

WINSTON CHURCHILL MEMORIAL TRUST

The Anthony Walker Foundation Ambassador Report

August 2012

Dr.G.V.Walker

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Winston Churchill Memorial Trust
The Anthony Walker Foundation Ambassador Report 2012

Report Produced by: Dr. G.V. Walker
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Introduction

From the 30th July 2012- August 31st 2012, I embarked on a trip to Jamaica and the United States of America sponsored by the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust in the UK. I currently work as a Learning Support Practitioner for Liverpool Community College; I am the Founder/Trustee of The Anthony Walker Foundation.

The Anthony Walker Foundation works in the local community to promote racial harmony through education, music and sport. The organisation was set up after the racist murder of my son Anthony Walker; he was only 18 years old. One year later in 2006 with the support of my family and local people in Liverpool I became the founder of the Anthony Walker Foundation.

The Anthony Walker Foundation has a young ambassador's programme that works to promote equality and diversity by empowering young people through education, sports and arts events to support criminal justice agencies and local communities to reduce race hate crime and racist bullying. The young people are then developed to become leaders, mentors and role models.

The purpose of my trip was to learn, evaluate and develop new ideas for the young ambassadors. I planned to create links between our young ambassadors, other youth organisations and projects at work in the community to assimilate information for all our advancement in the near future.

Whilst in Jamaica, my vision was to meet some of your young people, and to gain some understanding of the work done in the community. This work will hopefully facilitate a cultural exchange between the young people in the very near future. This report will be published via the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust detailing all I have learned during the trip.

Organisations visited in Jamaica

Blue Mountain Project
Trench Town Reading Centre
National Youth Council
Youth Opportunities Unlimited

Organisations/Persons visited in New York

Young Life Foundation
Sean Bell Memorial Trust/WIRIF
Susan Parker Interview
Rev Al Sharpton
Kings of Kings Foundation

Organisations

Blue Mountain Project

The Blue Mountain Project (BMP) is a grassroots, nonprofit, nongovernmental organisation that has been helping rural Jamaican communities since 2004. Their volunteers live and work directly with the communities they serve enabling them to identify key areas for development.

The BMP states that, “Our priority programme areas were determined in consultation with the community and by our belief in a holistic approach. BMP's priority programme areas are the provision of clean water and quality health care, improving literacy, and economic development. Working with volunteers and community members, we make the most of every donation to effect lasting, productive change”

The organisation was founded in the United States but is registered in the Hagley Gap community within Jamaica. My initial contact for the Blue Mountain Project was through Cathy Soukla the Executive Director of the Blue Mountain Project. I also scheduled a meeting with Euton Rodney, the assistant manager for the Hagley Gap fun camp in Kingston, who arrived with his travelling companion and co-driver.

Blue Mountain Project: Children and volunteers



On meeting Euton, he insisted that he was just a family man and coffee farmer who is passionate and wants a better life for himself, his family and his community. The team consists of volunteers from a variety of backgrounds and professions including some young people from USA. I felt privileged to be a part of this passionate team of people, especially the five young volunteers, who had funded and paid for their entire trip. They acted as benefactors whilst the children's willingness for this opportunity to be participants of this worthwhile project, which is to be educated further was wonderful.

As we climbed the great Blue Mountain bumpy roads the group of children and volunteers did not seem concerned or phased by any aspect of the journey, striking me as just willing, jolly and passionate trekkers. Others also joined in the long haul up the steep and exhausting climb towards the fun camp surrounded by the beautiful greenery of the Blue Mountain whilst I observed, perturbed by the huge climb ahead. Euton my driver and assistant manager of the project assured me that those young people were fine and the walk was simply part of their daily routine, just as if they were walking to and from school on a normal day, and that I should not be concerned. Not long after we arrived the children gathered in the playground ready for action.

The fun camp activities took place in the local primary school which is closed during the summer. Heading up the team was Euton and his wife and a small team of volunteers which consisted of 5 students from America, a few locals who volunteered, including Mike, a primary school teacher. and the local nurse, Edith Carson.

