

Back On Track United

(B.O.T.U.)

“A man’s mind is subject to inner storms far more devastating than those in the physical world around him”

- Yusef Ali

Prepared by:
Joseph Simmons, Staff Advisor

Co-Authors/Contributors: Roosevelt Jackson, Wesley Jones, Joseph Simmons, Robert Cariddi, Louis Tuzzolo, Ruben Pulinario

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BACK ON TRACK UNITED (B.O.T.U.)

Introduction

We are an interested group of concerned community members, assisting men, woman, adults and youth, who are returning to mainstream society and those who are already in society who find it difficult to adjust. We are committed to help find solutions via personal, community and governmental resources to align structures for fulfillment. In this regard, we consider ourselves soldiers for service. See Addendum A for B.O.T.U. History and examples of service.

Members of B.O.T.U. understand and can relate because they have had similar experiences, under similar circumstances, which they have had to endure and mature. Our group can speak directly to the problems related to re-entry and to helping youth-at-risk to make better choices to be happy contributing members of society. The combination of our experiences and commitment gives us unique advantages to make a difference where parents and other organizations might not be able for various reasons.

The group brings basic ingredients, including a wholesome and loving family-oriented environment. We interact with a hands-on approach, sharing and exploring experiences authentically. We believe that our clients and the members of the B.O.T.U. organization are most fulfilled when we allow ourselves to be vulnerable to become whole. This approach is a way we unite parents and their children in a partnership for a fulfilling and successful life moving forward. In effect, we become the Big Brother and Big Sister or coaches to the parents and their children alike. Additionally, we are committed to become the example setters for men and women being released from prison, returning to society, in an effort to empower them to be Back on Track United.

We perform research and share the findings to make recommendations to the members of the Authoritative Advisory Panel (AAP). In this department, an established panel consisting of our concerned community executive team members will review all information and documentation, as well as all material presented to them by the Staff Advisor as received from the community. We call it B.O.T.U.'s Research/Release & Recommendation Phase.

The group confidentially gathers and updates all the information from our research and conversations from men, woman, adults (newly released), parents and youth. We do this with the understanding that without intervention, many of our past experiences could easily become their future lifestyle. B.O.T.U. addresses and assesses the problems, including the specific circumstances and issues affecting the overall family setting. We do it compassionately with sincerity and deep-rooted conviction, to produce desirable results which lead to permanent family, community, national, and ultimately, global change.

Presently, B.O.T.U. is comprised of volunteers preparing for non-profit organization status. The Executive Board will include the Chairman, Co-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Internal Stability Officer, Public Relations Officer, and Spokesperson. The organization will be guided and seek the advisement of the Staff Advisor who will review and make recommendations regarding all material, processes and procedures. See Addendum A for description of responsibilities of the Executive Board Members and the Staff Advisor, as well as a list of the current Executive Board Members and Staff Advisor.

The duties, functions, obligations and responsibilities of each Executive Team Officer shall be sworn to in the presence of all Executive Team Officers under the banner and commitment established by B.O.T.U 's Constitution and By-Laws.

I. PURPOSE of B.O.T.U.

- A. Educate to present and demonstrate new perspectives and paradigms for living. Metaphorically, we will show where we, as human beings, have been operating as if Planet Earth is flat. In the context of new fundamental approaches, we will familiarize parents with some of the problems or issues their children, and other children face such as the need to be accepted, a need to feel safe and secure, and a desire to belong to something important. We teach and give first-hand examples of how to assess those needs in terms of re-structuring, re-establishing and re-focusing on the Family Unit to create an experience of True Oneness. This, in turn, sets the stage to learn tools to acknowledge and express love for self, each other and the community to precipitate community-building, family bonding, friendships, and life-long caring and sharing, otherwise known as unity. Hence, together, we become Back on Track United.
- B. Facilitate conversations and forums between children, young adults, parents, and community members. Conversations will encompass approaches for safe, reasonable, yet meaningful ways to become flexible and effective in problem solving and conflict resolution. Our Authoritative Advisory Panel (A.A.P.) through B.O.T.U.'s Research Release Recommendation Department will be consulted throughout each phase and case assessment.

