

Chicago summer
Youth Outreach 2003

The 7 weeks I was in Chicago working for the Young People's Project was a great experience. I learned what it took to be out on my own and away from home. The program was structured differently compared to 2002. I took on some new roles and stepped it up as a MLW's. My view for the summer was structured, one group would be the training group with Maisha, this group would only train and learn the curriculum. The other group would consist of trained MLW's who would be strictly out reach. The first couple of days of the camp were introducing everyone to each other and getting adjusted to the new system. There were many new faces to meet and some old ones. I was a little nervous with all the new people and the first couple of days I felt out of place, but as the time went on I found my comfort spot.

The first week I was teamed up with Manuel a new CMLW and all new math literary workers. Each group member brought a little something to the group. When I first started working with them I felt that it would be a little difficult working with all new members, but each of them knew their responsibilities and what needed to get done. I grew very close to them and knew from the beginning that we would get along very well. The prep time did not always go so well, we would prep for a workshop but the plan never came out as we had prepared for. There were many different age groups that we had to work with, and there was never a strong solid curriculum for those under the age of 13. I believe that there needs to be a solid single curriculum for younger kids that everyone could use, not different games. My group whined and talked way too much; we

would crack jokes a lot on Manuel aka Jilah Phil aka Flaming Hot aka El Diablo aka Jim. Manuel and I never really admit it but they had us in check and they were really running the show.

The workshops went well, many of my group members really stepped up and created a strong bond with the students. The first workshops we decided to really create a relationship with the students and by creating a strong relationship with them we could teach them anything without problems. The summer was not just workshops during the times we did not have to facilitate we had many deep conversations with the Outreach group. Many conversations were based on race, civil rights and the fighting the system. We used the RACE videos to create an over all knowledge. Many of the MLW's felt that we did not need to watch these videos because if we keep reminding our selves of our history were not going anywhere, whatever happened in the past was in the past. I made the point that if we do not know our past we do not know who we are.

Overall I felt that summer went very well. There were many bumps on the road but I feel that the program put it self out there so that the community knows that its there and wants to help. There are still many things that there has to change before the Young People's Project can be a long time success, but this is a strong start. With the help of these young people we could reach out to different cities and different kids.