

#061114

Submitted
C 3/28/01
Auntie

WHAT IS THE REICHERT HOUSE?



THE REICHERT HOUSE MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Reichert House is to provide and maintain an after-school program for “At-Risk”, male adolescents. Through a comprehensive network of community organizations, family, and programmed activities, behaviors are set out to be redirected and modified. Emphasis is also placed on education, mentoring, social and life skills. These components support the development of standards for working well with others and becoming productive examples to their peers with similar social, economic, and life challenges.

REICHERT HOUSE SPONSORS

Major Sponsors:

Gainesville Police Department
Black On Black Crime Task Force
Eighth Judicial Circuit States Attorney
Corner Drug Store
Gainesville Housing Authority
Alachua/Bradford Youth Employment Start

KEY SPONSORS:

Alachua County School Board
University of Florida
Santa Fe Community College
Plan Parenthood
Neighborhood Nutrition Network
Meridian Behavior Health Care
BCN Associates, Inc.
Boys Scouts of America
Eastside Developmental Task Force
Gainesville Regional Utilities
Florida Food Service
Eastside Health Clinic
Shands Health Care
Gainesville Home Builders
Gainesville Job Corp.
Department of Juvenile Justice

Special Friends:

U.S. Senator Karen Thurman
Florida Senator Rod Smith
Florida Senator Betty Holzendorf
State Attorney Bill Cervone
City Commissioner Chuck Chestnut
Mr. & Mrs. David Flagg
Ms. Juanita Mears
Mrs. Laura Winefordner
Ms. Doris Edwards

REICHERT HOUSE BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Mr. John Cherry	Gainesville Housing Authority
Mr. Wayland Clifton	Dept. of Juvenile Justice
Mr. Charles Cooper	Shands Health Care
Mr. Luis Diaz	Gainesville Home Builders
Mr. Walter Green	State's Attorney office
Mr. Tommy Howard	University of Florida
Mrs. Gwen Love	Corner Drug Store
Mr. Paul Mullings	Shands
Mr. Jim Voyles	Food Bank
Ms. Rosa Williams	Black On Black Crime Task Force
Mr. Nat Willis	Retired
Mr. Thor Wishart	Gainesville Regional Utilities

The Reichert House

Program Description

1. The Reichert House is a program that has been in existence for the past five years. This program addresses the issue of minorities being over-represented in our criminal justice system. The Reichert House is an innovative after-school program designed to meet the needs of youth that have been identified at-risk by their respective school or community leaders. The program operates 4 days a week during key hours when youth are usually unsupervised, such as after-school hours. The Reichert House provides a positive place where these youth can come and be associated with a structured, supervised curriculum that will assist the youth academically and teach them life skills, which will assist them in becoming positive citizens now and in the future.

The Reichert House program has five core areas that are emphasized: academics, life-skills, athletics, job preparedness, and community service. The Reichert House program offers youth the opportunity to learn:

- more about themselves
- how to develop and achieve positive goals
- cultivate healthy friendships
- build self-esteem and character
- how to maintain lifestyles that are substance abuse and violence free
- respect elders and others within their community

The unique feature of this program is that Law Enforcement has joined up with a youth service provider, the Corner Drug Store, and concurrently operates this facility. The Reichert House also is a collaborative effort of other key organizations, such as the Black on Black Crime Task Force, the Gainesville Housing Authority, State's Attorney Office, and the Youth Employment Service. The Department of Children and Family Services of the State of Florida donated the present site for the Reichert House to the Gainesville Police Department.

The parents of the youth, who are mostly single mothers, are required to be involved in their child's life through the program's design. These parents are required to donate 5 volunteer hours each month at the Reichert House.

The main mission of the Reichert House is to provide services and maintain a facility that will offer a program that will serve as a positive alternative to crime. Deterring a child from a life of criminal behavior will not only result in financial savings to the community but will also create self-supporting citizens for the future---to ultimately

The Reichert House

become tax contributors instead of "tax takers". The staff and volunteers who work at Reichert House strive to assist these young people of today in developing into exemplary citizens of tomorrow.

The Reichert House has placed a number of its graduates into either the Armed Services or college. One young man successfully completed the Police Academy.

