’t it seem reason to have several other representatives of the public evaluate the purchase.
 - Yes it would be difficult, and yes, like Harris and Kliebold, the potential shooter can have a friend buy the weapon and ammo. So there are many “loop holes” that have to be considered.
 - The DoPN could serve as a member of this gun/ammo review committee to provide a more in depth evaluation.
 - Anyone who has worked for the Department of Defense and has had a security clearance knows how in depth background investigations are. Typically a special agent personally interviews a half dozen associates to get a sense of the mental health of the individual, the economic status is also investigated.
 - The DoPN would focus on the root cause of why the buyer is purchasing weapons to kill someone – that is an indication that our society has failed to give the buyer any alternative tools to deal with an injustice,



Would the DoPN have made any difference about the two church shootings today – one in Arvada – the other in CO Springs?”

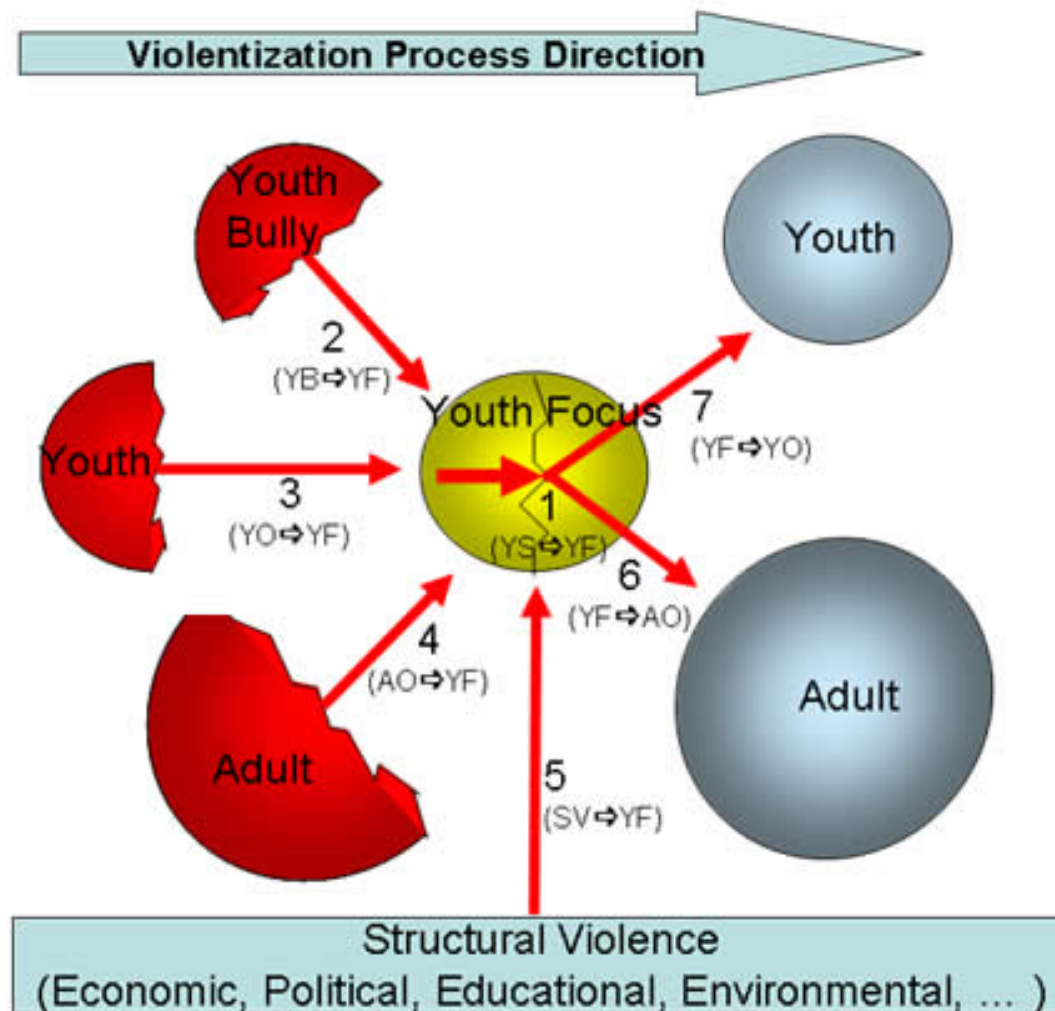
Answer:

