

Brian LeBaron M.A., M.S., L.C.P.C. New Pathways Wellness Center

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Re: Mr. Carl Cole

To Stephenson County Board Members:

I am writing in reference to a local treasure of multi faceted talent, Mr. Carl Cole. I have had the benefit of knowing Mr. Cole since we were classmates at Freeport High School. Over the years we have been involved in some mutual efforts of community benevolence with a particular emphasis on youth outreach. As a former director of the Youth Crisis Intervention Services and Screening Assessment and Support Services at the local community mental health center, I know first hand the multi categorical socio-economic challenges that our county children, youth and their families face.

This past summer I worked with the Boys and Girls Club of Stephenson County as a life coach in their 21st Century Community Learning Center and Teen Reach Programs, funded by Illinois State Board of Education, to support and develop at risk students. Mr. Carl Cole was a feature of this programming as he would weekly come to bring an engaging, informative and motivational dialogue the ""YES" Club Character Excellence Workshop Sessions" with the gathered students. Mr. "C" as he is affectionately known, brought insightful, culturally relevant discussion to the students on practical matters of daily living promoting pro-social attitudes and behaviors. Remarkably the students were very attentive and responsive to his real life oriented talks. He is a stellar role model for these students having come up in our own community.

I would strongly support Mr. Cole's proposal to the Stephenson County Board (Court Committee) for another Grant from their "Diversion Funding." I have personally witnessed the Program and endorse it as a project worthy of existing and continuing for the empowerment and inspiration of students to improve their academic and behavioral statuses and increase their positive attitudes about life. Mr. C has the talent, passion, and seasoned experience to enrich our community efforts to favorably impact the outcomes of our at risk children and youth.

Sincerely,

Brian LeBaron

Brian LeBaron, M.A., M.S. L.C.P.C., N.C.C.
Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor, Nationally Certified Counselor.