

Hip-Hop Gang Members and Hope

Written by Robert ID1144
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It is no big secret that gang life is part of the hip-hop culture in many areas. Rap artists rap about gangs and gang life; some even rap about their gang affiliations. As members of the hip-hop community we are aware of the status that gang life has in many areas. To a lot of members and affiliates things change and some see that they need to change their lives to meet the future growth of themselves or their family.

There is an organization in the LA area that is doing something more than talking about what needs to be done and pointing fingers.

It seems that those who do not understand street life or the importance of gang life, to some; are eager to just throw up their hands and give up on the youth or the older member who might have got hung up in his younger day and is now just getting a chance at life. To most of the un-understanding, locking them all up would be a good answer of what to do about something they fail to understand.

I am not going to 'glorify' gang life or gang members but I will respect them as people; not because of what they represent, or the sect they are claiming but because of who they are; the man or woman that is behind that sect, the real person.

I will not 'glorify' the Thug Life that many rappers rap about, but I will say that I understand that people get hung up and things go bad sometimes. And if we just give up on a person because we don't understand them, then we should also give up on our self's.

The late west coast rap icon Tupac Shakur is one rap artist who is thought of when you mention Thug Life. "I didn't create T.H.U.G. L.I.F.E., I diagnosed it," Tupac Shakur said.

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But Tupac also worked on making a change in the community. In 1992 at the 'Truc Picnic' in Cali, Tupac was instrumental in getting rival members of the Crips and Bloods to sign the 'Code Of THUG LIFE'.

Tupac and Dr. Mutulu Shakur had helped write up the 'code', with help from other 'og's'. The Code of THUG LIFE is listed [HERE](#) . It details do's and don'ts for being a righteous thug and banger. Although this code is not really followed today it was a start, and it is something that should be followed today by the new generation of 'bangers'. It showed commitment to people, and a caring for those who where not 'involved' in what is going on in a particular area.

That is what is needed, commitment to all people. Gang members are fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, and friends. They are human beings and have 'worth' to someone. It is not someone's place to just give up on people because they may be a gang member or they may be something else they do not agree with or understand.

There is a group in LA called Jobs For A Future. The following is a short description of their work and what they offer. There may be many programs like this, but this one could be a model for what the real people need. Maybe the answer to all this is just a little caring and a little respect for these men and women who may be gang affiliated. It is said that if you show respect you gain respect. And with respect comes learning and that is something that is needed by all of us.

Please read about this organization and the work they are doing. Visit their web site [HERE](#) and please help if you can. It is a good cause.

Jobs For A Future is a unique first stop center where gang members, at-risk youth and those recently released from detention facilities can find assistance with job placement, tattoo removal, counseling, community service opportunities and case management services. Although Jobs For A Future was born in the Aliso-Pico housing projects, it now serves all of Los Angeles County.

With the slogan "Jobs Not Jails," the program offers a second chance to at-risk, gang-impacted

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young men and women. The program was founded by Father Gregory J. Boyle, S.J. and now employs twelve full-time and one part-time staff members.

Job referral was the first service that Jobs For A Future provided, but as the organization grew, we recognized that in order to succeed in a job, other needs must be met. We have added services and continue to look for ways to better serve this community.

By giving a gang member a reason to get up in the morning, we provide them with a reason not to gang bang at night. For every gang member that we help get off the streets, we help make the streets that much safer. We believe that our approach provides a longer-lasting remedy than incarceration.

Traditionally, the solutions to gang violence are threefold-- prevention, intervention and suppression. Prevention and suppression receive ample public support and resources, but true intervention is often neglected. Our motto "Nothing Stops a Bullet like a Job" embodies the spirit of our intervention philosophy, and describes the benefit that Jobs For A Future provides to the community.

Some of the 'Services Provided' include: Job Readiness, Job Training, "Ya Estuvo" - Tattoo Removal, "New Image", "Release" - Intensive Transition Aftercare - In partnership with the LA County Probation department, Counseling, Community Service Opportunities - We accept volunteers to complete court-ordered community service hours, "Navigation" - Case Management, and other services are available.

Some of the other services that JFF also provides: space for a variety of groups to meet in the evenings. Nar-a-Teen, a twelve step group for youth with family members addicted to narcotics, Criminals and Gangs Anonymous (CGA), a twelve step program based on the idea that criminal behavior and gang involvement are an addiction, a GED class, Narcotics Anonymous, and a teen-age female support group meet there weekly.

To find out more please visit [HERE](#)