

# Perspective...

Continued from front page

the weekends, holidays and over the summer. We did very little despite the fact we can tell what children are in trouble by their grades or behavior or their parents' lack of involvement.

Furthermore, instead of teaching more children a skill or finding an education track that they might be interested in, we insist they follow a college track that the Duval County School Board thinks every child should be on. Instead of providing them the social services they need, we hope the parents will take care of them even though (with a wink and a nod to each other) we know they won't.

Would some of these young men barely out of childhood - murdered or murderers - have had a different fate had we provided them different options? When are we going to learn that hoping for the best, putting more police on the streets and building more

prisons doesn't work? It's not like we have to reinvent the wheel or break the bank.

We should make it so that if kids don't have the skills to advance they are retained. No more social promotions or pushing them along so they are the next grade's (or school's) problem, and teachers should be applauded for holding kids back, not regarded as if they aren't good teachers. Some children learn at different rates and have different abilities. They need to be nurtured even if it takes longer, plus if kids have the skills they need (no matter how long it takes), then they can't help but do better in life.

Next, we need programs that children are interested in to attain basic skills. Kids who want to drive trucks shouldn't be taking Algebra II. We need more skills and trades, more hands-on activities. If kids are interested in what they study, they will always, always do better.

Then we have to bring discipline back to the classroom, and the way we do that is by having meaningful consequences for children's behavior. We don't have to instill fear in them, but we have to make sure they don't want to repeat their actions. We also don't send kids home to their video games and iPods; we keep them at school, put them to work, suspend privileges - whatever it takes for as long as it takes until they get the message. Then we hug them and tell them we are proud of them.

The system of social promotions, no consequences for behavior and a curriculum that serves only a few isn't working; all you have to do is look at the young man who died at age 19.

*Above was my story. I got lucky; so many others didn't, and how many others won't until we say enough is enough? Chris Guerrieri, Special Education teacher at Ed White High School.*

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## Pray Jacksonville!

We urge all praying Christians who believe God can change lives and the crime situation in our city to join us on the second Tuesday of each month, 11:30 a.m., at 524 Stockton Street (W. W. Gay Mechanical Contractors, Inc.). The next meeting will be February 9, 2010.

Pastor Andrew Schiltz, who attends the meetings, says: "I go to the Pray Jacksonville! meetings, not only to join with other Christians in praying together for our city, but also because I know it is an encouragement to the leaders who spearhead these meetings. This is not "doing as unto man," for my primary goal is praying in the name of Jesus. Not only that, but my attendance (as well as the others who go) is a part of edifying one another in the Spirit of love, sending a message to leaders and others that their labor is not in vain! People are uplifted by our attendance, which in turn motivates them to attend next time. This is how the prayer meetings will continue to grow. The Bible says we are to do unto others as we would have them do unto us. Also, I receive a great deal of strength and blessing from these meetings as well, and the Lord knows we all need that!"

**Ezekiel, 7:23:** *Make the chain, for the land is full of bloody crimes and the city is full of violence.*

**II Chronicles, 7:14:** *If my people who are called by My name will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land.*