

The School to Prison



PIPELINE

By Rachel Marie-Crane Williams



This zine series was made in connection with “Unfinished Business—Juvenile Justice,” the community-curated exhibit at the Jane Addams Hull-House Museum, on view through August 2011.

“Unfinished Business” is curated in collaboration with over a dozen community partners and makes connections between the founding of the nation’s first Juvenile Court in 1899 and the pressing contemporary issues of juvenile justice and prison reform. The exhibit fosters dialogue and provides opportunities for visitors to participate onsite in several forms of civic engagement. While much progress has been made on the issue about which Jane Addams and other Hull-House reformers cared so deeply, we wanted visitors to know that there is still a lot of “unfinished business.” The work of creating a more just society continues, and we can all be part of transformative social change.

These zines—created in collaboration with Project NIA; the Chicago Freedom School; teaching artists Rachel Marie Crane-Williams and Elgin-Bokari T. Smith; artist and activist Billy Dee; and youth inside and outside the system—attempt to create a critical awareness of the issues by addressing the many facets of juvenile justice. Five zines speak to the History of the Juvenile Court, Girls in the System, Youth-Stories (of the Incarcerated), the School-to-Prison Pipeline, and the Prison-Industrial Complex. Through dialogue and creative thinking, we believe that a series of zines allows us to become a more effective public history site and enables us to contribute to popular education in a unique way. These zines challenge preconceived notions, stir our imaginations, and generate new community beyond the Museum’s walls.

So, what is a zine? Fanzines or “zines” are do-it-yourself (DIY) mini-books that have a long history of communicating openly, honestly, and plainly. Zines are independent and capture the spirit of a localized scene, but are meant to have far-reaching effects. Once you read a zine, pass it along to a friend or acquaintance. By sharing and discussing zines, the community grows, and you’ve made a valuable connection with someone.

The Jane Addams Hull-House Museum serves as a dynamic memorial to Nobel Peace Prize recipient Jane Addams and other resident social reformers whose work influenced the lives of their immigrant neighbors as well as national and international public policy.

The Museum preserves and develops the original Hull-House site for the interpretation and continuation of the historic settlement house vision, linking research, education, and social engagement. The zine series is a valuable tool for civic engagement and emphasizes that “history is not a spectator sport” but something that everyone can and should be engaged in making at all times.

Want to find out more or get involved? Check us out and download copies of the zines at: www.hullhousemuseum.org

--Teresa Silva, community curator of “Unfinished Business—Juvenile Justice,” Jane Addams Hull-House Museum, 2011

After over a year of work, I am thrilled to announce the publication of a series of zines about the juvenile justice and prison systems. This collaborative experience was a truly rewarding and wonderful one. When I approached my friend Lisa Lee, of the Jane Addams Hull House Museum, with the idea of creating a graphic novel about the history and current manifestations of juvenile justice, I could not have imagined where we'd end up today. We both agreed that this project would only make sense if we centered the voices of incarcerated youth as well as young people on the outside. We knew that we wanted to find partners who would share our vision and would have the skills to execute it. We were incredibly lucky to find talented and dedicated teaching artists like Rachel Marie-Crane Williams and Elgin Smith to work with on this project. Both of them collaborated respectfully with the young people who participated in what would eventually come to be known as our "cradle to prison pipeline" comic arts project. After that, they spent countless hours drawing and authoring the zines that we are releasing today. If we had paid them what they are worth, we would all be bankrupt.

We were also blessed to partner with the Chicago Freedom School which provided a meeting space for youth and with Eva Nagao, Freedom School board co-chair, who took it upon herself to recruit young people for this project. Eva handled all of the logistics for the 5 weeks of the comic arts program for youth on the outside. Special thanks also to Rachel Shine who volunteered her time with the youth as they learned about juvenile justice and drew their own images.

The Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center (JTDC) welcomed us for 4 weeks in August 2010 to work with the young people who were incarcerated there. Teaching artist Elgin Smith, who already works at JTDC, led comic arts workshops for both girls and boys at the jail. We are indebted to the youth for sharing their stories and talents with us.

