

**MURDER**

**Stop the  
Violence**

**CRIME  
SCENE - DO NOT CROSS**

**JUST  
FOR  
KICKS.**

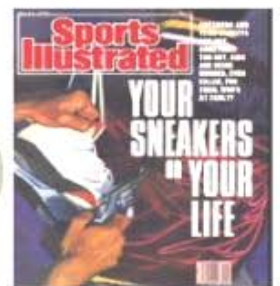


**A DOCUMENTARY ABOUT SNEAKERS, HIP HOP & THE CORPORATE GAME**

**WWW.JUSTFORKICKSMOVIE.COM**

**"..assailants aren't simply taking clothes from their victims. They're taking status. Something is very wrong with a society that has created an underclass that is slipping into economic and moral oblivion, an underclass in which pieces of rubber and plastic held together by shoelaces are sometimes worth more than a human life."**

Rick Telander is a sports columnist with the "Chicago Sun-Times." He is also an occasional contributor to Sports Illustrated magazine.



*presented by:*

**Rahmel Fox, CEO**

**WHO?**

**WHOMENTORS.COM**

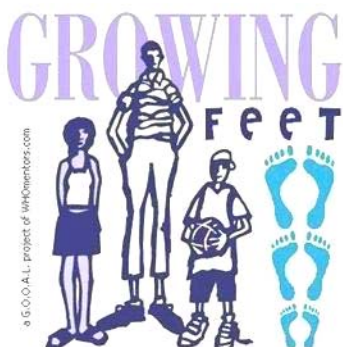
**Rahmel@WHOMentors.com**

## **Cow Chip Bingo, anyone? Or, Donkey Basketball? Would you Kiss a Pig?**

Dear Organizational Leader,

How far would you go to help raise funds for a worthy cause that provides for things not ordinarily covered by school budgets? For us, you don't have to go too far. *So, instead of going door-to-door, just go cubicle-to-cubicle, communicate email-to-email or call phone-to-phone.*

While many children will go back to school in the latest fashion trends endorsed by pop stars, celebrities, hip-hop moguls and glamorous athletes, some will face yet another year without the basic needs such as a new pair of properly fitting shoes. WHOMentors.com, Inc. is responding to pleas for new shoes from other nonprofit tax-exempt organizations, governmental agencies and schools.



**Need New Shoes & Socks!**

I realize the voluntary act of giving in the workplace or collaborating for a joint-fundraiser is not a new idea. But, it is an efficient and cost-effective strategy. The proceeds increase our presence and influence and add credibility to the grassroots gift-distribution campaign, **"Growing Feet Need New Shoes & Socks!"** Potential recipients are poor, homeless, or orphaned children or kids in foster care or under the care of child protective services.

Whatever the need, unrestricted public financial support permits WHOMentors.com, Inc. to buy discounted **skihlz.com** brand-named shoes for school-going children who may require different types of shoes for different functions such as school shoes, sport shoes and casual shoes.



**Imagine yourself in their situation and, "in their shoes."** I did and I was stunned. My dream as an outside supporter is a complete school year without fundraisers. But with more than 70 percent of our students on free or reduced-price lunch, there aren't a lot of families with extra money to shell out every time their children need something important paid for like shoes.

So how does it work? There are four ways to give. Online at <http://www.WHOMentors.com/donate.htm>, download the mailer and send via US Mail <http://www.WHOMentors.com/pdf/intheirshoes.pdf>, by email to [Rauhmel@WHOMentors.com](mailto:Rauhmel@WHOMentors.com), or by phone or sms text at 1-415-373-6767, 24 hours. WHOMentors.com, Inc. collaborates with participating religious, civic groups, fraternities, sororities, government, social and business organizations to collect contributions and employer matching-gifts each month to pay for new shoes and socks.

Thank you in advance for your timely consideration of this request.

Rauhmel Fox, CEO



Thursday, July 13, 2006

## REQUEST FOR LETTER OF SUPPORT

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Company: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State Zip Code + 4 \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Facsimile: \_\_\_\_\_

**RE: "Growing Feet Need New Shoes & Socks!" -- A Nascent International Shoe Gift Distribution Program**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

This letter is sent requesting your personal evaluation or official support of a proposal to be submitted by WHOmentors.com, Inc. to prospective donors in order to obtain funding or contributions to underwrite my nonprofit work that is "path-breaking" and influential.

### About WHOmentors.com, Inc.—

Society knows the importance of mentors but how often is the inspirational attributes emoted and a coherent example exhibited, especially to children of compulsory school age?

WHOmentors.com, Inc is a national nonprofit 501(c)(3) tax-exempt 509(a)(2) research corporation that is primarily engaged in interdisciplinary scientific applied research to gain knowledge or understanding to determine the means by which a specific, recognized need may be met. In addition to conducting scientifically-based research, WHOmentors.com, Inc. facilitates Mentor Practitioner Professional development at every level of opportunity and is an expert at Mentor Presence Management for business, industry, educational institutions, government entities, communities, and individuals.

Through this organization, I provide a model of the wisdom, intelligence, temperament, craftsmanship, and personal qualities that can make a mentor practitioner outstanding.

My initiatives are characterized by care, thoroughness, and sensitivity to opposing viewpoints or needs. For instance, school-aged kids need shoes for a variety of activities and sports. Kids grow fast, and shoe sizes change from month to month or they always have to have the latest pair. Since older kids usually want to make a fashion statement with their shoes instead of working out in the gym, parents are under pressure to balance good fit, durability, and family budgets with fashion requirements.

