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Building Peace, Unity, and Justice in Greensboro

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In an effort to build peaceful, nurturing communities, the Beloved Community Center, the Pulpit Forum, and the Almighty Latin Kings and Queens Nation of Greensboro (ALKQN), North Carolina, have been working together for over a year to deal with the problems of gang violence in Greensboro. Taking a grassroots perspective, this collaborative has focused on the positive potential for street groups in low-income and communities of color to be a resource to build peace and unity in their communities. Unfortunately, in the past year the ALKQN has been harassed and falsely charged many times by the Greensboro Police Department's Gang Unit, who has attempted to complicate the peace process by intimidation, and illegitimate arrests.

Jorge Cornell (better know as King J), as the Inca (leader) of the Almighty Latin King and Queen Nation in Greensboro, initiated the peace process on June 25th, 2008 in a meeting at the Beloved Community Center during their weekly Wednesday Community Discussion Table. Cornell set out his vision for peace and has since worked very closely with Rev. Nelson Johnson and community members at the Beloved Community Center and the Pulpit Forum. The growth in Black and Brown unity in their efforts to reduce gang violence and help build a positive community environment for youth of color has been met by an increasingly harsh anti-gang taskforce that has made many attempts to harass the ALKQN...

Empowering communities

Just before Thanksgiving 2008, the Southern Coalition for Social Justice became involved with this unique group in Greensboro. Our work with these organizations has focused first on utilizing our media and community organizing resources to further efforts to quell gang violence in this area.

In addition, we have also investigated and succeeded in having dismissed 12 criminal charges pending against members of the Latin Kings and helped with the successful prosecution of a security guard who physically assaulted a Latin Kings and Queens member in a public bus depot without provocation. Taking the next step, we are now working with these organizations to curb overzealous police efforts focused on Latinos in the Triad such that the community can remain safe, while its residents are free from racial profiling.

We believe that this work is a powerful model for similar interventions in gang activity on the community level throughout the South. These efforts bring to the forefront the unique support SCSJ can offer to communities in need, whether it pertains to organizing assistance, media outreach, or legal representation.