

Testimony Senate Budget Committee 6.8.23 9 AM

Thank you for the opportunity to advocate for our kids in public schools. I have been active in the B.R.E.A.D. Organization, which stands for Building Responsibility Equality and Dignity, here in Franklin County since about 2006. We have worked with Columbus City Schools to seek proven solutions to address unjust and unworkable solutions in the school district.

On Wednesday, May 31, I was privileged to meet a group at Walnut Ridge High School called SWARM. Swarm stands for Students With a Restorative Mindset. The students led the demonstration of the Restorative Practice they just learned this past February with intensive training on leading restorative practice circle and mediations.

Walnut Ridge has a remnant of Restorative Practices trained staff post pandemic. As a result, Columbus City Schools has in the toolbox of caring for the whole child an option to reduce suspensions and other disciplinary actions that further harm learning and the community.

To define restorative practices, I am going to quote from the IIRP (International Institute of Restorative Practices) to give you a definition:

The science of relationships and community.

All humans are hardwired to connect. Just as we need food, shelter and clothing, human beings also need strong and meaningful relationships to thrive.

Restorative practices is a field within the social sciences that studies how to strengthen relationships between individuals as well as social connections within communities.

Though newer to the social sciences, restorative practices has deep roots within indigenous communities throughout the world.

This is SWARM's work. Supported by trained staff and working as a team, we, from BREAD saw the circle in action. We participated in a circle led by a Sophomore Student after being reminded of the ground rules for doing a restorative circle. We also saw a video of a student led mediation circle to acknowledge harm and choose a way to make a teacher and a student feel heard, respected, restored.

There are several staff trained, as I said earlier, and 9 students who do the Restorative Practice work. We were thrilled to hear from one of the staff that 3 students are already planning to join SWARM in the fall from one of the feeder middle schools.

Meanwhile, back in the “real” world, 2 days after this momentous meeting, a 14-year-old was killed near the park where I took a respite in the shade for a few minutes while I waited to head to the school for the circle.

Public Schools build critical community. They deserve full fair restorative funding. As a Christian, I am told it is toes with the least who need our restorative support the most. We are so close to doing the right thing with our precious kids. Let’s do it!

What questions do you have?





Media Information

Columbus Division of Police
Homicide Bureau / Team 4 Unit

Date: 06/03/2023

Elaine R. Bryant, Chief of Police

For further information, contact: Detective Corbin

Phone: (614) 645 - 4730

Ext: 2685

Type of Offense/Incident: Homicide

Date: 06/03/2023

Time: 12:31am

Location of Offense/Incident: 1200 Block of Fountain Lane

Zone: 2

Precinct: 14

Incident Report #: 230416480

Cruiser District: 140

Victim: Lorenzo E. Butler Jr. (deceased)	Sex: Male	Race: Black	Age: 14
Victim:	Sex:	Race:	Age:
Victim:	Sex:	Race:	Age:

Suspect: Unknown		Address:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Arrested	<input type="checkbox"/> Warrant on File	Sex:	Race: Age:
Charges:			
Suspect:		Address:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Arrested	<input type="checkbox"/> Warrant on File	Sex:	Race: Age:
Charges:			

Incident Summary: On June 3, 2023 at 12:31am, CPD patrol officers were called to the 1200 block of Fountain Lane on the report of a shooting. Upon arrival at the scene, the victim was located with a gunshot wound. The victim was subsequently transported to a local hospital where he succumbed to his injury. At this time, the circumstances of this shooting are unknown and detectives continue to investigate. No suspects have been identified.

Anyone with information regarding this incident, is asked to call Columbus Police Homicide Unit at (614) 645-4730 or Central Ohio Crime Stoppers at (614) 461-TIPS (8477). Detective Corbin is the lead detective on the case and is being assisted by Detective Shepherd.

Copy To: Executive Staff Bureau Commander Public Information Office

Prepared By: Sgt. LeRoy Assignment: Homicide Telephone: (614) 645 - 4730

Approved By: Sgt. LeRoy Assignment: Homicide