

LIBERTY FOR YOUTH

PREVENTION, INTERVENTION & RETENTION

Liberty For Youth programming is unique in the sense that we offer programs for prevention & intervention combined, and 3 year scholarships to qualifying youth.

PREVENTION

Originally we began serving at-risk youth clientele between the ages of 14 to 25 and alumni beyond 25, living in the Hamilton and surrounding areas who are involved in, or at-risk of, criminal behaviour. However, after obtaining years of data and research we found that youth are being recruited to crime-filled lifestyles earlier, and in light of these findings we began serving clientele at the age of 12 years old in order to increase our prevention strategies.

Liberty For Youth offers a safe programming space for at-risk youth to get involved in sports (basketball), obtain free tutoring support, access our music studio, obtain bursaries and much more, all free of charge! We also provide free transportation to eliminate barriers for youth to attend and access programming.

INTERVENTION

Between April 2017 to March 2020, Liberty For Youth delivered and evaluated a three-stage skills building, mentorship and career planning '*3D Program*' targeted at youth in conflict with the law who are involved in, or vulnerable to, gun, gang and drug activities. Over 75 youth (referred by various youth detention centres and probation officers) participated in our *3D Program (Discovery, Development & Deployment)* designed to encourage self-discovery, empowerment, continued education, and employability.

In the **Discovery** stage of our program, we assisted youth with assessing their strengths and interests. These exercises showed youth career options that might be of interest to them. We also worked with the youth to help them increase their employability skills through various workshops, which included resume assistance and completing mock interviews.

We partnered with various businesses who provided youth with work experience and mentors to facilitate the **Development** of their careers of interest.

Finally we provided opportunities for youth to **Deploy** these careers of interest via scholarships, internships, and apprenticeships to assist them in achieving their future aspirations.

52% of youth from our 3D Program obtained employment as a result of their involvement.

Our 3-year pilot project was fully funded by the *Department Of Justice Canada* under their Guns, Gangs & Drugs initiative. To view our project overview & successes, please visit: <https://youtu.be/fyL-iDjz6B4>



RETENTION

Liberty For Youth developed an Alumni program for young adults who are over 25 years of age. For many, Liberty For Youth has been a safe haven for them and they have developed strong bonds with their long-term mentors. We continue to assist with various needs that often include:

- Obtaining pardons to have charges removed
- Employment assistance
- Finance education
- Education assistance
- Tutoring

Many of our Alumni members also desire to volunteer and 'give back' to Liberty For Youth by mentoring younger at-risk youth in our programming. Alumni members frequently share their testimonies to encourage other youth to get out of gun, gang, or drug related lifestyles. (This is also a large part of our gang exit strategy.)

FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FREDERICK DRYDEN

Frederick Dryden was born in Montego Bay, Jamaica. He migrated to Collingwood Ontario, when he was 11 years old. After experiencing abuse as a teen Frederick was inspired to start Liberty For Youth in 2004.

Between October 14th – November 5th of 2016, Frederick completed a 3 week/21-day marathon (Run For Youth) between Ottawa, ON to Hamilton, ON; with a goal to raise awareness and funding for youth. Frederick ran over 700 KMs & conducted over 72 speaking engagements along the route.

In 2018, Frederick released his first book entitled "Running For Their Lives". The book captures his at-risk teen years, when he experienced homelessness and was in conflict with the law, along with his Run For Youth journey.

QUOTES

"\$1 spent in prevention, saves \$17 in taxpayers' money." – *Running For Their Lives*, Page 75

"It can cost anywhere between \$63,000 to \$95,000 provincially to incarcerate one youth aged 12-17. For a chronic young adult offender, it can cost up to \$280,000 annually on a federal level. In contrast, one year of programming at Liberty For Youth serving 100 youth costs \$700,000; therefore, saving millions in taxpayer dollars for every individual that is kept out of the justice system. Intervention is extremely necessary, as 74% of institutionalized adults were once youth in conflict with the law." – *Running For Their Lives*, Page 94