

## PROPOSAL

For my Justice and Peace Thesis I decided to make a documentary film on a drug-rehabilitation center in Northeast Washington, DC. Regional Addiction Prevention, Incorporated, (RAP, Inc.) was founded in 1970 by a group of young men who had all gone through extensive treatment and recovery, and has been providing for now over 35 years an alternative way to treatment. RAP has been able to create a healthy, educational environment for all patients involved in drug rehabilitation treatment.

My primary goal with the film is to provide students, faculty, and other interested in and out of the Georgetown community, information about RAP in a creative way. I believe that film is a dynamic way of getting your message across. It not only incorporates various forms of art, such as photography, writing, etc., it also tells a story. While writing a thesis would have been important and substantial in telling RAP's story, I believe that by visually showing my audience the faces, the changes, and the success of RAP was much more appropriate and powerful.

## RAP'S BACKGROUND

### **RAP's Mission:**

To empower individuals to choose a productive life over addiction;

To teach the behavioral skills, attitudes and values necessary to prosper physically, emotionally, and spiritually; and

To reconnect clients to loved ones and to their community with a new appreciation of self and social responsibility.

### **RAP's Philosophy:**

As a Community, we are united in our struggle.

We say yes to life and no to things which threaten to destroy us.

Today we move toward a lifestyle of human values based on love, governed by honesty, and secured by trust.

No longer do we stand alone.

We must be as open as the air...with the will to survive, the will to learn, and the will to create.

We are a creative force motivated by each other;

For the will of the people is the greatest force conceivable.

RAP is a non-profit organization that was founded in 1970. RAP is dedicated to the transformation of individuals suffering from substance abuse. It is centered on cultural values and supports the development of the whole person, mind, body, and spirit.<sup>1</sup>

Unlike many other rehabilitation centers, RAP offers residential substance abuse treatment by using the therapeutic community approach, which emphasizes building the individual's sense of self. It is oriented around family (the RAP community), a healthful diet and exercise lifestyle, relapse prevention, individual and group counseling, work preparedness, and life skills.

Additionally, because of the extraordinarily high percentage of the D.C. HIV/AIDS population, many of the clients that come to RAP for treatment are also HIV positive. RAP, therefore, provides services to clients with HIV/AIDS and also has programs in

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<sup>1</sup>Rapinc.org

outreach and prevention for the community to increase awareness of both substance abuse and HIV/AIDS.

An overwhelmingly large number of the clients at RAP are not there by choice. Most have been formerly incarcerated and are court mandated to do a certain amount of treatment. The remaining clients are largely homeless, single parents, or substance abusers living with HIV/AIDS.

Interestingly enough, the vast majority of RAP's employees are ex-clients. The executive director and one of RAP's co-founders, is an ex-substance abuser. Knowing that the people who are taking care of you, who are providing you with services and resources, etc., were also at one time substance abusers is significant to RAP's philosophy of being united in a common struggle.

RAP offers many programs and services to its clients. Over the years some of these programs have been in youth prevention, HIV/AIDS, community support, substance abuse treatment, nutritional counseling, case management, primary medical care, and emergency housing.

## OBJECTIVES

- To tell a brief and concise history of RAP
- To inform audience of:
  - What RAP is
  - Why RAP is important, special, different
  - Alternative methods of treatment, holistic approach, therapeutic community
  - The HIV/AIDS and substance abuse issue existing in D.C.
  - The relationship between the judiciary/prison system and treatment centers
  - Individual's battles with substance abuse, prison, treatment

## TIMELINE

Fall 2006:

- Complete research
- Possibly begin conducting interviews
- Formulate a cohesive study guide that will help guide me in the filmmaking process

Spring 2007

- Writing narration
- Being and finish filming
- Post-production
  - Editing, completing film

## RESEARCH/FIELDWORK

For the past three and a half months I have been researching on the history current state of Regional Addiction Prevention, as well as the congruent patterns within Washington, D.C. Most of the research has consisted of watching various films, interviews, meetings, etc., concerning RAP, reading articles about RAP, and finding statistics on substance abuse and HIV/AIDS in Washington, D.C.

I have also been in constant contact with RAP employees, discussing where they want the film to go, what they want it to be about, who to interview, what to ask, and what they want to accomplish.

I have visited their main office located in 4<sup>th</sup> Street NE DC and their other residential treatment facility in Laurel, MD.