Kelee was one of the students I teamed up with, who though seemingly inert in strength and capabilities, sprang into action, and gathered the equipment ready to work with the children. Using a chalkboard and pens simple words are written on strips of laminated cards to be copied by the children. We were told that lunch would be served at noon. We handed the children hand-held, laminated strips for writing on, books, and white board pens for easy erasing. Kelee began teaching literacy to the children who were aged between 5 to 13 years old, rotating from session, to session, as the need arose, and taking only short breaks periodically. I resisted the urge and joined in, displaying some of my primary educational skills which I thoroughly enjoyed, much to the children's delight.

The children are mainly from an austere environment but, absorbing the sheer enthusiasm of the day, seized such auspicious opportunities. We knew that this could be their chance to fulfill their hopes and dreams, and to ensure nothing was wasted. Thus the project's mission "Make the good better and the better best" was well on its way to success.

Many of the children are from farming backgrounds in the Blue Mountain Peak area where coffee is the main source of income for the family. Coffee, as a commodity, can also provide employment; a factor that is vital to the community's survival. The families surrounding this area also rely on tourism drawn in by the Blue Mountain Peak.

However adverse the situation may be, these children had high aspirations which is conducive, not only to their community, but their great desire to give something back. They recognise that by pursuing the most trying careers such as those in law, education and medicine the children feel that these careers are important and are preferred and that their own personal skills and dedication can be demonstrated. Many of the children's role models are Usain Bolt and Shelley-Ann Pryce both Jamaican Olympic Champions. These two figures represented to the children that to be successful in the sporting arena is also a way out of poverty for them and to not be educated can be injurious to them being a success.

I found this visit to be very rewarding and it provided a huge insight into the power of education 'with purpose'; I found the volunteers and all the staff priceless and remarkably resourceful in nurturing these young lives for future endeavours.

The Trench Town Reading Centre

The Trench Town Reading Centre was set up in December 1993 and it is a non-profit, secular, and community based, development initiative. The centre has facilities of a library and a school for young people and is a community cornerstone. The centre works to enrich the lives of the children through reading and learning and emphasising the exchange of ideas, critical thinking, literacy, education and life skills. Trench Town is based in a small area in the West Kingston. Trench Town, like other ghetto areas, hasn't been as well served by public and private sectors of society and it has been isolated and threatened by the surrounding political and gang violence.

When I arrived at the centre I was met by Swete, and her family. The Reading Centre mission is similar to that of the Blue Mountain Project. The differences were that the volunteers are a family consisting of a mother and daughters team including a few local volunteers who are commonly known as 'Uncles and Aunties'. The main funding of this group comes through sponsorships and from local businesses.

The reading project was founded by Roslyn Ellison, a wonderful lady with a passion for change. The team leader is a young lady called Swete and the project is housed in a small room laid out in similar fashion to any other library. The only difference is that it is not just any library; it is the Trench Town Reading Centre also known as 'The Big Yellow Building in the Park' and Swete has control of a number of enthusiastic children willing to have fun whilst learning.

These children consider the library as their own safe place and a place where they have a real sense of ownership. A place where they can read, do their homework and play. After school, and at all times, they have access to all literature, science, numeracy and history books to name but a few. The children had story time then they practiced drama and carried out role play of the stories they had read; parents often leave their children at the library which is also a community and play centre. The children's theme and motto is "one coco full basket" interpreted as, 'one by one the number of children and tasks increases'.

Swete, the leader and mentor, has aspirations but they are on hold. In the mean-time, her desire is to see her children (as she refers to the children within the project) become more educated, cared for and for the library to be fully resourceful. Swete feels more fulfilled doing what she does best, which is enhancing and keeping her children educated and safe. This is what motivates her the most.

The room where the scheme takes place is immaculately clean, this is thanks to mother Joan who seems to be constantly dusting, cleaning and straightening the books. In order to make the library more replenished I enquired as to what she needed most, she responded "More English books and dictionaries, we simply do not have enough of those."

I often wonder what the key to being educated is; I found it in these people. I found that there are no secret ingredients, no magic formula; it just takes vision, planning, action and determination to make it happen. All participants must be committed, passionate, driven, and have a willingness to work hard and remain focused on their goals.