WHOmentors.com, Inc. could really benefit from having you behind the launch of our flagship project, "Growing Feet Need New Shoes & Socks," an international shoe gift distribution program to provide new shoes and socks to children and kids that are abandoned, homeless and/or orphaned. The focus of the program can be easily expanded to include relief workers volunteering to assist with humanitarian efforts in areas affected by natural disasters such as the Tsunami area or the Katrina area. WHOmentors.com, Inc. raises money to buy new skihlz.com athletic footwear at wholesale prices that fit properly and reflect a distinct element of individual performance.

Receiving your endorsement of my ability as the CEO to successfully deliver shoes to kids is essential and necessary for inclusion with request for funding. Your letter will inform a prospective donor that you have thoroughly reviewed WHOmentors.com, Inc. and the "Growing Feet Need New Shoes & Socks!" project, and that you have the confidence to offer a letter of support on my behalf.

Thursday, July 13, 2006

The Need—

WHOMentors.com, Inc. has identified obesity, particularly childhood obesity, and teen crime as two of its main areas of focus for the foreseeable future and recognizes that promoting fitness and active lifestyle is not just limited to involvement in traditional sports. The prevention of childhood obesity and teen crime are two unusual or odd pairings. Here's an explanation why.

Shoes are extremely important to school-aged children. And when those shoes are too small...falling apart at the seams...covered with holes...or hand-me-downs for the third or fourth time...it's a big deal. Children may stand on the sidelines of sport activities because they don't have the proper footwear. This contributes to a sedentary lifestyle and childhood obesity. Or, many children will participate in a physical activity like basketball wearing flip flops or torn shoes. This scenario could lead to unrealized foot problems later in life.

There is another generational trait that is manifesting itself into a more problematic and aggressive behavior. Older kids often want pricey shoes with popular labels or logos, and the lack of any monetary allowance becomes the motive for many robberies and even murder. In many cases, since each teenager has to decide what exactly they are or are not willing to do for money, shoes literally make a difference between life and death. In March of 2005, three teenagers, 19, 15, and 13 respectively, wanted another kid's \$110 new Nike Air Jordans sneakers so badly they conspired together and the young adult fatally shot and killed a 17-year-old student for his shoes. The group made up of two young boys and a little girl, settled for selling the shoes on the streets of Chicago for \$30 bucks. The Chicago police reported this as the first time shoes were the link to murder.

Wait, There's More—

And, what are low-income families with children of compulsory school age supposed to do when their kids need shoes? A memorable quote from Season 3, Episode 3 of the sitcom "Friends" provides insight into the answer.

"Joey: How come we don't have jam at our place?"

"Chandler: Because the kids need shoes."

The grocery budget in most low-income households is usually open to a bit of adjustment in order to free up funds for more pressing needs like new shoes for a child's ever growing feet. Stretching their income to cover so many needs seems difficult if not impossible. A mother reflects a personal sentiment shared by moms everywhere, "I forget who I am, that I have priority to myself. If I need shoes and the kids need shoes, I buy for the kids and leave myself. That's definitely the case," she says. "My happiness is connected to my family's happiness--if they are happy, then I'm happy."

How does it work?

WHOMentors.com, Inc. will make daily appeals for funding. Not only will the simple act of donating \$25 or more enable students to enter the classroom with pride, comfort, and a fresh focus on learning which WHOMentors.com, Inc. believes will help lead to early academic successes and, quite possibly, it could save someone's life.

The process is based on an efficiency model. Prospective donors will be asked to visit a secure website <http://www.WHOMentors.com/growingfeet.htm>. A contribution of \$25 will provide a child with one pair of running shoes. A contribution of \$50 will provide a child with two pairs of shoes for running and for winter use. A contribution of \$75 will provide a child with two pairs of shoes and a backpack. On a monthly basis, WHOMentors.com will distribute new pairs of skihlz.com branded athletic footwear to charities and government organizations that have an urgent need for athletic footwear and winter shoes for children age 0 to 18. Due to customs regulations, we only distribute new shoes, socks, and shoelaces. In contrast to traditional shoe collection or shoe drive campaigns, WHOMentors.com, Inc. does not accept donations of retail purchases of highly commercialized athletic footwear.

Thursday, July 13, 2006

WHOMentors.com, Inc. encourages teenagers to measure their life by their individual skills (read skills) and is focused on assisting a generation that will not define itself by its possessions.

Acknowledgment of nature of support—

As the requesting agency, WHOMentors.com, Inc. understands that a written letter of personal or official support from you to be included with a grant/funding request application in no way whatsoever creates an obligation on the part of your organization, government entity, or school to financially or materially support the proposed project created by WHOMentors.com, Inc.

The letter of support is intended solely for the purpose of assisting and supporting the grant/funding request application process. Execution of such a letter of support creates no obligation on the part of your organization or governmental unit to perform or not to perform any function.

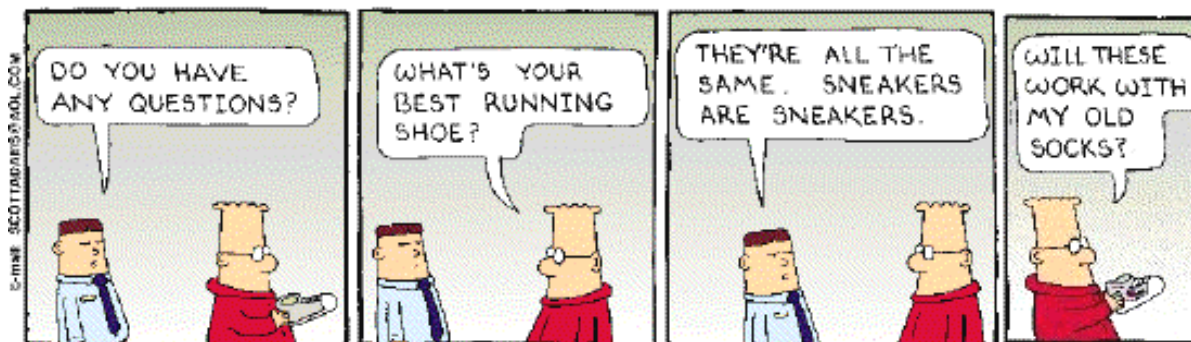
I encourage you to call me at 415-373-6767 with questions or feedback or email [Rauhmel@WHOMentors.com](mailto:Rauhmel@WHOMentors.com) within two weeks after the date of this letter. If you want to outline a specific commitment of human or financial resources to the proposed project in the form of a "Letter of Comment," a statement to document your intent to provide specific in-kind contributions or cash to support WHOMentors.com, Inc., I am willing to meet with you in person at the earliest opportunity.

