My Brother’s Keeper
September 25, 2015 Youth/Adult Convening
California State University, Sacramento
Sacramento, CA

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My Brother’s Keeper – Sacramento
September 2015

The My Brother’s Keeper Sacramento Convening- Be the Voice of Change

On September 25, over 450 youth, community leaders, policy-makers, thought leaders and education partners participated in a one day conference focused on identifying solutions to issues impacting the lives of young boys and men of color. This landmark conversation is part of a larger citywide effort, in alignment with President Barack Obama’s National My Brother’s Keeper initiative. Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson, in partnership with Sierra Health Foundation, local school districts, law enforcement agencies and community leaders, have joined in partnership to improve outcomes for Sacramento area youth, particularly our young men of color.

Objective for the event
Participants in the My Brother’s Keeper convening were welcomed by Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson, heard from inspiring speaker and former NBA star Lawrence Funderberke, engaged in courageous and challenging discussions, shared stories about their personal experiences, dialoged with a panel of adult system leaders, and began crafting what will ultimately inform local strategies to address the crisis facing our young men.

The My Brother’s Keeper convening was also specifically designed to create opportunities for youth and adult decision makers to engage in thought provoking discussions, critically examining three priority areas, aligned to President Obama’s national initiative focus areas and those identified by the My Brother’s Keeper (MBK) Sacramento Collaborative.

“...In other words, broadening the horizons for our young men and giving them the tools they need to succeed will require a sustained effort from all of us”

- President Barack Obama
3 Key Focus Areas

The following are three priority areas (and associated goal milestones) identified by the MBK Sacramento collaborative as central to the localized efforts for young men.

Education
Goal Milestones:
Ensure all children enter school cognitively, physically, socially, and emotionally ready.
Ensure all children read at grade level by 3rd grade.
Ensure all youth graduate from high school.
Ensure all youth complete post-secondary education training.

Employment
Goal Milestone:
Ensure all youth out of school are employed

Public Safety
Goal Milestone:
Ensure all youth remain safe from violent crime and have a second chance

The Table-Talk Discussions

Table-talk discussions were designed to in order to create safe and productive space for authentic youth input on the three MBK Sacramento Focus Areas. There were a total of three (3) table talk sessions, crafted to gain youth insight on the following guiding questions:

Am I my brother’s keeper at school?
Am I my brother’s keeper at work?
Are my “protectors” also my brother’s keeper?

Each session was introduced with a short youth video providing context (including data points). Participants then had the opportunity to share their initial reactions to each video via live polling. Following this, discussions among table groups of approximately 10-12 participants were facilitated by one adult male and one youth volunteer per table.

Table-Talk Summary

The following section of this report includes responses from the live polling sessions, as well as a detailed summary of participant feedback captured during the table-talk discussions for each of the three focus areas.
Live Polling Responses

Who are My Brothers Keepers in the Room?

The following demographic information on MBK participants is based on self-reporting responses to the live polling questions. The average number of polling responses fluctuated between 225 and 250 response per question.

How old are you?

Polling responses:
- 52% 16-19 years old
- 29% 14-15 years old
- 14% 10-13 years old
- 5% 20 years and older

What’s your gender?

Polling responses:
- 81% male
- 12% female
- 5% transgender
- 2% gender fluid
Where do you live?

Polling responses:
- 55% South Sacramento
- 13% Other
- 11% Del Paso Heights
- 8% Oak Park
- 5% Natomas
- 4% West Sacramento
- 3% Elk Grove
- 2% Rancho Cordova

What is your ethnic background?

Polling responses:
- 28% African American
- 28% Multi-racial
- 20% Asian
- 10% Latino
- 6% Southeast Asian
- 4% White
- 3% Pacific Islander
Education

Am I My Brother's Keeper at School?

Discussion Prompts:

• What are the barriers or challenges you see/experience in school(s)?
• If you were asked to develop an elementary school where there was a focus on the success of young men of color,
• What would it look like? How about a middle school? How about a high school?
• What can elementary, middle and high schools do better to help young men of color both prepare for graduation, and successfully graduate high school?
• What do you believe would help young men of color in high school prepare for college?