I am aware that here in England there are many summer holidays and after-school clubs which are fully staffed, well-resourced places where children are kept safe, while parents/carers are able to continue work. In comparison, these children had a few books with no computers, a clean room, not nearly enough staff or resources, yet they are all happy.

I learnt that:

These projects are the length the leaders will go towards in ensuring that these children are being educated

I discovered a passion within the children to learn these new skills

In the volunteer's I saw strength, commitment and enthusiasm, considering that they are unpaid and even funded themselves to be part of these projects. Many of the volunteers travelled across the globe, exhausted and mosquito-bitten, yet they were un-perturbed.

The educational values for the children came first

The staff at the scheme was self-driven, zealous and committed

The overall behavior of the children in this project was excellent; they have a lot to lose if they mess up these opportunities therefore they try hard not to.

Responsibilities and boundaries are set

I believe that a positive out-look on life is a vital part of their existence and development within these communities.

National Youth Council of Jamaica

The National Youth Council of Jamaica is the umbrella organisation for youth clubs across Jamaica, which seeks to foster youth participation at the community level, and advocate youth participation in all levels of governance through providing assistance in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of government policy regarding youth. One sector of the National Youth Council of Jamaica is the Youth Ambassador programme; I chose to meet these young people.

I spoke to Dean, the leader of the Young Ambassadors programme who told me that they currently have members who are based locally and are partnered with agencies such as schools, youth clubs, colleges and CARACOM is the Caribbean Community. The main aims of the organisation are not to distract or take anything from other organisations but to boost morale and effectiveness, add values and strengthen what is already operating and not to duplicate them. I believe that these areas are beneficial to the advancement of the Youth Ambassadors programme.

Youth Opportunities Unlimited



(Photo taken by the young people of Youth Opportunities)

Youth Opportunities Unlimited (Y.O.U) is based in Kingston, Jamaica. The photograph above was taken by the group as part of their project. The Y.O.U team, work with young people in the community and their “mentors” to make a difference, developing the local youths and building up their nation- as stated within their mission statement. The organisation works to ensure that through the mentoring relationship, every adolescent is provided with the emotional support necessary to build self-confidence and self-esteem.

The Mentors state that they work to “provide, through counseling, training and example, the tools, resources and ideals that will ensure that adolescents complete their post-primary education and are equipped to become productive citizens; to support schools in their goal of leading students to effectively utilise the opportunities offered to them through post-primary education and to play a strong advocacy role for the rights of children and adolescents”

The organisation was launched in 1991 at Excelsior High School and it works to provide positive interventions for in-school adolescents. Y.O.U provides a variety of mentoring, life skills training, parenting and vital support programmes designed to help students complete their post-primary

education and pursue higher education, employment or skill training. Since 2001 under the leadership of Executive Director Georgia W. Lewis Scott, Y.O.U has enjoyed exponential growth. Currently, there are 3,320 adolescents enrolled in one or more of our programmes in school across Kingston, Jamaica and the St. Andrew Parish.

Y.O.U partners with the Media Technology Institute (MTI) of Kingston, Jamaica. Through this partnership, adolescents enrolled with Y.O.U can participate in internships with media firms in Jamaica. They receive hands on, real world training in video production and photography. Prior to their participation in the programme, many of the Y.O.U adolescents have never experienced "out of class" opportunities or seen anything of historic value.

Y.O.U provides mentors with a handbook to guide them in their efforts to mentor Jamaican youths. The goals and methods outlined in the handbook can best be summarised in a quote that appears on the last pages in the handbook:

"If someone listens, or stretches out a hand, or whispers a kind word of encouragement, or attempts to understand a lonely person, extraordinary things begin to happen." Loretta Girzartis (Born 1920, American Writer & Educator)

Mentors implement the S.M.A.R.T model of goal-setting. SMART is an acronym for S-Specific, M-Measurable, A-Action-oriented, R-Realistic and T-Timely. A model long utilised in the corporate world, SMART also lends itself to endeavours in mentoring and has proven to be useful part of their development. The SMART attitude certainly seems to work for them and this model is practiced in their interactions with the Y.O.U youth groups.

