



OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF
BUNCOMBE COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

202 Haywood Street
Asheville, N.C. 28801

Van Duncan, Sheriff

May 12, 2014

To Whom it May Concern:

This letter is in support of the Peace Education Program (PEP) for correctional facilities by way of The Prem Rawat Foundation.

The PEP was piloted at our facility, March, '14 with 10 inmates, the maximum allowed. Due to the short term nature of detention, the program delivery was twice a week for 5 weeks.

I observed and participated in 5 of the programs with the inmates. The program curriculum is very professional, concise and clearly formatted. Participants are given the opportunity to think for themselves and express their opinions on subjects rarely discussed.

Inmates knew an infraction would keep them from attending the program. Several inmates expressed how much they wanted to stay in the program, so they changed their behavior on the housing unit.

Although I do not have factual data to support the effectiveness of this program, I have observation and thirty years of criminal justice experience. Seventeen of which were with NC Probation/Parole. My opinion is this program, like many programs, plants a seed. This program exposes inmates to a basic truth, one of peace that is within each of us.

The perfect place to plant a seed of hope and change is in a correctional facility. While incarcerated, inmates are safe, their basic needs are met and they are clean of mind altering substances. A correctional facility is like a petri dish where anything can grow, contingent on what is planted. PEP plants a seed that all humans need, especially those that are incarcerated.

Sincerely,

Val Lamberti
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