



HELP BRIDGEPORT YOUTH TURN AWAY FROM VIOLENCE

Hang Time is Bridgeport's most unique and successful community program, that is virtually a complete secret to those not involved! Started by former Project Longevity Bridgeport Program Manager Charles Grady in late 2014, Hang Time is changing lives and making our streets safer by giving purpose to ex-offenders and local youth struggling to establish themselves as productive citizens in the community despite prior indiscretions with the law. Hang Time is run by volunteers; however, We need your help to: Keep hot meals available to all who attend our meetings each week. Fund a trip to Washington DC for approximately 30 of our most promising individuals. For each of these individuals, this will be their first trip to our nation's capitol (and for some, their first trip out of Bridgeport). Purchase equipment and access for recreational sporting and educational opportunities. Most of these individuals have never had the chance to participate in events many of us take for granted, including swimming lessons, ice skating and CPR training. Create a scholarship fund for our top Hang Time participants. Hang Time's volunteer staff (Oriana Flagello, Charlie Grady, Aquil Crooks and Haley Dubits) with U.S. Senator Chris Murphy. Aquil, pictured above, started life where most people dare not imagine. Aquil was the product of statutory rape, and born to parents who are both convicted murderers. He was raised by his grandmother who at the time was addicted to crack cocaine. At the age of six, Aquil knew how to package and sell illicit street drugs and was good at it. He lived and violated the law in one of the most violent and dangerous housing projects in Bridgeport. Aquil was shot twice and labeled a "Bloods" gang leader by local police. In 2015, Aquil was released from a 5 year prison sentence for drug trafficking and gang violence. Once back on the streets of Bridgeport he initially felt "I can do this (sell drugs) and if I get caught I can do prison with no problem". Before he could get his first bundle, his uncle (a well-known ex- drug dealer and gang member), brought him to Hang Time to show Aquil a better way. While sitting at Hang Time, with one time rival gang members in a remarkably respectful atmosphere, he had an awakening that changed him. Aquil felt

a positive and hopeful energy in the room and wanted to be a part of it. Not only has he turned his life around, but today he is a volunteer staff member for the very program that changed him (Hang Time). He also works for an anti-gun violence program called Project Longevity and a neighborhood teen outreach program called Street Safe. Aquil, now a positive community leader, brings Bridgeport at risk youth to Hang Time each Tuesday to expose them the same opportunity and positive energy that helped shape his new life. To date he has influenced fifteen teens and young adults to get involved with Hang Time and stay off the streets. Aquil Crooks is just one of the amazing stories of transformation and giving back that occur weekly through the incredible movement called Hang Time.

OUR Cause: Most individuals that attend Hang Time have a very limited world view based on limited exposure to life outside of Bridgeport. Some aren't able to be in certain areas of Bridgeport without severe consequences due to inherited neighborhood conflicts and rivalries. Some dare not leave their neighborhood block. Your generous donations will go directly towards changing this for thirty Hang Time participants. We intend to bring them to Washington D.C. to broaden their minds and educate them on the history and freedoms they take for granted each day. Your dollars with help show them that there is more to see, learn and live than the lives and conflicts they've known. Many violent acts occur in Bridgeport because of a skewed sense of pride. Individuals feel that other individuals have disrespected their girl, family, or their side of town, thus they retaliate with violence. By broadening Bridgeport youth's world view

Donation



showing them new places and diverse people, we show them that there is more to life than pride. This also illustrates that there is more to life than pride for superficial items and experiences will help them bring new insight back to Bridgeport to create a better future not have otherwise had the opportunity.

About Hang Time:The

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