During my visit to this organisation, I spoken with staff members and mentors including a Jamaican netball player who was injured, during her recovery period, she decided to utilise her time as a volunteer for Y.O.U.

I was given a tour of the Y.O.U site. The organisation had the following:

- 21 programmes currently in operation featuring:
- Core mentoring – a period of time, when everything is focused/centered around mentoring, when an adult becomes a mentor for a minimum of 2 years.

- Programmes working with schools and directly in the surrounding communities with parents (10-19 age groups)
- Career programmes (15-26 age groups)
- Violence prevention, Leadership programme, Peer development programmes,
- Youth workshops focused on a variety of issues faced by youth - providing life skills, building self-esteem; thus improving their capability to finish school
- Primarily inner-city focused (violence prone communities) - working with youth, parents and community leaders
- Impacting the community so they become far more sustainable
- Working with youngsters and also with their parents and leaders
- Out of community work, here the youth learn who they are as a person, family member, community member, as a Jamaican with a holistic approach to life training
- Annually assessed and tailored programmes to the specific needs of the community.
- Providing positive role models that displayed respect for themselves and others are essential for their achievement.

Every year programmes are assessed and re-examined and tailored to the specific needs of the community. The Funding comes primarily from grants and managed by the Government.

New York Organisations

Young Life Foundation

(John Wagner, Dwayne Walker, Gee Walker)



I began the second leg of my trip in company with my nephew Dwayne Walker who had also partnered with Judy; a local Community campaigner who is active within the community. Dwayne and I worked well as a team to meet a variety of organisations to advertise my visit. He placed an article in the local paper called 'The Jamaican Times' in Queens, New York highlighting the Kings of Kings Foundation annual event, an Out-Reach programme.

Our first visit was the Young Life Foundation where we met a staff member called John Wagner. John and I talked in some detail about the work of Young Life Foundation. This is an international ministry founded in 1941, in Texas, by a man called Jim Raber, a Presbyterian minister and developed a plan of outreaching directly to children in the neighbourhoods where they lived.

The Young Life Foundation mainly targets 13-19 year olds with many of the older children in the community work as team leaders. The next step is to reach those aged 19 and over, who are in higher education.

The organisation is volunteer-led, supported by the community, local churches, schools, colleges, agencies, and Christian businesses with a small number of core staff provided from the local churches.

As a Christian, I felt it was important to understand an aspect of reaching young people that the AWF Foundation hasn't used much to reach young people. The use of faith, and Christian values is something I have always relied upon and practiced when working with young people. But the idea of using this to capture the hearts and minds of the young people was a new field of understanding and something I had only seen within the church walls. Young Life Foundation had mastered an art of what John called "reaching kids where they're at". John described going to the basketball courts, McDonald's or the school campus as "contact work".

John explained, "We get to know kids in their neighbourhoods. So it's not just, 'here's a flyer come to our programme', it is showing that we are willing to meet the youths at their level that allows them to get to know them. Our leaders and a lot of the Young Life Foundation is run by volunteers, college students, and community members who are trained on how to develop relationships with kids in their own environments. So we get to know kids, we generally invite them to Young Life Club which generally

happens on a Thursday night in their neighbourhood. These meetings may be in a rec-center, a church or even at a kid's house. They involve skits, fun and games, a kind of a 'party with a purpose' some people call it. So it's 59 minutes of chaos with a message. Sometimes we will have food or even go to McDonald's afterwards. Young life Club is a place where every kid and every teenager is invited."

I found this enlightening and refreshing; Young Life is able to adapt to the different types of neighbourhoods. John understands that young people need something to capture their imagination and by using drama, sports, such as basketball, and music; this project is able to do just that.

Young Life has offices around the world and in New York they reach young people across 15 of the community districts. Their offices are based in Harlem, Jamaica Queens, Red Hook Brooklyn, Manhattan, and South Bronx, with the majority either run out of a rec-centre or a church. Young Life is traditionally a volunteer-led organisation and most staff members in this scheme, serve to bring in the volunteers train, equip and help them. Funding, as always with the majority of nonprofit organisations, is an issue, with Young Life relying on "80% of our funding from individuals, maybe 10-15% from churches, and a little of money from foundations, usually family run foundations and Christians.