- parents need to learn about “violent subjugation.” Matthew Murray was subjected to a violentization process. He was unable to extricate himself from that environment.
- Murray’s blogs and emails were red flags. Some people were concerned – but their response was more of the same subjugation – throwing gasoline on the fire to put it out
- Even home schooling can be dangerous if it is conducted in secrecy and teaches hate, promotes intolerance, etc.
- **Plan of Action.**
 - Met with John Andrews and provide an response to his question “Would the DoPN have made a difference?”
 - Run the idea of simulating a Model Department of Peace and Nonviolence here in Centennial – make it a model city.
 - We would have to think “root cause” – systemic change – circles of responsibility – demand performance – quality is not a bad word – it is the key to success – if we could get agreement from the city and the sheriff to use them for real cases / situations, we could use our team of experts to pretend there were on the DoPN staff (because they are already trained)
 - We would have to construct an information system – focus our efforts – look at the incidence of interpersonal violence
 - Matthew Murray lived in Arapahoe County – how could we let that happen?



Youth Violence Map

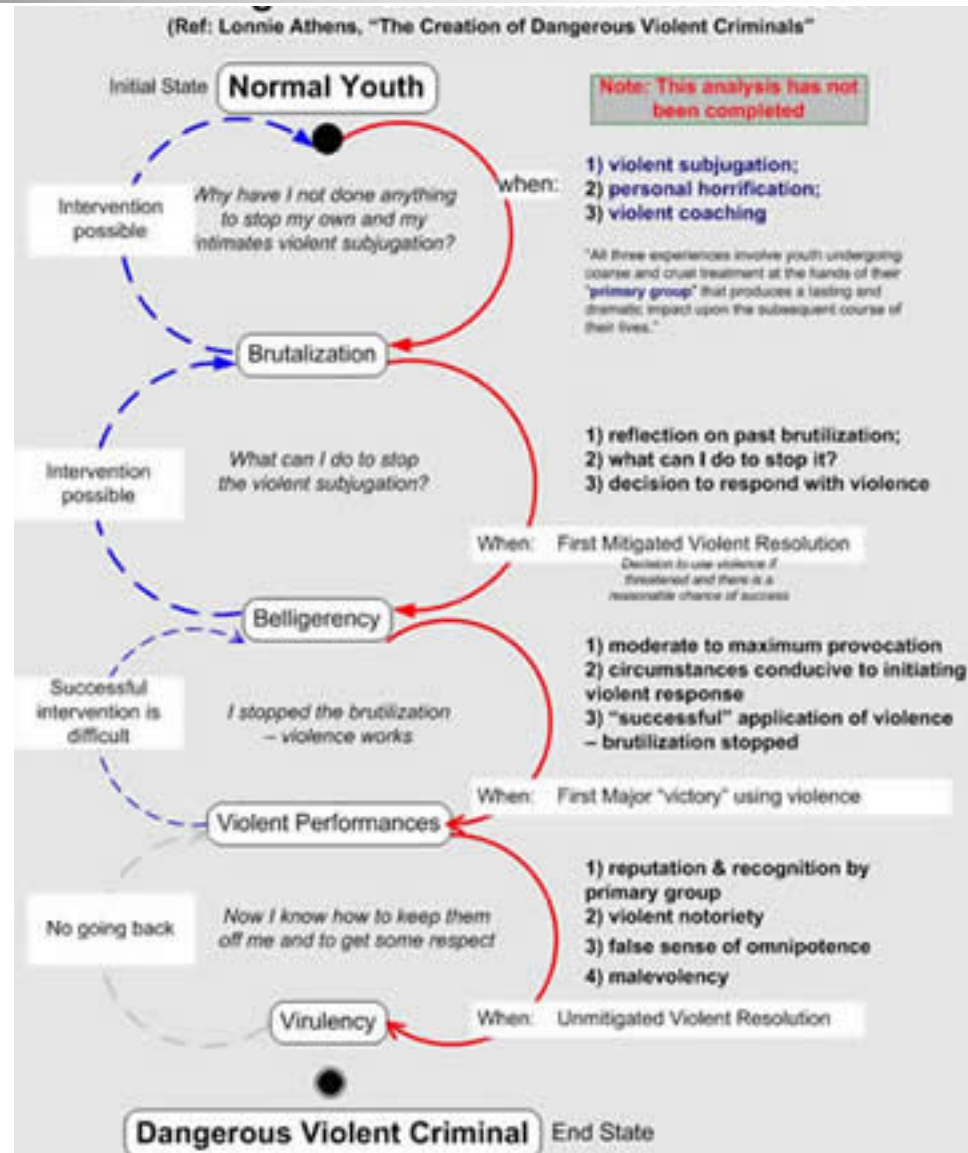
Violence...an action that prevents someone from reaching their potential





