

## CONCLUSION

**Less cost, more safety.** Lower recidivism, more youth success. These are the bottom line results of the programs and initiatives highlighted in this report.

Nor are these highlighted programs alone in demonstrating that substantial progress is attainable through juvenile justice reform. Other guiding light programs and initiatives in other jurisdictions are also proving that the eight challenges identified in this report can be effectively met and overcome. In addition, *Less Help, More Hype* identified several more weaknesses that now cripple juvenile justice efforts nationwide and several more challenges for juvenile justice reform: reducing excessive transfers of youthful offenders to adult courts; engaging community organizations and volunteers to help supervise juvenile offenders; improving legal representation for youthful offenders; and carefully monitoring the success of juvenile justice programs and institutions. Guiding light programs are also tackling these challenges, proving again that far greater success is attainable.

In its cover story for the week of November 13, 2000, *Newsweek* reflected on the paradoxical trend in America – the land of the free – toward incarcerating an ever-increasing proportion of our nation’s poor and minority youth. “We believe in

making people pay for their crimes,” wrote reporter Ellis Cose, “in protecting the weak from the vicious. We believe in justice. And we believe in simple truths.

“Our strivings to protect society may have weakened it,” Cose continued, “for they fuel the notion that we can afford to throw human beings away. And they discourage us from asking whether

it is morally or economically justifiable to invest so much in locking lost souls down and so little in salvaging them.

“In fact,” the *Newsweek* story concluded, “a strategy of human reclamation may be the only thing that makes sense in the long run, not only for those fated to spend time locked down, but for the communities to

which they seem destined to return—communities that now are doubly damned: to suffer when wrongdoers are taken away and yet again when they come back.”<sup>64</sup>

Particularly when it comes to juvenile offenders, a strategy of human reclamation is not a pie-in-the-sky fantasy. Rather, as the programs highlighted in this report demonstrate, reforming juvenile justice represents a common sense, dollars-and-cents opportunity – a sound and sorely needed investment in our safety and in our future.

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