Young Life is all about the children, as John described "kids understand when you care about them and love them. It is about outreach. It's not about waiting for kids to turn up at our door, it's about running an excellent programme, and it's about having a message that kids can relate to". This ability to present and relate to children and to meet them where they are at is unique, but also universal. The Anthony Walker Foundation uses the summer festival, which is our annual sports events, to bring young people together. It is similar to the format Young Life uses as it is fun, games, education and entertainment, giving the children / young people something to do which is important and here too our messages similar; 'We care, and We will be there for You'.

John emphasised the importance of the children not feeling forced to adhere to the beliefs of Christianity but allowing choice. This choice practice is similar principles to the Youth Opportunity Unlimited organisation which seems to work for the young people involved and their organisations.

John stated “We always say from the beginning you can believe in anything you want but you have to listen. We are going to ask you to listen and pay attention and at the end of the day, you decide. But we are not going to change anything about how we think about you, or how we care about you, but if you think no, we always think no is not forever. But if you decide at this point no, that’s ok”.

Most of the children are between 15 and 16 years old, and they have plenty of time to think about what they have been taught, and what is right for them. John explained “We hang in there with the kids, another principle we informally talk about is “He who loves the longest usually wins, and so we hang in there with kids, no matter what. These kids- one day they are like this, then one day they are like that, and so it is a process we hang in there with them, even if they reject what we telling them, they are always welcome.”

I found this perspective to be inspiring and heartfelt and important. I have found that when the secular and faith based ideologies mix it is essential that young hearts and minds are allowed a choice in spite of what the adults may think. The important thing is that the children know that you are going to be there for them. This is key to the success of Young Life Foundation and was an aspiration for the foundation.

Young Life Foundation works in some areas such as East New York, South Bronx, and Red Hook. The majority of these children come from broken homes, or are raised by another family member such as an aunt, uncle or grandparent therefore, building relationships is essential. In some cases Young Life is providing the only source of stability in the young lives of these children.

The conversation with John continues “At times extra support is needed for the young people”; this is similar to the work that AWF are involved in with young offenders back in the UK. John stated “that children may need counseling, or professional trained social workers. If they are in trouble with the law and need lawyers, and education. If they don’t graduate from high school or they’re in trouble it’s going to be hard for them to get a job and raise a family later on life because these are tough times. We prefer to invest in people not just in buildings. Yes, buildings are important too, but if we rent, borrow and seek out vacant places for use; we can support those

who have buildings. We need to give young people things; we don't provide everything we need to partner with schools. We need to partner with learning centers; we need to partner with churches as we can't do it all"

I mentioned some of the work of the foundation and how my meeting him would form recommendations for the future projects our young people work on. John loved the idea of an exchange, and he stated that "if these kids from here could gain valuable experience from different cultures and different parts of the world that would be phenomenal. They don't even get out of their neighbourhoods, but for them to get out to England would be outrageous"

Young Life foundation is an international organisation with offices in Latin America, Asia, Africa and even in the UK. Its purpose is to build relationships with young people and let them know that somebody cares. Young Life has an Expeditions Project with a purpose of getting the young people to experience not just the world they are in, but the world outside their windows. So in the future, Young Life, AWF and other interested parties could possibly work together by bringing young people together; my recommendation for cooperation is detailed at the end of this report.

Young Life Foundation has shown me a different way of reaching young people and how to use this to reach the maximum amount of children possible. Instead of focusing on a particular issue, they devote their time and attention to young people succeeding in all areas of their lives. Teaching and introducing them to Jesus and also helping them to grow in their faiths.

Based in New York, the Young Life Foundation programmes are custom made for kids throughout their adolescent years. Young Life's multicultural ministry, focused on kids in diverse cultural communities and those in economically-depressed areas, is arguably the largest of its kind in the United States. Young Life has a ministry to kids with disabilities such as Capernaum and does work with teen moms called Young Lives. In a partnership with Military Community Youth Ministries, Young Life reaches military teens through a programme called Club Beyond. The Small Towns initiative brings Young Life to communities of fewer than 25,000 people.