Four Stages of the Violentization Process

- This model was developed by Athens based on interviews of violent criminals while they were incarcerated





Notes from discussion with Mayor Pye (added after the meeting)



- Was the only person at the Pye & Coffee that evening (21 Feb 08) so we spent about 45 minutes on this briefing
- Mentioned that we came to visit so he wouldn't feel ignored. He responded with, "when no one shows up, then I assume everything is going well – when things are not going well, there a lot of people at my door."
- Explained that DoPN colleagues (Ron & Carla) were unable to attend that evening, but sent their regards
- We spent the first several minutes discussing common perspectives related to energy technology development (his day job is economic development)
- Proceeded through the briefing charts. We first acknowledging his support during 2007 and expressed sincere thanks. He expressed regret that he was not able to effectively respond to Councilman Dindinger perspective that "This is not an appropriate item for a City Council to consider".
- The Mayor spent a few minutes describing the new Council members political perspectives. The Mayor expressed his respect for each of them and their general political leanings. He suggested that we set up one-on-one session with these new members to fill them in on the DoPN legislation.
- Did not get a answer to whether or not it would be appropriate to get on the City Manager's calendar and discuss "Lessons Learned" from the Kirkwood MO City Council shootings. The Mayor did mention that they took the typical approach of "beefing up security" as a reactive response, but admitted that the proactive response suggested in the briefing charts (pg 5) was probably better – I responded that both are needed.
- We spent several minutes discussing Ron Cole's appearance on John Andrews' Talk Radio show, 30 Dec 07.
 - He expressed his respect for Mr. Andrews – reminding us that Mr. Andrews was a speech writer for President Reagan.
 - The Mayor agreed that Talk Radio was not an appropriate format for a meaning exchange of perspectives and that a one-on-one meeting with Andrews would be better.



Notes from discussion with Mayor Pye

(added after the meeting)



- We spent some time discussing two recent preventable incidents of violence since we last met at the November Council meeting.
- We began with the Matthew Murray incident, noting that he was not a resident of Centennial but did live in Arapahoe county. The Mayor was particularly interested in the Lonnie Athens “Violentization Model” illustrated in the graphic on pg 15 of this briefing. We spent some time on this topic and the concept of violent subjugation. The Mayor appeared to immediately understand and related it to his own experiences. We used the graphic on pg 14 to illustrate the different ways a youth can be subjected to violent subjugation. This graphic also includes the idea of structural violence that we used to illustrate differences between youth in Denver and youth in Centennial (The Mayor related this immediately to the “assets” for positive youth development perspective)
- We then discussed the Kirkwood MO incident. The Mayor was not aware of the underlying reasons for Charles Thornton’s violent behavior, but when informed, the Mayor quickly saw the contributing factors and how an intervention (e.g. mediation) could have prevented this conflict from escalating to physical violence and six lives would have saved.
- Discussed briefly the “Model DoPN Project” and noted that we were beginning to work with Centennial youth – and the Model DoPN project (patterned after the youth Model UN conferences) was a possible activity for local youth involvement. **He strongly encouraged us to work with the youth – noting they had significant influence on the Council** – for example, the youth council brought a “tobacco possession” ordinance before the City Council and it passed overwhelmingly.
- Closed the meeting by asking if a Mayoral Proclamation was still a possibility. He said that required a lot more thought (we can infer that it carries with it a number of political liabilities) and to continue to work with the Council until that option was exhausted.
- He again expressed regret in how the November City Council meeting turned out and that he was not able to be more influential.



Discussion with Mayor Pye – Summary

(added after the meeting)



- Do attempt to schedule one-on-one meetings with the new Council members to provide background on the DoPN and proposed City Council Resolution
 - Betty Ann Habig (Ward I)
 - Keith Gardner (Ward II)
 - Patrick Anderson (Ward III)
- Do attempt to schedule one-on-one meetings with Councilman Rick Dindinger and Mr. John Andrews
- Do continue to work with the Centennial Youth Council