



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Shutting Down the School-to-Prison Pipeline: An Urgent Goal for Every Presidential Candidate

Upcoming New York City Information and Training Sessions

Every one of us, no matter what class or neighborhood we come from, knows of at least one young person who's causing his or her family, school and self insufferable trouble and heartache.

Such outrageous, unmanageable, even criminal behavior has become all too common among youths in rural and suburban areas and cities alike.

The prevailing remedy for the problem has been "ZeroTolerance" policies, in effect in schools across America. But these policies haven't worked, and instead are feeding a growing "school-to-prison pipeline," swelling juvenile and adult detention centers, according to *Are Zero Tolerance Policies Effective in the Schools? An Evidentiary Review and Recommendations*, a report by the American Psychological Association, August 9, 2006.

At the same time, many teachers, finding they're sorely unprepared to deal with student misbehavior, are leaving the profession, as reported in *Education Week*, December 12, 2007, citing information from the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future.

What's the solution? Restorative practices. This results-based approach, when systematically implemented in schools, proactively builds positive school communities while dramatically reducing discipline referrals, detentions and suspensions. Restorative

practices deals with inappropriate student behavior in a transformative way, providing equal amounts of accountability and support, and building trust and hope.

The International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP), a graduate school and training organization, has brought the restorative approach to schools, educators, children- and youth-serving and criminal justice professionals in 50 U.S. states and as many countries.

The IIRP began 30 years ago as Community Service Foundation, a school for struggling youth that grew into eight schools, 16 group homes and other programs, all of which utilize restorative practices.

Research has shown restorative practices to be extraordinarily successful with kids at CSF schools, kids who were previously considered hopeless. (See <http://www.realjustice.org/library/ermbrief.html>.)

Restorative practices worked so well at CSF schools that the IIRP began training public schools and other programs in the approach, with highly positive results.

In New York City, the IIRP and restorative practices helped Community Prep High School, a center for youth recently released from juvenile detention, become a safe place for kids to turn their lives around, as was reported in the New York Times. See <http://www.safersanerschools.org/library/communityprep.html>.

To further spread the word about restorative practices, the IIRP announces upcoming New York events. The press is invited to attend.

United Way of New York City, 2 Park Avenue

- Feb 13—Free Briefing for Decision Makers in Children- and Youth-Serving Agencies
- March 17 or 20—Introduction to Restorative Practices Training

For more information on these events see: http://www.iirp.org/media/NY_Briefing.pdf .
For more information on the IIRP, see <http://www.iirp.org>.