Sean Bell Memorial Trust /When It's Real its Real Forever (W.I.R.I.F)



(Gee and Nicole)

On November 24, 2006, the late Sean Bell joined his friends in celebration of his upcoming wedding ceremony to his high school sweetheart and mother of his children, Nicole Paultre. Upon leaving his celebration in the early hours of his wedding day, Sean was gunned down and killed in a barrage of 50 bullets, fired by three New York City Police officers. During this attack, two of his friends, Joseph Guzman and Trent Benefield, survived with unimaginable injuries. The family and others deemed that as all of the men were found unarmed, they were in no violation of the law and they would pursue a fight for justice.

The Sean Bell Memorial Trust is in the fight for justice. Nicole vowed that she would devote her energy into seeking justice, not only for Sean, but for many other citizens violated by society and wrong-doings inherent in the system, and also to form links with those who have suffered such losses.

Nicole took the tragedy that changed her family's life, and decided to make a difference in cities and neighbourhood's, by providing a forum to inform

all city residents. She wants her daughters and others in similar situations to not see bitterness, but see hope.

Shortly after this tragic incident and the loss of her fiancé, Nicole Bell helped set up 'When It's Real Its Forever (W.I.R.I.F)'. WIRIF was founded by Nicole immediately following the killing of Sean Bell with help of Rev Al Sharpton's organisation in 2007 which is dedicated to the memory of Nichole's love for Sean so she can never say goodbye. Nicole said, "Sean never liked to say goodbye. He would say", "See you later."

The purpose of the organisation is to assist families and communities in need. Nicole stated "Since our start, (W.I.R.I.F) has always sought public venues where people can receive and understand the resources available, the tools we provide, and rights they possess. We cannot afford to forget families in crisis from injustice by our court system, police brutality, gun violence, civil rights abuse and abandonment from our federal system"

I met Nicole and Susan in New York and was invited to participate in their annual community event for Sean Bell Ride for Justice. This consists of a gathering of people riding motorcycles and cars, escorted by police driving across the city, marking all the places that meant something to Sean while he was alive. This tour also included his final resting place where we held hands and the vicar said a short prayer. Then we returned to the park event – The Sean Bell Day, which is similar to the Anthony Walker Foundation Festival that we hold annually to remember my son, Anthony.

They also hold the Know your right's conference - every April bringing the police and community together. This year a young black male from the New

York College was on the panel when the community asked questions of the Police; the main goal of the summit is to prevent another Sean Bell tragedy.

Other objectives included:

- Building a relationship with police is the first step that needs to be taken
- They identified that tragedies such as that in the case of Sean Bell caused the community to lose trust in the Police but the community need the police
- Police/Community relations is the key to success for the 'Know Your Rights Conference'
- Funds are needed which are collated by fundraising events similar to AWF events
- Improvement of relations between the police and the community
- Local councillors and celebrities should show their support for the event

Susan Parker Interview

After an extremely busy event I managed to catch Susan Park, who works for W.I.R.I.F for a few seconds to find out more about the Community Summit project where they gather each year with the intention of building relationships and bridging the gaps between police and the community.

Annual Sean Bell Summit or Know your right's Conference

- The conference was held at New York College in Jamaica, Queens, NY (around April 25th of each year - it is the anniversary of the day

when the three police officers who fatally shot Sean Bell were acquitted of murder)

- It is attended by minority men, members of the New York City Police Department (NYPD) and Community Leaders. (It is very well attended)
- Young minority men in the community are given information about interactions with NYPD that can save their lives.
- Panel of speakers include people who understand about young minority men in New York City and issues they face:
 - Police & high ranking police officials
 - General council of the American Civil Liberties Union [ACLU- American organisation advocating individual rights]
 - Criminal and civil rights attorneys
 - Various government officials (last year New York State Senator, Malcolm A. Smith attended)
- The conference addresses the difficulties with relations between the police and minority men by discussing the plight of minority men in America and the police and developing awareness around the subject. Susan said that, “No convictions, no confidence in the police”.