As an added bonus, artist and activist Billy Dee, working with members of the Chicago PIC Teaching Collective, has created a zine about the prison industrial complex that the Museum has generously printed too. There is no way that anyone who looks at the "PIC Is" zine will miss Billy's talent or huge heart. Both are apparent throughout the publication.

This project would not have been as seamless or as enjoyable as it was without the presence and guidance of Teresa Silva. Teresa's steady hand and her soft touch moved us along and helped bring the project to completion. Thanks to Teresa for all of her contributions.

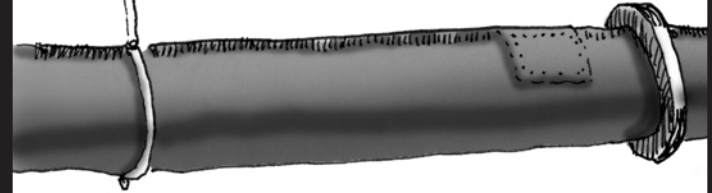
There are few people in the world as unique and inspiring as Lisa Lee. Over the years, Lisa has fostered opportunities for youth and adults across Chicago to learn about history, art, and social justice. She does this without fanfare but always with unmatched generosity of spirit. This project would not have happened without her. I am eternally grateful to Lisa for all that she has done and will undoubtedly continue to do in the future.

Finally, a point of personal privilege... I am committed to using art as a tool for social transformation and justice. I believe that art has the capacity to speak across difference and to help educate and incite people to action. I hope that those individuals who read these zines come away asking the question: **How can I contribute to dismantling the prison industrial complex?** If even only one person asks, then we will have done our part.

In Peace and Solidarity,

Mariame Kaba, Director, Project NIA

THE SCHOOL TO PRISON PIPELINE



"IN ORDER FOR US AS POOR AND OPPRESSED PEOPLE TO BECOME PART OF A SOCIETY THAT IS MEANINGFUL, THE SYSTEM UNDER WHICH WE NOW EXIST HAS TO BE RADICALLY CHANGED... IT MEANS FACING A SYSTEM THAT DOES NOT LEND ITS SELF TO YOUR NEEDS AND DEVISING MEANS BY WHICH YOU CHANGE THAT SYSTEM."

--ELLA BAKER



IF YOU
ARE
BORN A
BOY WITH
BROWN
SKIN, IN
THE USA,
AND YOU
LIVE IN
POVERTY,
THEN YOUR
CHANCES
OF GOING
TO PRISON
DURING
YOUR
LIFETIME
INCREASE.



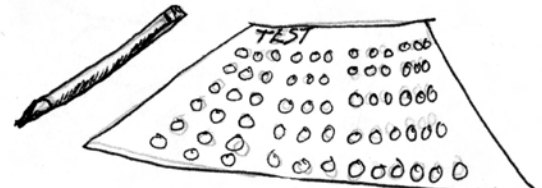
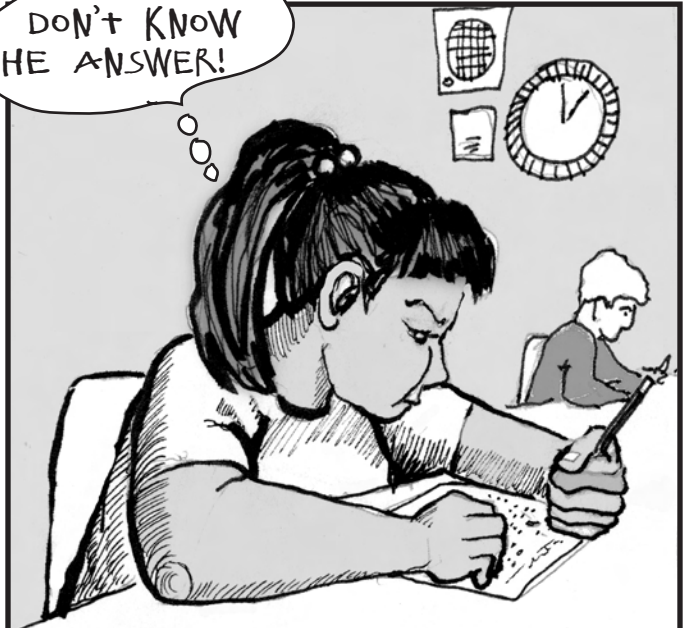