While I recognize that there are competing solicitations for your time and resources, I want to thank you in advance for your timely consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



"Rauhmel Fox" Robinson, CEO  
1993 Graduate, United States Air Force Academy



Thursday, July 13, 2006

**SAMPLE LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR GRANT APPLICATION  
TO BE SUBMITTED BY  
WHOMENTORS.COM, INC.**

(Please submit on your official letterhead)

Date

To Whom It May Concern:

(Your name or your entity's name) is very interested in addressing (insert the issue being addressed by WHOmentors.com, Inc.) (State why the issue is of concern to your corporation, the country, state, prefecture, region, county or city and its citizens.)

(State knowledge of proposal, evaluation of the CEO submitting the proposal, and encouragement of funding WHOmentors.com, Inc. to provide resources to address issue identified above.)

(State that the need to address the issue is significant, and that other resources to address the need are insufficient to address or impact the need.)

(State that the proposed project appears to avoid duplication problems, and that the WHOmentors.com, Inc. would coordinate with appropriate partners to ensure efficient and effective use of grant funds. Address in-kind or other matching being proffered by WHOmentors.com, Inc. to other benefiting organizations.)

(Conclude with general statement of confidence in and support for WHOmentors.com, Inc. seeking assistance, based on past experience with the WHOmentors.com, Inc., if applicable, local reputation for effectiveness, etc. Again encourage positive response from funding WHOmentors.com, Inc., and indicate if you have an intent to encourage local support for the proposed project, if funded.)

Sincerely

Name, Title  
Organization Name  
Contact Information



## ***Teen Says He Was Beaten, Robbed Over Nikes***



POSTED: 7:08 am EDT May 4, 2006

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. -- A 15-year-old boy said he was left barefoot and bloody after he was beaten and robbed of his brand-new Nike basketball shoes.

Fenton Reese said he was attacked from behind by a group of teens who punched him in the face, leaving him with a fractured nose and a swollen face.



"I had blood all over my face, my shirt," Fenton Reese said. "I just wiped my nose and had blood all over my arm."

"As a mother, to see your child harmed in that way is devastating," said Reese's mother, Miquelle Christian. The teen's mother said she had just bought him the Nike Jordan Kids Mach III shoes in New York because they're hard to find.

## ***Three Teens Arrested In Attack Over Nikes***

POSTED: 7:02 am EDT May 5, 2006

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. -- Three people were arrested Thursday, accused of attacking and beating a 15-year-old boy last weekend in order to take the boy's Nike basketball shoes. Fenton Reese suffered a broken nose, broken blood vessels in his eye and other injuries when he was beaten by a group of teenagers and his brand-new Jordan Mach III shoes were stolen. The three suspects will have a first appearance before a judge Friday.

## ***Teen Pleads Guilty To Beating Boy For Sneakers***

POSTED: 12:32 pm EDT June 1, 2006

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. -- One of two teens arrested for beating 15-year-old Fenton Reese and robbing him of his Nike basketball shoes last month has pleaded guilty in the case. A 15-year-old boy who is not being named because of his age pleaded guilty Thursday morning to attempted robbery. He was sentenced to an indefinite term in a medium-security juvenile facility. Reese suffered a broken nose and broken blood vessels in his eye in the attack. His Jordan Mach III shoes were stolen. Outside the courtroom, Reese's mother, Miquelle Christian, said she wished the plea would have been to robbery, but she is satisfied with the sentence.

Christian mentioned the lack of remorse she's gotten from the mothers of the two suspects, saying what can you expect from their kids when the mothers think the beating was justified. Christian said the way to reduce the murder rate is to give juvenile judges more power to come down hard on juvenile offenders.



## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Monday, March 14, 2005

John Diaz, 415-777-7018  
Letters to the Editor, 415-777-7176  
Letters@sfchronicle.com  
Images@sfchronicle.com  
Fax: 415-543-7708

Address: Letters to the Editor  
San Francisco Chronicle  
901 Mission Street  
San Francisco, CA 94103

Title: Footnote to Suicide?

Editor—Do you see what I see? The 03/12/2005 front-page edition of the *San Francisco Chronicle* features a photograph showing two officers coaxing a young man into giving up his temptation of jumping off the stunning Golden Gate Bridge.

At first glance, we see impressive, timely action by the public servants that is nothing less than a small miracle of rescuing someone from the edge. We should recognize and affirm that. Yet it is important to draw another lesson from the image. Looking a little deeper, however, I see indicators and elements that move youth towards a genocidal conclusion. My sympathies are with the parents because I see a dejected kid—with *all the frailty which that implies*—alone with his thoughts and his brand new apparel including NIKE shoes.



Of all the messages that can reach youth, whose voices could and should get through? Mired in a dilemma, I wonder did he cede his mental control to the bewildering beauty of some footwear and the influential power of a marketing slogan? Asking himself, “should I *jump, man?*” Did the wisdom of just a few words from some expensive retail running gear confuse him? The *swoosh logo* inaudibly whispers a directive that can be easily understood. The unfiltered catchphrase, “**Just Do It!**” isn’t exactly easy to resist in situations like this.