The King of Kings Foundation



(Picture: Lance Fuertdo, Gee Walker, Todd Fuertdo)

The final organisation I met in New York was the Kings of Kings Foundation where I met the executive director Lance Fuertdo; we also had many conversations over the phone about his work. The King of Kings Foundation was set up by Lance and Todd Fuertdo in 2005 to create a way of giving back to 'at risk' youth in our communities.

The mission of the organisation is to educate all against the dangers and consequences of being involved in drugs, violence and a lack of education, which can lead to homelessness, poverty and incarceration. One of the strongest goals of Kings of Kings is to help build stronger safer and closer communities.

Lance explained that the organisation used a variety of methods to conduct their work. One of the methods included an annual community breakfast/BBQ, which is titled "friends for life". Lance stated he used this to

help bridge the gap of communication between the seniors and youth in the community and to work with various people who moved out of the community, who have grown up with the same mentality.

Another method used by Lance included discussing with the young people the choices they had. He described these three things as: Choices, Consequences, and what's at stake; this is used by the young people to analyse the choices they make and eventually what they are willing to sacrifice.

I learned that Lance had a hard life growing up. He explained that “When we were growing up we fell in the traps that were out there, at a young age and we were involved in one of the biggest gangs in Queens, at the time in the early 1970s that was equivalent to the Crips and Bloods today. Being involved in the gangs led us to selling drugs, and we became really good at it the government dubbed us ‘kings-pins’, we were known in 23 different states, we operated in 23 different states’; so gangs and drugs landed us in prison. When we were in the prison system we learned the more about the prison industrial complex, which was just a modern day form of slavery which dealt with cheap manual labour. I did 10 years in prison. Upon my release I vowed I would do all I could do to make sure our future generations are kept from falling into the same trap, which was the prison industrial complex. From there, I wanted to tell our story and I wanted to do a feature film, as our history set the precedent in Queens and the destruction and demise of Queens”

After Lance's lengthy prison sentence and accepting Christ as his Lord and Saviour, he understood he had to break the cycle and the chains of

destruction that he had helped cause in the community. So the foundations for Kings of Kings were laid.

Since 2005, The Kings of Kings Foundation has been going into schools, libraries, educational centres, recreational centres, community centres, youth detention centres anywhere they could go and get that message out of not being involved in gangs, and that message was the only thing it will lead you to is destruction.

One of the highlights of the work produced by the Kings of Kings Foundation was a six-state tour that Lance and Todd worked on. These motivational and educational talks enabled the foundation to create recognition for the work it had been doing.

Kings of Kings obtains its fundraising similar to that of the AWF Foundation in its early days. This means that for the first 5 ½ years they did everything for free. Lance explained that when he eventually got out of prison it was not easy adapting to this new way of life as before prison he was a very wealthy young individual; so coming home and setting up the organisation was hard and sometimes tempting to return to the old ways, but he felt rooted in Christ and prayed for wisdom and strength. He had a renewed focus on the key objectives of the Kings of Kings project.

So Lance and Todd went into every school for free, and eventually gained a positive reputation of the work they had completed. They then began submitting and receiving small grants. One of the early grants they received was a small grant for a programme that they creating and completing along

the way; an anti-gun and anti-gang tour targeting schools and community centres. In creating that, they perfected their techniques and ended up getting a federal grant for \$300,000 to target communities and schools in the area with an anti-drug programme.

In 2009, in reaction to the large numbers of shootings and murders in New York, the elected mayor called a city-wide emergency meeting. Within that meeting were clergymen, grassroots organisations including supporters of a cease fire programme that had been adopted in Chicago. The programme had the sole purpose of reducing shootings and murders in targeted areas, and the 4 million dollars was allocated to various organisations. The Kings of Kings Foundation was one that was selected to implement the new programme. This enabled them to hire a large number of staff, both paid and voluntary who continue the work of Kings of Kings Foundation.