MANY POOR STUDENTS ENTER SCHOOL WITHOUT THE SKILLS TO IDENTIFY BASIC LETTERS, NUMBERS, AND SHAPES BECAUSE THEY DID NOT HAVE THE ADVANTAGES OF STUDENTS WHO ARE MORE WELL-OFF. IF YOU ARE BORN POOR YOU MAY GO TO A SCHOOL THAT IS OVERCROWDED AND UNDERFUNDED SO CATCHING UP WILL BE DIFFICULT. THE SCHOOL WILL PROBABLY PUT YOU IN SPECIAL EDUCATION CLASSES.

IF YOU ARE A
BLACK
CHILD YOU ARE
TWO AND A
HALF TIMES
AS LIKELY AS
A WHITE
CHILD TO BE
HELD BACK
A GRADE
OR
RETAINED
IN SCHOOL.

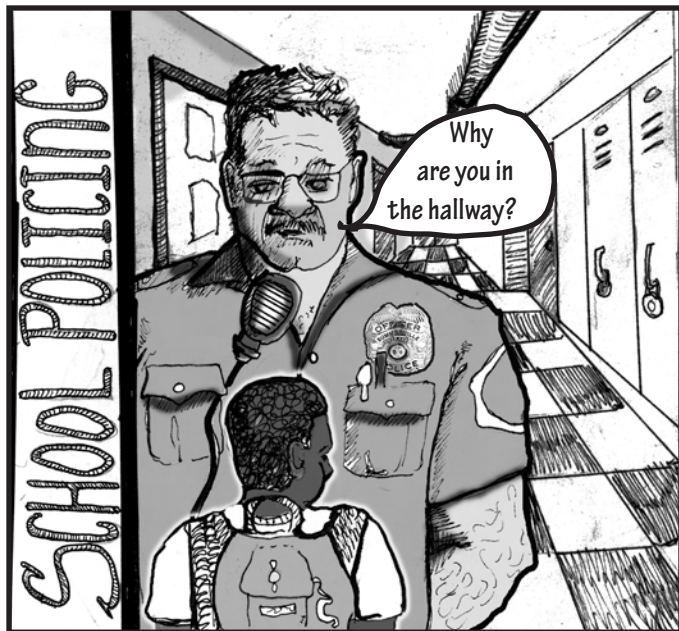


I
DON'T KNOW
THE ANSWER!



BECAUSE OF "NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND", IF
YOU DO NOT PERFORM WELL ON
STANDARDIZED TESTS YOU MIGHT BE
MORE LIKELY TO BE "PUSHED OUT" OF
SCHOOL AND EVEN SUSPENDED IN ORDER
FOR YOUR SCHOOL TO REPORT HIGHER
TEST SCORES.

SCHOOL POLICING

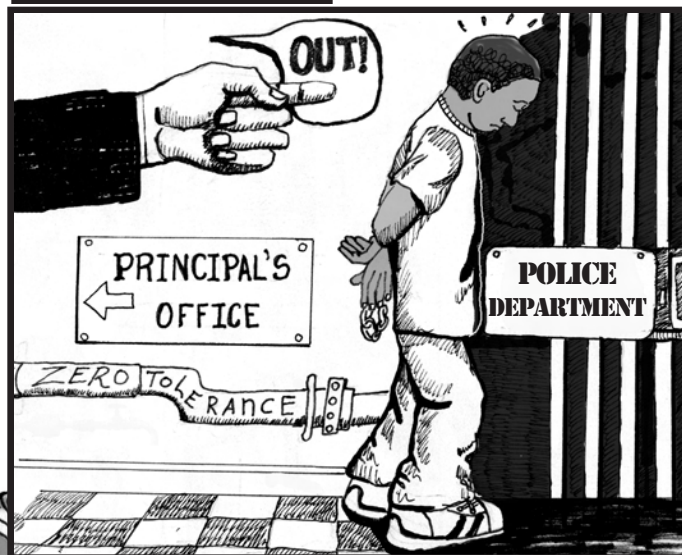


IF YOUR SCHOOL FREQUENTLY CALLS THE POLICE OR A SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER TO DEAL WITH DISCIPLINARY ISSUES THIS COULD INCREASE THE NUMBER OF SCHOOL-BASED ARRESTS THAT OCCUR EACH YEAR AND COULD SEND YOU DIRECTLY FROM THE SCHOOLHOUSE TO THE JAILHOUSE.

