

Diversion is only a moment in time but for that moment, young people are presented with a one-time opportunity to avoid the justice system, gain an appreciation for second chances, understand the impact of their behavior on others, exercise positive behaviors in an effort to repair damage and restore balance for themselves and their victims, and walk away feeling validated, valued, and powerful over their circumstances. Success studies reveal 89% of first time offenders coming before local Diversion Panels do not re-offend.

Prevention sounds simple by definition because it implies that we will simply stop something from happening. Why then do we encounter so many young people who have disconnected from family, reason, and self-appreciation? Prevention is a lot more than coloring books in kindergarten and story books in grade school. At what moment are we struck with the reality that it is simply too late to stop, alter, or reverse the result of our own apathetic responses?

Prevention requires us to form a shield of protection around our children by doing whatever it takes to keep them safe at all ages.

What then is prevention? Please allow me to share a mother's letter written to her son as he entered rehab.

LETTER

Prevention is seeing and listening and responding with a plan constructed of hope and wisdom.

Will you help us bandage the wounds, wipe away the tears, erase the conflict, lead the blind, and break the silence? Will you exercise courage by taking a stand to love our kids enough to give them a second chance? Will you be the one that made a difference?

Prevention takes guts and money. Please make prevention a priority by continuing to fund our efforts to increase school achievement, reduce aggressive behaviors, improve environmental safety, strengthen family health, and provide transformational and life changing moments for the young people of our communities.