I learnt from Lance the importance of “street” education of the youth and the need for more people with real life stories to educate and deter youth in the community. Lance stated “We encourage, as long as you believe, you can achieve, positively, we don’t promote anything negative, if you are thinking along the lines of being a doctor, attorney, or a school teacher. We let them know, you have to firstly believe in yourself. If you don’t believe in yourself no one else will. We have a unique style of reaching the youth, it’s a special ingredient, give it real and the kids recognise it and real recognises real. When you’re talking to kids, youth and young adults, you can’t be phoney. You have to be real about it, so we have that secret ingredient... and we just have a connection”. I believe this connection and realness is unique to the Kings of Kings Foundation and this allows

dynamic change within the community. The Anthony Walker Foundation organisation and my story uses this method when working with young people and it is found, not just in USA but in the UK, that the responses are life changing and help deliver new perspectives, attitudes and beliefs.

Kings of Kings Foundation aspires to have it's our own centre too which would be open to the local community. The learning centre would have access to a library, computers, and a place to practice dancing; this would then be duplicated in other cities and countries. The Foundation is also working on the production of a documentary that demonstrates the work they have completed and their own life stories.

Rev Al Sharpton

I met Al Sharpton in Queens, New York he attended and supports the Sean Bell event which was held in the park. Reverend Alfred Sharpton was born 3rd October 1957 and he was ordained into the Pentecostal church. Al Sharpton is an outspoken and sometimes controversial political activist in the fight against racial prejudice and injustice. In 1971, he established the National Youth Movement. His many critics and supporters have watched him run for Senate, mayor of New York, and candidate for president. His dramatic style brings popular and media attention to his causes.

In Conclusion

I am eternally grateful to the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust for the opportunity to visit these organisations. The late Sir Winston Churchill be remembered and honoured alongside my other heroes. The experience and what I have learnt will be tailored to improve some of the Anthony Walker Foundation activities, and valued by myself as life changing.

I will recommend directly to the AWF Foundation the following;

- AWF should remain open to other organisations and agencies wanting to get involved and form partnerships with AWF and in return also support their work
- Social Networks/Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Skype should be utilised
- Distribution of a report and findings to other organisations
- Target more Primary schools
- Possible long term exchange programme should be discussed
- Remain open to other organisations/agencies i.e. Young Life; to ensure that they get involved and form links with the AWF
- The police should open dialogues with minority groups, youth organisation and agencies, schools and colleges to educate, alleviate fear and build bridges between them and the community. Similar to (WIRIF Summit)

This trip has taken me on a journey from which I have learnt about the true and real value of education; and talents to get to a particular point in life. Whatever we do, in order to have a positive out-come we should do it with 'purpose'. We must have a vision, a plan, actions, hard-work commitment, and a passion which is an enthusiasm that burns deep within. This passion

must be visual, and stimulate the senses such that it aims become a reality; one that all can see, touch, do and help evolve. For real change to be realised and happen; it is paramount to start educating our children and the next generation as early as possible, preferably in the formative years when they are unaffected by peers and environment; this is paramount for the future. As a society we have a tendency to treat life's unsolvable problems rather than taking positive actions and using preventative methods to stop most problems from happening, by being proactive, we can manage such problems from even occurring.

I have experienced and met many committed people who are working alongside and within the community to restore hope. I have known those who believe in and have faith in God - those who demonstrate God's love and faithfulness as they experience life's difficulties. I met people who stand by teenagers because they felt that they had needed someone whom they can trust, someone to guide, reassure, encourage and support them. All the above are echoing the common bond which creates a bridge into the lives of our youth, which are to try and understand young people's needs because at times 'they do not care much about how much you know, until they know how much you care about how they are feeling and what they are going through'.

All the organisations function with mostly positive purposes attached. All felt that there is a higher power, namely God that we are answerable to. Both Jamaican and American organisations felt that their countries are formed on Christian principles and therefore everyone will be told about God. It is not forced or imposed on people, but in principle their faith is shared and practiced - it is then down to individual choice. I am told that

these projects and organisations are effective and have success stories to prove that what they do and practice does work for them and within the communities in which they live and work.

Completed by Dr G.V Walker

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