MY
SIDE OF THE
STORY DOESN'T
MATTER...



IF YOU GO TO A SCHOOL THAT HAS A ZERO-TOLERANCE POLICY YOU MAY GET KICKED OUT OR SUSPENDED FOR A MINOR BEHAVIOR OR DISCIPLINE ISSUE THAT COULD EASILY BE HANDLED WITH A PHONE CALL TO YOUR FAMILY.



IF YOU ARE A STUDENT OF COLOR YOU WILL PROBABLY BE PUNISHED MORE HARSHLY THAN A WHITE STUDENT WHO GOT IN TROUBLE FOR DOING THE SAME THING.

IF YOU GET EXPELLED OR SUSPENDED
YOU MAY NOT BE ALLOWED TO RETURN
TO YOUR REGULAR SCHOOL YOU MAY
BE FORCED TO ATTEND AN
ALTERNATIVE DISCIPLINARY CENTER
WHERE YOU WILL PROBABLY FALL
BEHIND IN YOUR SCHOOL WORK.

ZZZZZZ

...so
bored...so
bored...so bored



YOU MAY GET SO
DISCOURAGED THAT
IT IS EASIER TO
DROP OUT THAN STAY
IN SCHOOL.



YOU MAY END UP IN A JUVENILE COURT. IF YOU ARE WHITE THERE IS A GOOD CHANCE THAT THE JUDGE WILL GIVE YOU PROBATION OR FINE YOU AND REQUIRE YOU TO DO COMMUNITY SERVICE.