Youth responses (major themes)

• Elimination of teacher “profiling” of students
• Need to “be seen” by teachers
• Higher expectations of students
• Fair treatment of all students
• Teachers to show patience
• Need to address various barriers to learning, including lack of basic human needs (food, safety, issues within home environment, etc.)
• Relevant and interesting curriculum
• Diversity/teachers who look like the students
• More male teachers
• Better college preparation

“More understanding on personal issues”
—youth participant

• Increased tutoring
• Support for issues happening within the household
• Counseling services on campus/therapy rooms
• Clubs, fun activities related to student interest available at school
• Tutoring- more than just homework help
• Minimizing distractions/opportunities to increase focus
• Support dealing with gangs
• Technology resources available at school
• Better libraries/making the libraries more fun
• Leadership


**Employment**

**Am I My Brother’s Keeper at Work?**

Discussion prompts:

- What are the barriers or challenges you see/experience in getting a job?
- What can schools do to better prepare you to find/get a job?
- What types of jobs are available to young men of color?
- What types of jobs would you like young men of color to have?
- What do you feel you need most to be successful in getting a job? (Access to transportation? Skills? Training?)
- Where/who are our resources?
- Who should be helping our young men of color get jobs?

**Youth Responses (major themes)**

- Preparedness barriers (clothes, transportation)
- Younger age minimum for worker’s permits
- Forgiveness of juvenile records on applications
- Social/Emotional/mental preparedness when not hired
- Learning opportunities on fundamentals on job readiness

- Access points for youth who have never worked before
- Lists of who is hiring youth? Non-profits?
- Access to work permits
- Navigation from a job to a career
- Electives (9th grade) that provide exposure to career opportunities
- Job placement assistance services located at schools
- Connections to employers
- Internship opportunities
- Assistance with resumes
- Career pathways at school


“More forgiveness for records”

“Affordable process for kids to get their social security numbers”

—youth participant feedback

Prepared by Innovation Bridge, Inc.
Public Safety

Are My “Protectors” also My Brother’s Keeper?”

Discussion Prompts:
1. What safety challenges or issues do you or your friends experience in your neighborhood/community?
2. Describe what would help make you feel safer in your school, neighborhood and/or community?
3. What is our role (youth, adults, parents, law enforcement, etc.) in keeping each other safe? Our schools, neighborhoods/community safe?

Youth responses (major themes):
- Youth not having a voice when public safety decisions are made
- Role of law enforcement
- Better communication between community and law enforcement
- Improving practices and interactions between youth/community/neighborhood and law enforcement
- Chance to shift misperceptions between law enforcement and youth (both ways)
- Youth opportunity to inform police training

“Community and law enforcement working together to create better police practices”
-Youth participant

-“No father figures”
-“Cops should have experience or Captains in every car”
- More things to do in the neighborhood
- Clean park spaces, recreation spaces
- Prevention/intervention- gangs and substance abuse
- Street Safety- speeding, drunk driving
- Street knowledge
- Environmental Safety-street lights, usable community space
- Law enforcement to increase empathy- youth are not “just a record”
- Law enforcement to have better knowledge and understanding of communities/people they serve
- Civic engagement
- Educating youth on their rights
- Bullying- peer awareness and accountability
- Parent guidance around public safety
Youth Participants

No decisions about me, without me
Over 300 students and youth from throughout the city of Sacramento region participated in this remarkable event. Engagement of multiple K-12 school districts, youth groups from community based organizations, as well as junior college and university school systems was critical in ensuring representation of young men from various communities, ages, ethnicities, backgrounds and socio-economic status.

Participating School Districts

Sacramento City Unified School District
American Legion School
C.K. McClatchy High School
John F. Kennedy High School
Hiram Johnson High School
Luther Burbank High School

Twin Rivers Unified School District
Foothill Farms Middle School
Grant High School
Martin Luther King Tech Academy

San Juan Unified School District
Encina High School
San Juan High School

Natomas Unified School District
Leroy Green K-8 School
Inderkum High School
Natomas High School

Sacramento County Office of Education
Gerber Jr. and Sr. High School

Los Rios Community School District
Sacramento City College
American River College
Consumnes River College

California State University, Sacramento

University of California, Davis

Youth groups from various Community Based Organizations, including:
Always Knocking, Inc.
Asian Resources, Inc.
Center for Fathers and Families
La Familia Counseling Center
Roberts Family Development Center

“The opportunity to have the My Brother’s Keeper summit is a wonderful opportunity for the leaders of Sacramento to hear the voice of the kids. This summit gives us an opportunity to listen, and then to help develop a strategic plan”

-Sacramento City Councilmember Rick Jennings
Table Talk Facilitators

Brothers Helping Brothers

Table-talk discussions were facilitated by a mighty team of volunteers. Facilitators attended training to learn tools for engaging youth in critical discussions and practice group facilitation strategies. Their hard work and generosity of time and spirit was instrumental in the successful implementation of the table talk discussions.

FACILITATORS:

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