For verification purposes:  
Rauhmel Fox, CEO  
WHOMentors.com, Inc.  
Rauhmel@WHOMentors.com  
415-373-6767

Sincerely,

“Rauhmel Fox” Robinson, CEO  
1993 Graduate, United States Air Force Academy



## Police Investigate Whether Teen Was Killed Over Shoes

### *Teen's Dying Words: 'They Set Me Up'*

POSTED: 11:33 am CST March 30, 2005

UPDATED: 9:00 pm CST March 30, 2005

**CHICAGO** -- Chicago police are investigating the Monday shooting death of a South Side teen whose mother believes he was killed over his gym shoes, [NBC5's Kim Vatis](#) reported.



NBC5 Image  
Steve Terret

**Images:** [Killed Over Shoes?](#)

**Video:** [Victim's Family, Classmate React](#)

**Images:** [More NBC5.com Slideshows](#)

Steve Terret, 17, was shot in the back in an alley at 72nd Street and South Perry Avenue and died later that night at a local hospital.

Police said before the victim's last words were, "They set me up."

Terret's cell phone and expensive gym shoes were missing, but police have not confirmed that robbery was the motive for the killing, Vatis reported.

Terret's mother, Barbara Braxton, said she bought Terret a new pair of Nike Air Jordan Solidify shoes, which retail for \$110.

"You work so hard, your kid do good and you buy him what he asks you to buy him and then someone takes his life over a gym shoe? It hurts so bad," Braxton said.

The victim's grandfather, Leonard Furqua, said Terret left home at 9 p.m. and said he'd be right back.

"We told him, 'Don't wear it. Don't be wearing those shoes out here,' so he only put them on every once in a awhile to wear them. So I don't know why he had them on that day," Furqua said.

Terret's attended Paul Robeson High School, where classmates and parents said there's always a risk with wearing something pricey.

"Sometimes (you worry about it), that's why you don't always wear your good stuff up here all the time, because you never know, sometime you might get robbed or something," student Uriah Johnson said.

"It is a really big concern. I try to stay away from the shoes that are really popular, that they might get into a fight over," parent Samantha Blackman said.

Police said crimes over sports gear have dropped since the 1990s, when Michael Jordan and the Bulls were in their heyday, Vatis reported.

No suspects have been named in the case.

"Only God knows. Why would someone do that to my kid? I loved him," Braxton said.

#### SURVEY

Does your child's safety ever affect your decision on whether to buy them expensive clothing items?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

[Results](#) | [Disclaimer](#)

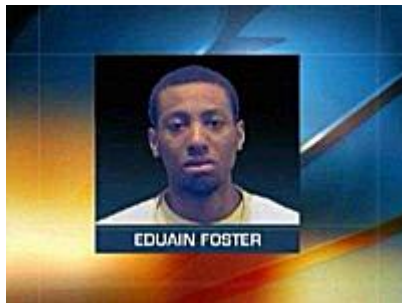
## Police: Suspect Sold Killed Teen's Shoes For \$30

### *Police Say Basketball Shoes Motive For Slaying*

POSTED: 6:42 am CDT April 4, 2005

UPDATED: 12:04 pm CDT April 5, 2005

**CHICAGO --** Police say one of the teens accused of robbing and fatally shooting another South Side teen sold the victim's shoes to a relative for \$30.



Bond was denied on Monday for a 15-year-old who police said was the triggerman in the crime.

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 **Images:** [Two Teens Arrested](#)

 **Video:** [Bond Denied Teen In Slaying](#)

 **Images:** [More NBC5.com Slideshows](#)

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NBC5's [Darren Kramer](#) reported that 19-year-old Eduain Foster and his cousin Marshall Simmons came to court in high-end basketball shoes -- not so different from the ones for which they are accused of killing a 17-year-old Steve Terret. Foster is being held on \$800,000 bond.

Simmons and Foster appeared together before Judge Raymond Myles in Violence Court, each charged with first-degree murder and armed robbery in the March 28 fatal shooting of Terret. According to Assistant State's Attorney Margaret Blade, Simmons and Foster plotted to rob Terrett because his nice clothes and new shoes led them to believe he had a lot of money. On March 28, Simmons' 13-year-old girlfriend set the plan in motion with a phone call, asking Terrett to meet her near 7210 S. Perry Av. at around 9:30 p.m., Blade said.

When the youth arrived, the girl greeted him with a hug, which was actually a pretense to frisk him for weapons, Blade said. Foster walked up and asked Terrett if he had the time, and Simmons grabbed him from behind and dragged him to an alley and threw him to the ground, Blade said.

Terrett complied when the two assailants asked him to empty his pockets and he tossed the men his sneakers, wallet and cell phone, Blade said. After Foster gathered the loot, Simmons fired one shot from his .22-caliber pistol, striking Terrett under his left arm, Blade said.

After the men drove away in a car with another woman, police arrived at the scene to find Terrett still alive but fatally wounded, Blade said.

Foster, who lives in Minneapolis, Minn., had been in Chicago visiting family for about a week.

"He's a good kid, church-going, in school, working," said Kenny Bowie, one of the suspect's relatives. "For something to happen is really shocking to us."

"Both boys have plenty of shoes -- they were raised good," said Erica Sears, "The gym shoe thing was really shocking to my whole family."

As for the 13-year-old girlfriend who police alleged set up the meeting, Kramer reported that police have questioned her but don't have enough evidence yet to charge her with a crime.