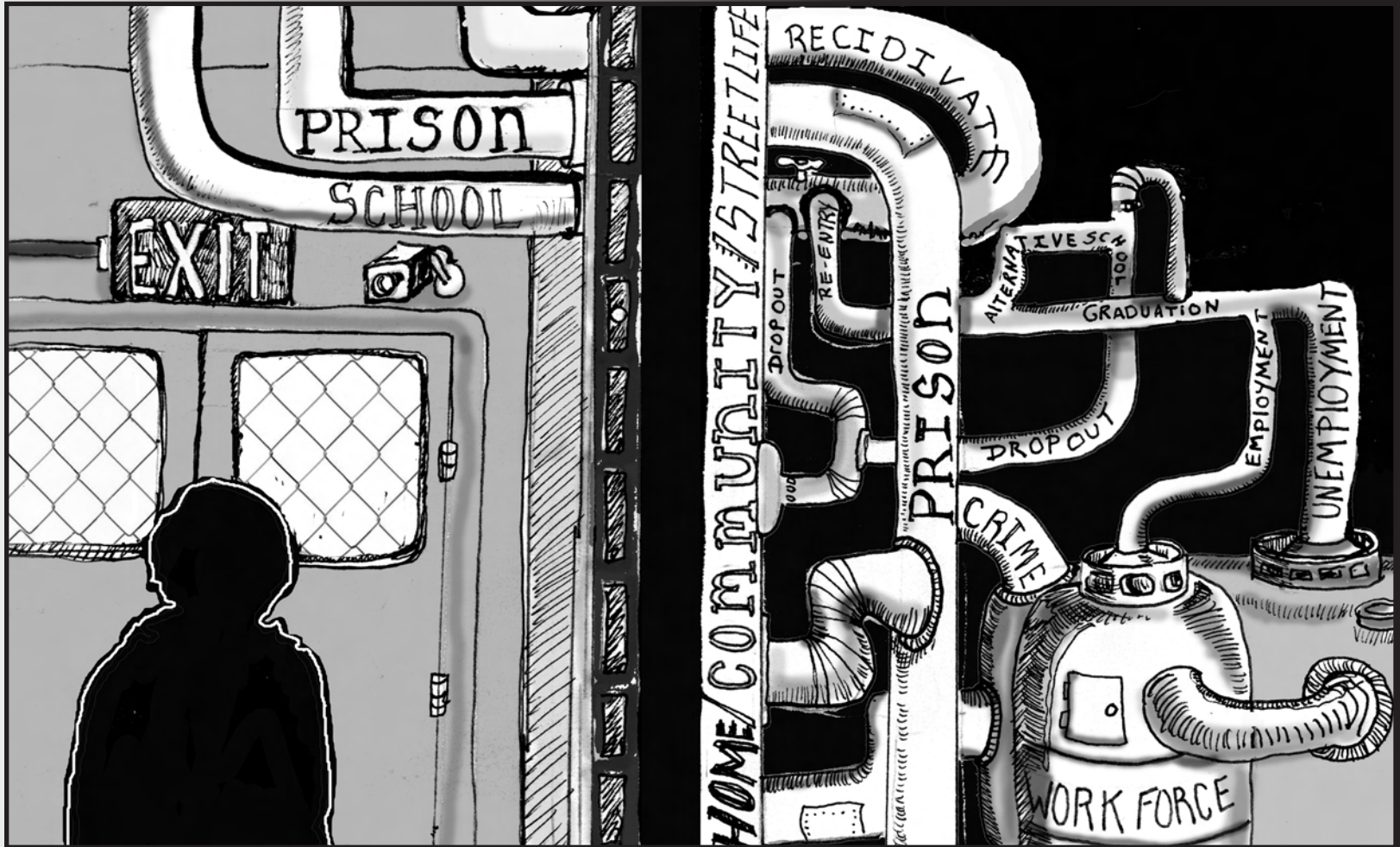


IF YOU ARE BLACK OR LATINO/A YOU HAVE A BETTER CHANCE OF BEING SENT TO A JUVENILE CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION OR PUNISHED MORE SEVERELY.



IF YOU GET SENT TO A JUVENILE CORRECTIONAL FACILITY YOU WILL HAVE FEW IF ANY DECENT EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES, OPPORTUNITIES, RECREATION, OR COUNSELING. GOING BACK TO A REGULAR SCHOOL CAN BE NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE.





WHEN YOU LEAVE A CORRECTIONAL
INSTITUTION THERE ARE NOT MANY
PLACES TO GO.

SCHOOL, WORK, AND LIFE,
BECOME MORE COMPLICATED.