2. The Reichert House program was established to address the acute problem of minority overrepresentation in our Juvenile Justice system. In 1997, our community had an infamous history of minorities being over-represented within the criminal justice system of Alachua County, in which Gainesville is the home seat. African Americans comprise about 24% of the local population, yet account for 65% of the youth arrested. In addition, African American youth account for 59.6% of youth referred for delinquency, 71.6% of youth committed for delinquency, and 66.7% of youth placed on community control. The problem in our community is that there are a number of reactive programs established once the child has made the decision to participate in delinquent activity. We needed a program that would meet some of the preventive needs of the youth that have been identified as being the most **at-risk** in our city. The Reichert House was established for this reason.

The targeted population for this facility is African American males between the ages of 12-17. African American males make up 45% of those charged with criminal offenses in our community. Each year, staff calculates those Reichert House members who have offended while in the program. This program has an 85% success rate of youth non-offending while in the Reichert House program.

We believe that you either invest now in the future of the youth at-risk or you pay later for their time while they are being incarcerated. The cost to society is overwhelming. We agree that some youth need to be incarcerated for the actions that they have committed to society. However, the question is, "What are we as a community doing to stem the flow of youth entering the system?"

The Reichert House, in my estimation, is a prevention program that inhibits many youth from making the decision to commit delinquent acts that may result in their incarceration. The cost for our program is minimal compared to the cost of locking the child up in a detention setting. The average cost of maintaining a child in an incarceration program is \$75.00+ per day. The Reichert House program costs considerably less.

The Reichert House

3. The population enrolled in the Reichert House program has a high probability of entering the Criminal Justice System. If a child refrains from offending or committing a criminal act, that is considered an accomplishment in itself.

The source that is used to verify if the child is participating in delinquent acts is the Juvenile Justice Records Management System. Each child enrolled in the program must have periodic record inquiries performed by the Police personnel.

The child's school record for violation of school policy is also checked. A parent release form is completed on each child subsequent to them enrolling in the Reichert House program.

Many of the youth who have become Reichert House members were prime candidates to drop out of the school system. For most of them that stayed in public school, furthering their education beyond high school was not considered possible. Reichert House graduated two members from high school this past year. Both of these young men went on to attend Santa Fe Community College. Another Reichert House member is in his second year at Santa Fe Community College. One Reichert House member is in his second year at the University of Florida. One young man is in the U.S. Army stationed in California. Three more Reichert House members are in the U.S. National Guard with two stationed at Ft. Jackson, South Carolina and one at Ft. Benning, Georgia. The young man at Ft. Benning has been nominated as a candidate for Officer School. He is also currently a Gainesville Police Service Technician. Not only has Reichert House been instrumental in keeping these young men out of the criminal system, but also they have been afforded the opportunity to become productive citizens within our society.

4. Who are the current and potential beneficiaries of your program?

The citizens of the community will benefit from this program directly through the community service hours that the members of Reichert House are required to donate. Reichert House youth are encouraged to participate in neighborhood clean up campaigns; pass out flyers which announce community meetings such as Neighborhood Crime Watch; and work in the local food bank's stock room gleaning good, useable food from that which is non-consumable.

The community also benefits indirectly because of the probability that there is one less child who will enter the Criminal Justice system. Therefore, taxpayers will not have to pay for the cost of their incarceration.

The youth of Reichert House benefit personally from this program by being given:

- the opportunity for greater educational growth with access to tutors, a computer lab, an environment conducive to study, career preparedness training, life-skill training, and potential for extended education through scholarships, summer job programs, and other programs designed for at-risk youth

- mentors who serve as positive role models
- a safe place to come after school for adult supervision until parents can get home from work
- a hot, nutritious meal each day
- the opportunity to experience diverse cultural events

The families of the Reichert House members benefit from the program by having a potentially negative influence turned into a positive one. A single female heads many of these families with multiple children. They frequently work more than one job. These older youth have little adult supervision with no opportunity for positive role models. Reichert House strives to provide positive adult supervision. In turn, these young men have the potential to become positive role models for siblings as well as for other youth within their own communities.