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MAY 14, 1990

\$2.75

# Sports Illustrated

SNEAKERS AND  
TEAM JACKETS  
ARE HOT,  
SOMETIMES  
TOO HOT. KIDS  
ARE BEING  
MUGGED, EVEN  
KILLED, FOR  
THEM. WHO'S  
AT FAULT?

## YOUR SNEAKERS OR YOUR LIFE



# Your Sneakers or Your Life

- *Sneakers and team jackets are hot, sometimes too hot. Kids are being mugged, even killed for them. Who's at fault?*
- *In America's cities, kids are killing kids over sneakers and other sports apparel favored by drug dealers. Who's to blame?*
- *Is it the shoes?...Money, it's gotta be the shoes! -- Mars Blackmon, to Michael Jordan, in a Nike commercial.*



*Thinking about ripping someone off to get a pair of fancy, overpriced sneakers?  
Just remember this little rhyme:*

*Why become a con -- and deal with a jailer. . .  
When you can wear the Con -- made by Chuck Taylor!*

For 15-year old Michael Eugene Thomas, it definitely was the shoes. A ninth grader at Meade Senior High School in Anne Arundel County, Maryland, Thomas was found strangled on May 2, 1989. Charged with first-degree murder was James David Martin, 17, a basketball buddy who allegedly took Thomas's two-week-old Air Jordan basketball shoes and left Thomas's barefoot body in the woods near school.

Thomas loved Michael Jordan, as well as the shoes Jordan endorses, and he cleaned his own pair each evening. He kept the cardboard shoebox with Jordan's silhouette on it in a place of honor in his room. Inside the box was the sales ticket for the shoes. It showed he paid \$115.50, the price of a product touched by deity. "We told him not to wear the shoes to school," said Michael's grandmother, Birdie Thomas. "We said somebody might like them, and he said, 'Granny, before I let anyone take those shoes, they'll have to kill me.'"

Michael Jordan sits in the locked pressroom before a workout at the Chicago Bulls' practice facility in suburban Deerfield, Illinois. He is wearing his practice uniform and a pair of black Air Jordans similar to the ones young Thomas wore, except that these have Jordan's number, 23, stitched on the sides. On the shoelaces Jordan wears plastic toggles to prevent the shoes from loosening if the laces should come untied. Two toggles come in each box of Air Jordans, and if kids knew that Jordan actually wears them, they would never step out the door without their own toggles securely in place. The door is locked to keep out the horde of fans, journalists, and favor seekers who dog Jordan wherever he goes. Jordan needs a quiet moment. He is reading and account of Thomas's death that a reporter has shown him.

For just an instant it looks as though Jordan might cry. He has so carefully nurtured his image as the all-American role model that he refuses to go anywhere, get into any situation that might



detract from that image. He moves swiftly and smoothly from the court to home to charity events to the golf course, all in an aura of untarnished integrity. "I can't believe it," Jordan says in a low voice. "Choked to death. By his friend." He sighs deeply. Sweat trickles down one temple.

He asks if there have been other such crimes. Yes, he is told. Plenty, unfortunately. Not only for Air Jordans, but also for other brands of athletic shoes, as well as for jackets and caps bearing sports insignia -- apparel that Jordan and other athlete endorsers have encouraged American youth to buy.

The killings aren't new. In 1983, 14-year-old Dewitt Duckett was shot to death in the hallway of Harlem Park Junior High in Baltimore by someone who apparently wanted Duckett's silky blue Georgetown jacket. In 1985, 13-year-old Shawn Jones was shot in Detroit after five youths took his Fila sneakers. But lately the pace of the carnage has quickened. In January, 1988, an unidentified Houston boy, a star athlete in various sports, allegedly stabbed and killed 22 year old Eric Allen with a butcher knife after the two argued over a pair of tennis shoes in the home the youths shared with their mothers. Seven months later a gunman in Atlanta allegedly robbed an unnamed 17 year old of his Mercedes-Benz and Avia high tops after shooting to death the boy's 25 year old friend, Carl Middlebrooks, as Middlebrooks pedaled away on his bike. Last November, Raheem Wells, the quarterback for Detroit Kettering High, was murdered, allegedly by six teenagers who swiped his Nike sneakers. In Baltimore last summer 19-year-old Ronnell Ridgeway was robbed of his \$40 sweatpants and then shot and killed. In March, Chris Demby, a 10th grader at Franklin Learning Center in West Philadelphia, was shot and killed for his new Nikes.

In April 1989, 16-year-old Johnny Bates was shot to death in Houston by 17-year-old Demetrick Walker after Johnny refused to turn over his Air Jordan high tops. In March, Demetrick was sentenced to life in prison. Said prosecutor Mark Vinson, "It's bad when we create an image of luxury about athletic gear that it forces people to kill over it."

Jordan shakes his head. "I thought I'd be helping out others and everything would be positive," he says. "I thought people would try to emulate the good things I do, they'd try to achieve, to be better. Nothing bad. I never thought because of my endorsement of a shoe, or any product, that people would harm each other. Everyone likes to be admired, but when it comes to kids actually killing each other" -- he pauses -- "then you have to re-evaluate things."

We certainly do. In a country that has long been hung up on style over substance, flash over depth, the athletic shoe and sportswear industries (a projected \$5.5 billion in domestic sales of name brand shoes in 1990; more than \$2 billion in sweatpants, sweatshirts and warm-up suits) suddenly have come to represent the pinnacle of consumer exploitation. In recent months the industries, which include heavyweights Nike and Reebok as well as smaller players Adidas, Asics, British Knights, Brooks, Converse, Ellesse, Etonic, Fila, L.A. Gear, New Balance, Pony, Puma, Starter and numerous other makers of sports shoes, caps and jackets, have been accused of creating a fantasy-fueled market for luxury items in the economically blasted inner cities and willingly tapping into the flow of drug and gang money. This has led to a frightening outbreak of crimes among poor black kids trying to make the mark by "busting fresh" or dressing at the height of fashion.