## INTERVIEWS

The interviews will be broken up into four parts

- History
- Clients
- Current staff members
- Neighborhood and community members

Focus:

- Stories that don't get told, full story
  - addiction, mental health, HIV, diseases
  - family/lifestyle
  - housing
  - job skills training
  - statistics in respect to DC and related problems
- Success stories from either current clients or RAP staff members
- Social fabric of DC
- History
- Role of HIV/AIDS
- Prison system

## PRELIMINARY INTERVIEWE'S

### **History:** (4-5)

Ron Clark-Founder/CEO of RAP, Inc.

Kwame

Rocman

### **Clients:** (4-5)

Individual interviews

Group circle

Focus is going to be on clients telling their stories, stories that almost never get told.

### **Current Staff Members:** (4-5)

Michael Pickering—the man that I will be working most closely with. He will be picking the staff members and clients that I will be conducting the interviews with. Since an overwhelming majority of the staff members are ex-clients of either RAP or other rehabilitation centers, I will, in addition to asking them questions specific to Rap, I want them to share their success stories.

### **Neighborhood/community members** (2-3)

## PRELIMINARY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### **History:**

What were the original premises for starting RAP?

What was the social/political/historical context?  
What were the original goals/methods, etc.?  
How is the program conducted?  
Where did this treatment approach come from?  
In terms of prevention, what sorts of things has RAP been involved with, from the beginning stages?  
Heroin situation?  
-Movement into black urban community  
How did you feel about methadone and its meth clinics throughout the rest of the country?  
Nixon's war on drugs?  
How has the infiltration of HIV/AIDS affected the way RAP works?

**Clients:**

How did you originally become involved with drug use?  
-What were some indicators?  
-What kind of background did you come from?  
What was/is your drug of choice?  
Were you ever involved with the meth maintenance programs of the 70's?  
Were you employed before you were entered RAP/prison? If so, what kind of work were you involved with? If not, what were you involved with?  
Would you consider yourself a criminal?  
Why are you at RAP?  
How do you feel about RAP? Have you been to other programs? If so, how would you compare them to RAP?  
-collectivity, community, family  
-drug-free environment  
How do you feel about yourself?  
How long have you been with RAP?  
What do you plan on doing after RAP? What do you plan on not doing after RAP?  
Would you consider becoming involved with drugs again?  
How has RAP changed you, or not changed you?  
How do you feel about your other "family members?"  
Any input on drug problem and/or HIV/AIDS problem in DC, USA, or rest of the world?

**Staff members:**

Are you a former client of RAP? If so, what was your drug of choice? How long were you a user?  
-effects on family, job, lifestyle, education?  
Why did you choose to go to RAP? Why are you at RAP still?  
What were your overall feelings about RAP? How effective was it? How supportive was it? Etc.  
General ideas of what experience as a client was, now that you are a staff member here?  
Where do most of the clients come from? Has it changed since the beginning of RAP?  
What is the background of most clients?  
Drug of choice of most clients?

HIV positive?

What are the primary methods used here at RAP to treat clients?

How do you feel about the therapeutic community approach? The idea of the family?

Afro-centric, holistic, alternative approach to treatment?

Prevention programs?

-sterile needle exchange?

Residential treatment facilities?

Prison system reform?

Government policies?

Continual effectiveness of program?

What are some of the keys to ending this never-ending cycle?

## RESOURCES

Newspaper articles:

1. Patrice Gaines-Carter. *D.C. Drug Center Moves to New Home in Laurel*. The Washington Post, Nov. 17, 1987, A19.
  - On move of one of its rehab centers to Laurel, a suburb of D.C. Article mostly focuses on funds and search for a new center, and then a few interviews, including one with Executive Director, Ron Clark.
2. William Raspberry. *In the Habit of Caring*. The Washington Post, Feb. 12, 1973, A21.
  - Author has taken a trip to RAP and now explains routine of what it is like to be a patient. Article written during period of methadone maintenance, so he talks about differences between certain rehab centers and RAP
3. Courtland Milloy. *Like It or Not, Heroin Is in Our Back Yard*. The Washington Post, Sept. 21, 2000, C1.
  - It begins with how RAP started then goes into how it has dealt with the heroin problem in D.C. Interview with Ron Clark. Then goes into problem with HIV/AIDS in D.C.
4. Sally Quinn. *RAP Ball: An 'In' Affair*. The Washington Post, Oct. 3, 1972, B1.
  - General synopsis of RAP and where it has gotten its funds from and why it has dodged certain areas, organizations, and individuals.
5. Joseph Novitski. *RAP Therapy Strong After 5 Years*. The Washington Post, Jul. 14, 1975, A19.
  - Discusses RAP's success after its five year anniversary
6. Courtland Milloy. *RAP Worth Saving*. The Washington Post, Mar. 26, 1987, J1.
  - After 17 years of serving D.C.'s drug addicted population, RAP faces hardship when lease runs out.
7. J.Y. Smith. *Rap, Inc., Running Short of Money*. The Washington Post, Jun. 2, 1973, D2.
8. Wolf Von Eckardt. *The New Resident on Williard Street*. The Washington Post, Aug. 12, 1972, A14.
  - RAP moves to an Adams Morgan block creating a new, interesting dynamic to the neighborhood.
9. Don Colburn. *Undoing the Damage*. The Washington Post, Dec. 27, 1988, Z6.
  - Focuses on one addicts fight to get clean, then goes into his time at RAP

10. Eric E. Sterling. *Take another crack at that cocaine law*. Los Angeles Times, Nov. 13, 2006.

- The writer is the president of the nonprofit Criminal Justice Policy Foundation in Silver Spring, and was counsel to the House Judiciary Committee, principally responsible for anti-drug legislation. He goes into depth specifically about the cocaine drug law

Misc. Websites:

1. Rap, Inc. official website, [www.rapinc.org](http://www.rapinc.org).

- Has sections on resources, services, their mission, philosophy, history, and updates on what is happening

Films:

1. Winnie Mandela Comes to RAP, 2001.

- Roundtable discussion with Mrs. Mandela and RAP executives on HIV/AIDS in D.C., the importance of education, and discussing exactly what RAP does and how it is effective

2. Health Matters Interview with Sabrina Heard and Kwame Roberts

- Interview on television show with Mr. Roberts, who is an executive at RAP. He discusses the stigma against HIV/AIDS people, the demographics of the HIV/AIDS population and the drug-addicted population, and finishes with RAP's 35-year success

3. The Trip is the Thing, 1994, Ron Clark Speech

- Speech given by Ron Clark, executive director at RAP. He compares treatment to any other voyage being taken, instead of looking forward to the destination, appreciate the ride.

4. The Best of Us, a 60 Minutes Interview with Dan Rather

- Rather interviews Don Clark in 1989 about RAP, D.C. community, and the therapeutic community approach to treatment

5. Methadone: An American Way of Dealing, 1973

- Two movies in one, one talking about a drug-rehab center in Dayton, Ohio which was using methadone as a way to get abusers off of heroin, and the other was RAP, which used this very alternative, holistic approach to treatment
- Both little films really concentrate on the rehab centers but also the communities of Dayton and D.C.
- A good compare/contrast piece on centers that do and do not use methadone maintenance

6. Ron Clark College Tour Seminar

- Mr. Clark speaks to group of people (not students though) about D.C. demographics in respect with HIV/AIDS, race, poverty, services, talks about the structure of a therapeutic community, and the African concepts that are integrated into RAP's mission

7. RAP in the Suburbs

- RAP's move to a quiet suburban neighborhood creates a lot of tension amongst neighbors, and forces the center to relocate

## FILM SHOTS (PRELIMINARY)

- Group/morning meeting
- Exercise
- Group sing/activities
- Laurel facility
  - Outdoor shots
- DC facility
- Interviews
- Condom project
- RAP in the city
  - Clients involved in activities around DC
    - Marches, rallies, other activities

## STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF THE FILM

- Photographs dating from 1970
- Interviewee's narrate film
- Sporadic shots of RAP centers, clients, staff members
- Film completely chronological
  - RAP at the beginning
  - RAP during the 80's , HIV/AIDS
  - Changes from NGO→government aid
  - Current state
- Tone is uplifting but dark at the same time to give success story of RAP but also its downfalls, and hardships of being a substance-abuser

## ASSISTANCE/GUIDANCE

- Henry Schwarz. Head of Program on Justice and Peace
- Bernie Cook, Dean of College, Professor
- Claire MacDonald, Georgetown student
- Gerry Wurzburg and Grady Watts, documentary filmmakers
- Michael Pickering, staff member at RAP