II. FAMILY/COMMUNITY ORIENTATION

- A. Development to set and lead by example. We become the family oriented members that the community needs.
 - 1. B.O.T.U. will develop and maintain, through our experienced Executive Team, Counselors , Coaches and Sponsors, in connection with the Information, Research and findings of the A.A.P., Father and Mother figures, Big Brother and Big Sister figures to the youth, children, adults, parents, community members/New Releases. Our aim is to become the source of strength each United Family needs to *"birth the greatness in a community and nation."*
 - 2. We will achieve this through the following:
 - i. Education
 - ii. Job Skills and Vocational Training
 - iii. Parenting Workshops
 - iv. Drug Rehabilitation
 - v. Substance Abuse Treatment
 - vi. After School Workshops
 - vii. Problem Resolution Counseling
 - viii. Other Confidential Counseling

3. B.O.T.U. will offer these comprehensive services as a means of pursuing the “*Old School*” way of “*Each One Teach One*”, with a concentrated focus on each One being responsible for everyone in our communities. We teach what that means and how to present accountability appropriately and empoweringly.

III. THE GUIDING LIGHTS OF EXPERIENCE AND EXAMPLES

A. Objectives

The Executive Team, Sponsors, Advisors and General Membership, who believe in the ***Back on Track United*** creed and principles, commit ourselves to the families and community members who are desperately in need of help, aid, assistance, support in virtually any undertaking the Organization is able to provide.

We commit to being a family and community oriented organization, whereby, we will assess each case individually and confidentially. In the pursuit for wholeness, police officers, judges, juries and lawyers are solely responsible for their roles and areas of contribution, whereas, B.O.T.U. will serve as a mediator and facilitator for peace and wholeness on a case-by-case basis where appropriate and allowable. Any of the incidents, issues, problems or situations discovered and/or raised to the level of threat, will be referred to our Authoritative Advisory Panel (AAP) who will then take the appropriate steps to help resolve the matter. Again, B.O.T.U. cannot and will not deviate from our creed and policies, regardless of how serious, severe or traumatic the incident may be. However, we shall acknowledge, observe, intake, assess each case, and consult the A.A.P. for advisement. See Addendum C for principles adopted for a violence-free zone.

B.O.T.U. also produces innovative and accessible research that will empower the public and society, encouraging them to participate in the building and improvement of each family and community concern for their own troubled children, and for other youth and teens, in general.

Back on Track United has conducted important research in many areas that afflict our young, old and every one in-between; e.g., the poverty stricken, single-parent raised children, drug use and abuse, bullying, including emotional and physical abuse and other important areas of concern that have contributed to the struggle. Our Executive Team knows, through past experiences, what it takes to bring the family unit back together in order for each family to produce the “*Greatness a Nation can offer... Love, Care, Concern, Responsibility, and mostly, becoming the “Oneness” God intended for all His Children. “*

See Addendum A for B.O.T.U. history and examples of service.

Contact Information

Roosevelt Jackson, Co-Chairperson/Co-Founder: 646-420-6949, 631-464-5064

Wesley Jones, Co-Chairperson/Treasurer: 631-459-7119

Robert Cariddi, Secretary/Log Recorder: 631-320-4085

Ruben Pulinario, Internal Stability Officer: 631-388-8472

Louis Tuzzolo, Internal Stability Officer: 631-747-8603

Remy, Public Relations/Spokesperson: 631-575-1051

Joseph Simmons, Spokesperson/Staff Advisor: JoeSimmons.org, 631-949-5784

Addendum A

B.O.T.U. History and Current Events

Founder: Mr. Roosevelt (Siddiq) Jackson with Corrections Counselor Delores Black

Year: 2001 at Lincoln Correctional Facility

Back on Track United started as “Back on Track” to assist society emphasizing services to ex-prisoners re-entering society, youth at risk and their parents. The project consisted of inmates, former inmates, civilians, and prison advocate groups. Today the organization is expanded to include other visionaries, community leaders and advocates at large addressing the concerns of troubled youth, teenagers and young adults, where the parents or authorities cannot do it alone.

Back on Track was formed in April of 2001, by Mr. Roosevelt Jackson, a.k.a. Siddiq and his then correction counselor, Ms. Delores Black. It was then that a group membership was formed in the capacity of fifteen (15) inmates, and five (5) civilians, namely counselors and project directors dealing with re-entry.

This project lasted one (1) year, whereas the inmates were released, the foundation dissipated, and finally its purpose was just a memory to those that had been assisted by the organization.