In some cities muggings for sportswear are commonplace -- Atlanta police, for instance, estimate they have handled more than fifty such robberies in the last four months. Yet it is not only the number of violent acts but also the seeming triviality of the booty that has stunned the public. In February, 19 year old Calvin Wash was about to cross Central Park Avenue on Chicago's West Side when, according to police, two youths drove up in a van and demanded that he give them the Cincinnati Bengal jacket he was wearing. When Wash resisted, one of the youths is alleged to have fatally shot him in the back -- through the A in "Bengals."

Chicago police sergeant Michael Chasen, who works in the violent crimes division in Area Four, which covers four of Chicago's 25 police districts, says his districts have about 50 reported incidents involving jackets and about a dozen involving gym shoes each month. "When you really think about the crime itself -- taking someone's clothes off their body -- you can't get much more basic," he says.

But, of course, these assailants aren't simply taking clothes from their victims. They're taking status. Something is very wrong with a society that has created an underclass that is slipping into economic and moral oblivion, an underclass in which pieces of rubber and plastic held together by shoelaces are sometimes worth more than a human life. The shoe companies have played a direct role in this. With their million-dollar advertising campaigns, superstar spokesmen and over-designed, high-priced products aimed at impressionable young people, they are creating status from thin air to feed those who are starving for self-esteem. "No one person is responsible for this type of violence," say Patricia Graham, principal of Chicago's Simeon High, one of the city's perennial basketball powers. "It's a combination of circumstances. It's about values and training. Society's values are out of sync, which is why these things have become important."

"The classic explanation in sociology is that these people are driven by peer pressure," say Mervin Daniel, a sociology professor at Morgan State. "What is advertised on TV and whatever your peers are doing, you do it too." Most assuredly, the shoe industry relies heavily on advertising; it spends more than \$200 million annually to promote and advertise its products, churning out a blizzard of images and words that make its shoes seem preternaturally hip, cool and necessary. Nike alone will spend \$60 million in 1990 on TV and print ads that have built such slogans as "Bo knows," and "Just do it," and "Do you know? Do you know? Do you know?" into mantras of consumerism.

What is baffling, however, is the strength of certain sporting products as icons for drug dealers and gangs. In Boston the Greenwood Street gang wears Green Bay Packer gear, the Vamp Hill Kings wear Los Angeles Kings and Raider gear, and the Castlegate gang wears Cincinnati Reds clothes. "The Intervale gang use all Adidas stuff, exclusively -- hats, jackets, sweatpants, shoes," says Bill Stewart III, the probation officer at the Dorchester District Court in Boston, one of the busiest criminal courts in the nation. "They even have an Adidas handshake, copying the three stripes on the product. They extend three fingers when they shake hands."

Stewart knows how certain young drug dealers feverishly load up on the latest models of sneakers, tossing out any old ones that are scuffed or even slightly worn and replacing them with new pairs. "I was in a kid's apartment recently and there were about 50 pairs of brand-new

sneakers, all top of the line stuff -- Adidas, Reebok and so forth," he says. "I asked the kid's mother how he came into all this stuff. She said she didn't know."

The use of Major League Baseball hats by gangs has prompted some high schools around the nation to ban them from school grounds, and expensive gold chains, major league or major college team jackets, and other ostentatious, potentially troublesome items have also been prohibited. "When I look around sometimes, I think I'm in spring training in Florida," says Stewart.

When informed that baseball caps are being used by gangs as part of their uniforms, Major League Baseball public relations director Richard Levin seemed shocked. "I'm not aware of it at all, nor would I understand why," he said. "Obviously, we don't support it in any way."

Could any respectable U.S. corporation support the use of its products in this way? Absolutely not, said most shoe company executives contacted for this article. You better believe it, said a number of sports apparel retailers, as well as some of the more candid shoe executives.

Among the retailers is Wally Grigo, the owner of three sportswear shops in and near New Haven, Connecticut. Last August, Grigo put a sign in the front window of his inner-city store that reads, "If you deal drugs, we don't want your business. "Unfortunately, it'll probably have to stay up forever," says Grigo. "I was doing, I'd say, \$2,000 a week in drug money sales that disappeared after the sign went up. Our industry is sick, addicted to drug money sales. We're going through the first phase of addiction, which is total denial."

Before he had put up the sign, Grigo had been told by sales reps from two sportswear companies that he should "hook up" with the local drug dealers to expose the companies' new products to the neighborhood clientele. After the sign went up, Grigo says, the rep from the smaller company returned and said, "Wally, we're thinking about giving you the line. But, you know, I can't do anything until you cut out the crap and take that sign out of your window. The bulk of our business is done with drug dealers. Wake up!"

Grigo was so stunned that he thought of wearing a wire to record the rep making similar statements. He didn't do so, though, figuring the company's officials would dismiss any evidence by saying the rep was a loose cannon. But Grigo says the companies know what's going on, because the reps are "in the trenches, and they go back and report."

Grigo doesn't want to publicly state the names of the suppliers, for economic reasons. "I'm not afraid of the drug dealer," he says. "But the shoe companies could put me out of business anytime, just by canceling my credit."

One obvious question: How does Grigo, or anyone, know when a drug dealer and not a law-abiding citizen is making a buy? "Hey, spend 10 minutes in any city store," says Grigo. "When an 18 year old kid pulls up in a BMW, walks down the aisle saying, "I want this, this, this and this," then peels off 50's from a stack of bills three inches thick, maybe doesn't even wait for change, then comes back a couple weeks later and does the same thing, hey . . . you know what I'm saying?"

