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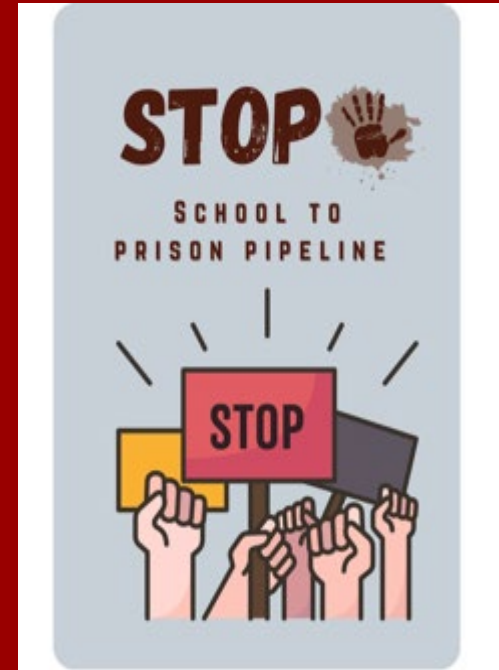
# Disrupting the School to Prison Pipeline

A Community Restorative Justice Practice Project

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# Project Goal

The SToPP Project sets out to disrupt the school-to-prison pipeline for **ethnic minorities and other students of color** who have developmental disabilities, through trainings developed and provided to educators, school resource officers, and other youth professionals as well as utilizing best practices in implementing restorative justice in schools.





# How Will We Accomplish It?

## Level 1

- 15 Hours of In-Person Training
- 50 Hours of Virtual Training
- Establish teams of trained individuals in at risk counties for networking, support, and sustainability.
- Advisors help facilitate and support.

## Level 2

- Exchange information with schools, churches, legal, and youth organizations to help identify needs of persons with disabilities/disadvantaged circumstances;
- Review disciplinary referrals, code of conduct policies, and other practices that lead to expulsions and legal encounters.

## Level 3

- Create presentation of divergent activities for community engagement;
- Introduce trained leaders to community;
- Utilize trained teams to begin new cycles of training in their specified counties-locations.
- Note: This last criterion completes Gold Star Certification and moves toward sustainability

# Meet The Teams



# Why Are We Doing It?

The Office of Civil Rights states, “students with disabilities are treated far more harshly than their peers without disabilities.” Students with disabilities are “twice as likely to receive an out-of-school suspension (13%) as are students without disabilities (6%).” Sadly, “75% of students physically restrained at schools are disabled.”



This project includes a language acquisition specialist for translation and interpretation.



# Counties We Would Love To Be On The Team

This project includes four potential counties which have higher poverty populations.

- **Boone County**  
16.8%
- **Cape Girardeau/Bollinger**  
16.8%
- **Greene**  
15.5%
- **St. Louis City**  
22.5%



# To have trained teams in each of the four counties to:

- Sustain Restorative Practice Training and Activity Implementation
- To Serve as Ongoing Trainers of Restorative Justice Practices

# Certified Community Restorative Justice and Practice Project Trainers of Trainers

- Are now able to train in schools, churches, the workplace and MJJA training activities.
- Teams that expand their practices to include divergent social, industrial and mentoring activities will receive the Gold Star Certification Rating.



## Expected Project Outcome

**To have a positive impact on youths of color with disabilities:**

- Lower Suspension and Expulsion Rates
- To further Awareness and Inclusivity

# Some of the Experts and

# Advisors

Dr. Gaye Lang  
Restorative Justice  
Expert

Juanita Simmons  
PhD  
Equity Coach

Larry Bryant  
PhD  
Mental Health  
Professional

Tia N. Locke-  
Simmons EdD  
School  
Administrator  
Advisor

Nate Stephens  
EdD  
Mentor and  
Advisor for  
Youth

Nidia Lopez  
Language  
Acquisition  
Specialist

Liz Ballard  
RED Coordinator  
MJJA

Jennifer Phillips M.S.  
Restorative Justice  
Coordinator  
MJJA



Jennifer Phillips has a Masters of Science Degree from Lindenwood University in Criminal Justice Administration. She worked as a Deputy Juvenile Officer, Grant Manager and was the Disproportionate Minority Contact Coordinator for St. Charles County, Circuit 11 prior to joining MJJA as the Restorative Justice Coordinator. She is also the current Vice President of Foster Adoption Support Team, serving foster and adoptive children in St. Charles County.

Jennifer Phillips M.S.

Rylee is a third-year Ph.D. student who is passionate about disrupting the school-to-prison pipeline by improving mental health services for justice-involved youth and their families. This project is important to me because I believe that bringing together stakeholders from all walks of life and building a strong collaborative team to support these youth is the best way to create impact in our community. I feel lucky to be a part of this team.



Rylee Park, B.A.  
Clinical Psychology Ph.D.  
Student



**Nidia Lopez**  
Language Acquisition  
Specialist

Nidia A Lopez was born and raised in Colima, a rural, coastal town in Mexico. At the age of 13, a coyote smuggled Nidia along with her mother and 9 month-old brother across the border to reunite with her father who was working in the United States. After settling in the Midwest, Nidia earned a Bachelor of Arts/Science degree in Psychology from Missouri Southern State College in Joplin, Missouri. She has dedicated more than 13 years of her career to advocacy, most recently in the Migrant Education Program, working with at-risk youth helping families access resources and teaching parents how to advocate for their children's education to increase high school graduation rates. Currently she is working in Communications for the Kansas Department of Labor, focusing on messaging to the Spanish speaking community through the Spanish media across the state. She is also an active advocate for the immigrant and LGBTQ+ community.