Today, the organization has been revitalized as Back on Track United as the group’s goals expand. B.O.T.U. is supported today by society and those that hold positions in various contributing capacities including real estate agents, insurance agents, Priests, visionaries, advocates, doctors, lawyers, police officers, judges, families, bus drivers, business owners, and other interested parties.

The project's founder, Roosevelt Jackson is not new to being a troubled child, teenager or young adult. His past consists of probations and incarcerations resulting in parole for crimes committed over twenty-five (25) years of his life. Mr. Jackson's desire to reach back into today's society is overwhelmingly obvious. Anywhere he has been today, he has affected positive change. The list would go on and on if we were to put it on paper.

Pursuing this project's goals, Mr. Jackson embraced the idea that the project must address the concerns of all society, not just the youth. To start, Mr. Jackson, while a guest at Pax Christi Hospitality Center a temporary homeless shelter for men and a project of Hope House Ministries that was founded by Father Francis Pizzarelli, assisted an inebriated ex-fireman from a bus stop in Port Jefferson to the Patchogue train station, then to Mastic, where the ex-fireman resided. The ex-fireman was also a guest at Pax Christi Hospitality Center. On that long hectic day, Mr. Jackson did not skip a beat in his efforts to accomplish the mission, knowing the intoxicated man could not do it without assistance.

On another occasion, Mr. Jackson, while on a public transit bus, befriended Ridley Carmichael, a twelve (12) years old youth. Ridley was a member of a gang. Prior to Mr. Jackson's friendship with Ridley, Ridley and three active gang members were on the bus having a serious heated discussion about Ridley leaving the group. He was told that "Big Homie", their leader, was not going to let him go just like that.

Ridley did not get off at the same stop as the other gang members. Mr. Jackson then found the opportune time to speak with Ridley. During the course of their conversation, Ridley found himself revealing critical information to Mr. Jackson as Mr. Jackson talked to him about finishing elementary school, high school, then college so that he can be someone other than a lowly (abused) gang member holding illegal drugs and guns for his gang leaders.

Ridley revealed to Mr. Jackson that he was holding two weapons for them, and that he did not want to be in the gang any more. Mr. Jackson convinced him to talk with an Imam (religious leader) in his town the next day. Mr. Jackson met with Ridley the next day after school and proceeded to the Masjid. While at the Masjid, the Imam had brought a McDonald's meal for Ridley. While eating, Ridley revealed to them what he said to Mr. Jackson the previous day.

Ridley agreed to Mr. Jackson's suggestion to go talk to Ridley's mother. That evening everything was revealed to Zamia Carmichael, whereas, she appeared to be stunned and distraught that her son was involved with any gangs, guns or drugs. Ridley showed his mother where these things were stored and turned them over to the Imam. The Imam, in turn, called the Suffolk County Police Department (SCPD) in that area. That evening everything was turned over to the police without incident, while the Back on Track United project was embraced and supported by the Imam and others. Two (2) days later, Mr. Jackson and a few Muslims visited "Big Homie" (who turned out to be seventeen (17) years old and evasive) in Wyandanch to discuss his and other's gang involved, and to come to Jumu'ah services on Friday.

The organization's continuance to inform and assist society has no foreseeable end. Today, there are members of B.O.T.U. that are inherently motivated and see the organization as a vehicle to serve a society that they once abused in one way or another. Joe Simmons, the Staff Advisor, describes the group members, including himself, as being "Soldiers for Service".

To maintain the unified mind for service, members are currently being trained to master the tools needed to serve selflessly while realizing that serving others is, in and of itself, a source of fulfillment for the members. The group emphasizes the idea of oneness and that while embracing and celebrating the

unique beauty and magnificence of all individuals and races, ultimately we are all a part of one race, the human race. As such, Mr. Simmons states, "Since we are One, if you are doing well, so am I."

B.O.T.U. dynamically contributes to society as well as gives youth at risk and released prisoners who are re-entering society a second chance at life, whereupon they become transformed and inspired to make meaningful contributions to society. B.O.T.U. serves as their motivational vehicle.

As a reminder of this project's goals and initiatives, we are not counselors, an authority nor the guardians of anyone. We are ex-prisoners, parolees, advocates, visionaries, community leaders and other interested parties helping to affect change, using our experiences effectively and providing resources. Addressing youth at risk, Co-founder and Chairperson, Roosevelt Jackson, stated that otherwise, "Our pasts might become their future."