And what about all those good guys advertising the shoes? What about Nike's Jordan and Spike Lee, the gifted filmmaker and actor who portrays Mars Blackmon, the hero-worshiping nerd in the company's Air Jordan ads? Are they and other pitchmen at fault, too?

"Maybe the problem is those guys don't know what's going on," says Grigo. "There are stores doing \$5,000 to \$10,000 a week in drug money, all over. Drug money is part of the economic landscape these days. Even if the companies don't consciously go after the money, they're still getting it. Hey, all inner city kids aren't drug dealers. Most of them are good, honest kids. Drug dealers are a very small percent. But the drug dealer, man, they set the fashion trends."

Liz Dolan, director of public relations for Nike, hits the ceiling when she hears such talk. "Our commercials are about sport, they're not about fashion," she says.

But the industry's own figures make that assertion extremely questionable. At least 80% of the athletic shoes sold in the U.S. are not used for their avowed purpose -- that is, playing sports.

Dolan sighs. She says that all of Nike's athlete-endorsers are quality citizens as well as super jocks. "We're not putting Leon Spinks in the commercials," she says. Then she says that the people who raise the alarm that Nike, as well as other sports apparel companies is exploiting the poor and creating crime just to make money are bizarre and openly racist. "What's baffling to us is how easily people accept the assumption that black youth is an unruly mob that will do anything to get its hands on what it wants," she says, excitedly. "They'll say, 'Show a black kid something he wants, and he'll kill for it.' I think it's racist hysteria, just like the Charles Stuart case in Boston or the way the Bush campaign used Willie Horton."

Lee also says he has heard such panic before. "Everybody said last summer that my movie *Do the Right Thing* was going to cause 30 million black people to riot," he says angrily. "But I haven't heard of one garbage can being thrown through a pizzeria window, have you? I want to work with Nike to address the special problems of inner city black youths, but the problem is not shoes."

Lee is particularly irate because he has been singled out by *New York Post* sports columnist Phil Mushnick as being untrue to the very people Lee champions in his films. In Mushnick's April 6 column headlined, "Shaddup, I'm Sellin' Out . . . Shaddup," he sharply criticized Lee for leading the hype. The caption under four photos -- one of Lee; the others of soaring pairs of Air Jordans -- said, "While Spike Lee watches Michael Jordan (or at least his shoes) dunk all over the world, parents around the country are watching their kids get mugged, or even killed, over the same sneakers Lee and Jordan are promoting." In his column Mushnick said, "It's murder, gentlemen. No rhyme, no reason, just murder. For sneakers. For jackets. Get it, Spike? Murder."

Lee wrote a response in *The National*, the daily sports newspaper, in which he angrily accused Mushnick of "thinly veiled racism" for going after him and other high-profile black endorsers and not white endorsers like Larry Bird or Joe Montana. Lee also questioned Mushnick's sudden "great outpouring of concern for Afro-American youths," Lee wrote. "The Nike commercials Michael Jordan and I do have never gotten anyone killed. . . . The deal is this: Let's try to



effectively deal with the conditions that make a kid put so much importance on a pair of sneakers, a jacket and gold. These kids feel they have no options, no opportunities."

Certainly Lee is right about that. Elijah Andersen, a University of Pennsylvania sociologist who specialized in ethnography, the study of individual culture links the scourge of apparel-related crimes among young black males to "inequality in race and class. The uneducated, inner city kids don't have a sense of opportunity. They feel the system is closed off to them. And yet they're bombarded with the same cultural apparatus that the white middle class is. They don't have the means to attain the things offered and yet they have the same desire. So they value these 'emblems,' these symbols of supposed success. The gold, the shoes, and the drug dealer's outfit -- those things all belie the real situation, but it's a symbolic display that seems to say that things are all right.

"Advertising fans this whole process by presenting the images that appeal to the kids, and the shoe companies capitalize on the situation, because it exists. Are the companies abdicating responsibility by doing this? That's a hard one to speak to. This is, after all, a free market."

But what about social responsibility? One particularly important issue is the high price of the shoes -- many companies have model retailing for considerably more than \$100, with the Reebok Pump leading the parade at \$170. There is also the specific targeting of young black males as buyers, through the use of seductive, macho-loaded sales pitches presented by black stars.

"You can quibble about our tactics, but we don't stand for the drug trade," says Dolan., She points out that Nike's fall promotion campaign will include \$5 million worth of "Strictly pro-education, stay-in-school" public service commercials that will "not run late at night, but on the same major sporting events as the prime-time ads." Nike is not alone in playing the good corporate citizen. Reebok recently gave \$750,000 to fund Project Teamwork, a program designed to combat racism that is administered by the Center for the Study of Sport in Society at Northeastern University.

Nevertheless, certain products wind up having dubious associations -- some products more than others. John Hazard, the head buyer for the chain of City Sports stores in Boston, says, "We used to have brawls in here, robberies, a tremendous amount of stealing. But we cut back on 90 percent of it by getting rid of certain products. We don't carry Adidas, Fila, British Knights. Those things bring in the gangs.

"There's a store not far away that carries all that stuff. They have after-hours sales to show the new lines to big drug dealers. They even have guys on beepers, to let them know when the latest shoes have come in. It would be nothing for those guys to buy 20, 30 pair of shoes to give to all their 12 year old runners."

He thinks for a moment. "I don't know if you can really blame the shoe companies for what happens. Not long ago there was a murder, a gang deal, here in Boston. The cops had the murderer, and they were walking him somewhere. It was on TV. The murderer was bent over at first, and then the cops stood him up, and -- I couldn't believe it -- all of a sudden you could see he was wearing a City Sports T-shirt. There's no way you can control what people wear."