YOU MAY FIND IT HARD TO GET

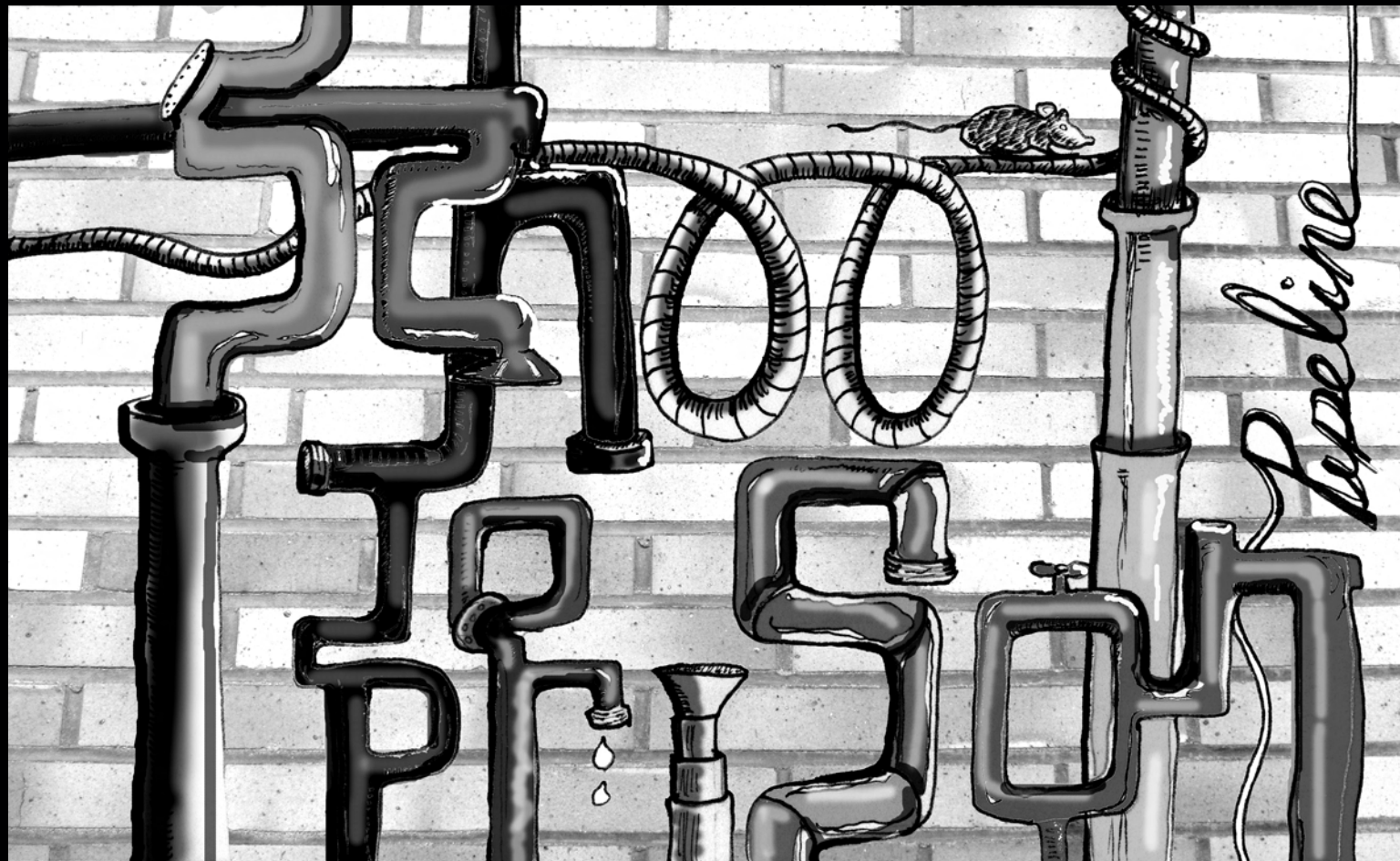


A
JOB...

OR RETURN TO A NORMAL LIFE.



ONCE YOU HAVE
BEEN IN THE SYSTEM,
IT IS HARD TO GET OUT...
YOU MIGHT FIND
YOURSELF INCARCERATED
OVER AND OVER.
ONE DAY YOU MIGHT
REALIZE YOU ARE MORE
COMFORTABLE BEHIND BARS
THAN IN YOUR OWN
COMMUNITY.