Addendum B

Titles and Duties of the B.O.T.U. Executive Board and Staff Advisor

Chairperson: Roosevelt Jackson shall be the Chief Executive Officer of the B.O.T.U.; preside at all meetings, have the general management of affairs of B.O.T.U.. See that all orders and resolutions are carried out, shall be responsible for the B.O.T.U. to its Board of Directors only; shall have one vote if by chance there is a tie, the Chairman shall have an additional vote to break the tie (only).

Co-Chairperson: Wesley Jones shall be deemed Vice President during the absence or disability of the Chairman. He shall have all of the powers and functions of the Chairman, and shall perform such other duties, as the Board shall describe. He shall design perfect, and control all B.O.T.U. activities. He shall have power to implement his discretion in all matters dealing with informing the public and other related matters of B.O.T.U..

Secretary: Robert Cariddi shall be responsible for all clerical duties and shall be responsible for gathering and classifying pertinent information for all B.O.T.U. activities, shall keep the minutes of the Board of Directors, responsible for monthly reports of the Executive Boards, serve notice of the B.O.T.U. when authorized by the Executive Board, shall have charge of books and papers. He/she shall attend to such correspondence as may be assigned to him/her, perform all duties incidental to that office, and keep up with members, the time/date when they became members, location and their contact information.

Treasurer: Wesley Jones and Robert Cariddi shall have care and custody of all funds, and such other valuables of B.O.T.U., shall deposit said funds of the B.O.T.U.. The Treasurer shall keep or supervise the keeping of completed and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements of the B.O.T.U. group, shall perform such finance related duties as the Chairman or Co-Chairman shall direct, he may if time permits, review and co-sign expenditures of the organization's funds, shall at the request of any member of the

Executive Committee exhibit the books and accounts of the B.O.T.U. group, shall prepare an annual financial report detailing the receipts, expenditures and current account balance of the B.O.T.U. group for the preceding twelve (12) months period.

Internal Stability Officer: Louis Tuzzolo shall keep order at all meetings of the group or any other meeting on their time or during the Executive Committee meetings. He shall keep the Chairman and the Vice Chairman informed on any issues the membership may have. He will be available to individual members of the group to hear any issues they may have that relate to the operation of the group.

Public Relations/Spokesperson: Shall be responsible for keeping the public, through the media and public and any other appropriate persons or entities, informed on the group's actions. He shall in consultation with the Chairman and the Co-Chairman, be responsible for articulation and communicating the group's views to the free world. He shall also have the powers and duties assigned to him by the Chairman and/or the Co-Chairman.

Staff Advisor: The Staff Advisor shall serve as an initial point of contact for the public, including B.O.T.U. advocates, benefactors, and contact persons from B.O.T.U. resources for service and the media. The Staff Advisor shall be responsible to receive concerns and requests for assistance from the community at large, service groups, advocates, media and clients as they pertain to the B.O.T.U. mission and purpose. He shall present the issues to the Executive Board for review and assessment of it. The Staff Advisor shall compare the group's mission and B.O.T.U.'s declared objectives with community needs and requests to make recommendations to the Executive Board as to whether subject projects comply. The Staff Advisor shall assist in training and make recommendations regarding individual member and group presentations to assist in maintaining B.O.T.U.'s creed, honor, quality services, professionalism and favorable reputation.

Current Executive Board Members and Staff Advisor

Roosevelt Jackson, Chairperson/Co-Founder

Wesley Jones, *Co-Chairperson and Treasurer*

Robert Cariddi, *Secretary and Log Reporter*

Louis Tuzzolo, *Internal Stability Officer*

Ruben Pulinario, *Internal Stability Officer*

Remy, *Public Relations and Spokesperson*

Joseph Simmons, *Staff Advisor and Spokesperson*

Addendum C

Adopted Declaration of a Violence-Free Zone

- I. In this space, we will strive to insure that...

- A. There will be no violence against persons and all living creatures. Here there will be no physical or verbal abuse based on race, creed, gender or sexual orientation.
- B. There will be a voice for reform of any government, organization or institutions whose rules or practices do violence to groups or individuals.
- C. There will be a voice for peace among nations.
- D. There will be respect and love for our planet and all its creatures, and we will work to eradicate violence against, and abuse of, the Earth and its creatures.
- E. We will speak out against the use and glorification of violence in our media and in our culture.
- F. There will be protection for victims of violence.
- G. There will be a commitment to nonviolent resolutions of conflict.

The author is unknown.

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