Dr. Nathan Stephens is a graduate of University of Missouri-Columbia, where he earned his Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis. His dissertation was 'Examining the Impact of a Black Male Initiative on Members' Post-College Lives. His research interests include such topics as Racism, Racialized Stress, Racialization, Complex Trauma, Black Masculinity, Mass Incarceration, Mental Health, Wellness, Somatic Healing, Racial Healing, Critical Race Theory, Ecological Systems Theory, African American Male Theory, Social Justice, and Social Justice Praxis. He received a Master of Social Work (MSW) from the School of Social Work - Columbia College, after earning a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW).

He is currently an Assistant Professor at Illinois State University, School of Social Work. Some of his current publications include book chapters: *The Rose That Grew Through the Concrete*. *Gumbo for the Soul: Males of color share their stories, meditations, affirmations and inspirations*; *The Sting of a WASP: An autoethnographic account of a black male administrator in student affairs*; *Black Studies and Critical Thinking Reader*. He has published in such peer-reviewed journals as *Health and Social Work*, with his work entitled *Barriers to Hospice Use Among African Americans: A systemic review*. He has presented numerous lectures as invited speaker at conferences and seminars, including *Black Mental Wellness = Healing Black Men*, *Champaign-Urbana Trauma and Resiliency Initiative*; *MJJA July Virtual Conference 2022*; and countless others.



Dr. Nathan Stephens





Juanita Cleaver  
Simmons PhD

Juanita M. Cleaver Simmons, PhD, is Senior Diversity Consulting Partner with Atlanta-based Talent Management Consultants, LLC. She specializes in training and designs for diversity, equity, climate, workplace civility and inclusion, and Equity Coaching with theoretical and practical strategies. Her passion is facilitating seminars in leadership development for cultural competency and responsiveness for excellence in equity. She is the former Vice President of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Northwest Missouri State University, and retired associate professor of the University of Missouri-Columbia. She earned her PhD in Urban Superintendency and a Master's in Educational Leadership from the University of Texas-Austin. She takes special pride in working with the Missouri Juvenile Justice Association, where she has conducted many conference presentations and training seminars. She now serves as a consultant for the Stop Red (Racial and Ethnic Disparity).

Larry C. Bryant, PhD, is a professional educator, consultant, and advocate for nearly 30 years. Dr. Bryant's research examines the cultural relationships between urban adolescents and social systems. His immediate interest lies in understanding the impact of race in education, the social interaction between race and social systems, and social justice in education. More specifically, Dr. Bryant employs theories of justice to address the phenomenon of the overrepresentation of African American males in special education programs for students with emotional and/or behavioral disabilities.



Larry Bryant PhD



**Tia N. Locke-Simmons**  
**EdD**

Tia N. Locke-Simmons, EdD is a 23-year educator who has served as a Special Education Teacher, Behavior Support Specialists, Assistant Principal, Associate Principal, Executive Principal, Director of Accountability and Assessment, and a Curriculum Director. As former executive principal of two of some of the largest high schools in America, she has created and designed alternative programs and activities to divert criminal activities in urban high schools. She is a product of the inner-city, urban high school of Dallas Independent School District - South Oath Cliff High School. She earned her Bachelor of Arts from Our Lady of the Lake University, a Master of Education from Stephen F. Austin State University, and was recently awarded her Degree in Educational Leadership from Sam Houston State University. She is a Harvard Scholar through the Raise Your Hand Texas Program, and holds the Higher Education Teaching Certification from Harvard University. Tia is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated and is a Past President of the Houston Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated. She is a founding member of the Houston Metropolitan Area Section of the National Council of Negro Women. Tia has received several recognitions, including the National Women of Achievement Yellow Rose Award and the Wheeler Avenue Inner City Visions Audrey H. Lawton IMPACT Award for her service and civic-mindedness, the Trailblazer Award from the South Dallas Business and Professional Women's Club. She is most noted for her success in changing the cultural climate and academic ratings of urban high schools.

Dr. Gaye Lang is the President and Founder of Workplace Restorative Practices Inc. Gaye is a highly respected educator with over fifty years of experience. She has worked as a classroom teacher, school administrator, district director, U.S. Department of Education Secretary's Regional Representative, Deputy Associate Commissioner with the Texas Education Agency, Senior Advisor to the Commissioner, and Statewide Restorative Director. Dr. Lang continues to seek ways to dismantle the school to prison pipeline. She strives to improve the effectiveness of businesses, institutions, and communities by building stronger relationships. More than 8,000 participants have benefited from her passion and dedication to restorative practices training and coaching, with 2,000 of them receiving it virtually. She has authored and co-authored several books; Amazon Best Seller SEVEN (2021), Benjamin Franklin Award winning Colorizing Restorative Justice: Voicing Our Realities (2020), Raising the Bar: Measuring Restorative Practices (2019), and Restorative Discipline Practices: A Journey in Implementation by a Community of Texas Educators (2017). Additionally, Dr. Lang is the podcast host of Workplace Diversity your workplace D.I.E.T. (Diversity, Inclusion, Equity and Tolerance)



Dr. Gaye Lang

# Questions? Contact Us!

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