HOW TO RESIST THE SCHOOL TO PRISON PIPELINE

SPEAK OUT AGAINST DISCRIMINATION AND
INJUSTICE

GET INVOLVED
IN YOUR SCHOOL
AND
COMMUNITY

CREATE A LONG TERM RELATIONSHIP
WITH A MENTOR YOU ADMIRE

ASK ADULTS IN YOUR LIFE TO GET
INVOLVED IN YOUR SCHOOL

PROTEST ZERO TOLERANCE
POLICIES--MAKE A ZINE, WRITE A LETTER
TO YOUR LOCAL PAPER

INSIST THAT YOUR SCHOOL USE RESTOR-
ATIVE JUSTICE INSTEAD OF PUNISHMENT
TO DEAL WITH DISCIPLINARY ISSUES

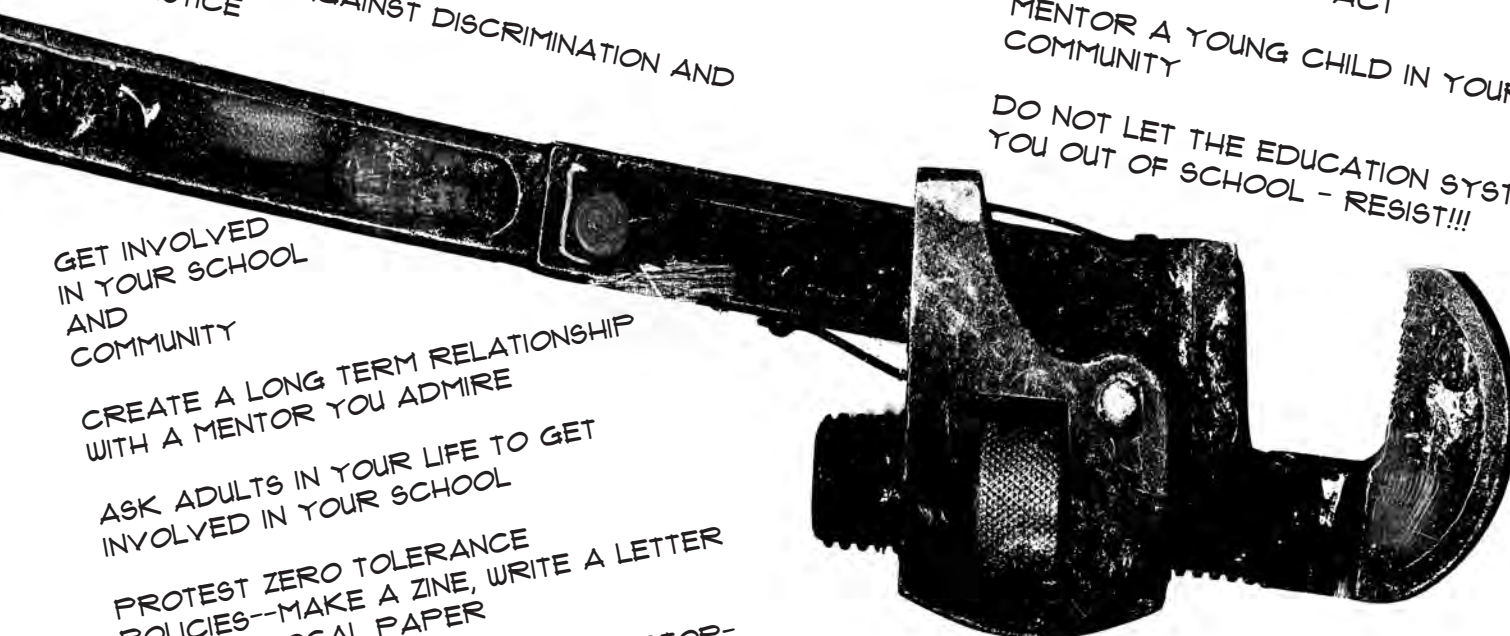
ORGANIZE YOUR COMMUNITY TO
PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES LIKE SPORTS,
ART, DANCING, ACTIVISM AND LEAD-
ERSHIP DEVELOPMENT, ETC... FOR ALL
YOUTH

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

THINK BEFORE YOU ACT

MENTOR A YOUNG CHILD IN YOUR
COMMUNITY

DO NOT LET THE EDUCATION SYSTEM PUSH
YOU OUT OF SCHOOL - RESIST!!!



VOTE WHEN YOU CAN

A PRODUCT OF THE CRADLE TO PRISON PIPELINE
PROJECT

SPONSORED BY:

THE JANE ADDAMS HULL HOUSE MUSEUM; COLLEGE
OF ARCHITECTURE AND THE ARTS, UNIVERSITY OF IL-
LINOIS AT CHICAGO; THE CHICAGO FREEDOM SCHOOL;
AND PROJECT NIA

2011

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ELGIN SMITH

FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO:

[HTTP://CHICAGOFREEDOMSCHOOL.ORG/](http://CHICAGOFREEDOMSCHOOL.ORG/)

[HTTP://WWW.HULLHOUSEMUSEUM.ORG](http://WWW.HULLHOUSEMUSEUM.ORG)

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