John Donahoe, manager of a Foot Locker store in Chicago's Loop, agrees. "Right now, this is the hottest thing we've got," he says, holding up a simple, ugly, blue nylon running shoe. Behind him are shelves filled with more than 100 different model or color variations. "Nike Cortez: \$39," he says. "Been around for 20 years. Why is it hot now?" He shrugs, "I don't know."

Assistant manager James Crowder chimes in helpfully. "It's not the price, or who's endorsing it. It's just. . . what's happening."

Keeping up with what's happening has shoe manufacturers scrambling these days. "It used to be you could have a product out and fiddle with it for years, to get it just right," say Roger Morningstar, the assistant vice-president of promotions at Converse. "Now, if you don't come out with two or three new models every month, you're dead."

At home I go to my closet and pull out my own meager assortment of sports shoes -- nine pairs, all told. A pair of ancient turf football shoes, some nubbed softball shoes, a pair of old running shoes, a pair of original, hideous Air Jordans, kept for historical reasons, a pair of Avia volleyball shoes, worn-out, though they were never used for their intended purpose, two pairs of low cut tennis shoes (or are they walking shoes?), a pair of Nike cross-training shoes (though I don't cross-train or even know what it means) in bad shape, a pair of sweat stained, yet still awe-inspiring high top basketball Reebok Pumps, a Christmas gift from my sister and brother-in-law. I pick these up. They are happening.

There are three colors on them, and the words "Reebok Basketball" are stitched in the tongue, right below the wondrous pump itself, colored orange and pebbled to resemble a basketball. On the bottom of the shoes are three colors of textured rubber. And there is an indented section in the heel with clear plastic laid over four orange tubes, and embossed with the word "Reebok Energy Return System." On the back of the high tops there is the orange release valve that, when touched, decompresses the whole shebang.

The shoes haven't changed my hoops game at all, though they are comfortable, unless I pump them up too much and my toes slowly go numb. While I could never bring myself to pay for a pair out of my own pocket, I will admit that when I opened the shoebox on Christmas Day, I was thrilled by the sheer techno-glitz of the things. It was identical to the way I felt when, at the age of eight, I received a Robert the Robot.

But can promoting athletic shoes possibly be wrong in a capitalist society? Reebok chairman Paul Fireman was recently quoted as describing the Pump as "a product that's inspirational to a young person" -- that is, something to be desired. He added, if prospective buyers couldn't afford the shoes, "That's the place for a kid to get a job after school." What, indeed, is the point of ads if not to inform the public of products that it may or may not need, but that it may wish to buy? Should we demand that the sports shoe industry be held to a higher standard than, say, the junk food industry? The advertising community itself thought so highly of Nike's "Bo knows" spot with Bo Jackson and Bo Diddley that Advertising Age named Jackson its Star Presenter of 1989.

What are we looking for here, anyway? "Responsibility," say Grigo, the New Haven store owner. "Have Spike Lee and Michael Jordan look at the camera and say, 'Drug dealers, don't you dare wear my shoes!' Put anti-drug labels on the box. I already do at my stores."

"Everybody wants us to do everything," says Nike's Dolan. "It's naive to think an anti drug message on the shoe box is going to change anyone's behavior. Our theme is 'Just Do It' because we want people playing sports, because they'll need more shoes. The healthier people are, the more shoes we'll sell."

Trouble is, young black males -- a significant portion of the market are not healthy right now. In fact 23% of black males between the ages of 20 and 29 are under the supervision of the criminal justice system -- incarcerated, paroled, or on probation. According to a 1989 study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, a black male is six times more likely to be a homicide victim than a white male. Writes *Washington Post* Columnist William Raspberry: "The inability of so many young black men to see themselves as providers, or even as necessary to their families, may be an explanation for their irresponsible behavior." Marc Mauer, of the Sentencing Project, a non-profit group concerned with disparities in the administration of criminal justice says, "We now risk the possibility of writing off an entire generation of black men."

Obviously we are talking about something bigger than shoes here. Jordan sits up straight in his chair. It's time for practice to start. "I'd rather eliminate the product [the shoes] than know drug dealers are providing the funds that pay me," he says.

Of course drug money is, to a troubling extent, supporting the product, as well as other brands of sneakers and sports apparel. And kids are being killed for them. So what should the shoe companies, the schools, the advertising industry, the endorsers, the media, parents -- all of us -- do about it?

Do you know? Do you know? Do you know?

**--by Rick Telander**

## Visitacion Valley Elementary School

\*\*\*\*\* Parents, Educators, Friends & Communities Working Together For Our Children \*\*\*\*\*

55 Schwerin Street, San Francisco, CA 94134

PHONE (415) 469-4796 / FAX (415) 469-4099

Email: [sch867@muse.sfusd.edu](mailto:sch867@muse.sfusd.edu)

April 04, 2005

Rauhmel Fox, CEO  
WHOMentors.com, Inc.  
110 Pacific Avenue, Suite 250  
San Francisco, CA. 94111

Dear Mr. Fox:


Let me first take this opportunity to thank you on behalf of the entire Visitacion Valley Elementary School family, for your thoughtfulness. We are very grateful that you are considering our school as a candidate in your pilot program and we support your efforts to increase scholastic excellence.

As the Outreach Consultant, I am very much in support of children achieving and going on to college. The SB65 program, for which I work, is focused on finding the best environment for the child to achieve, with an emphasis on dropout prevention. Your organization is a direct reflection of things that our program tries to address and hopes that this belief is instilled in our children.

I would like for our students to meet the person responsible for giving them tennis shoes and for you to impart some of your knowledge on to them. Hopefully your words would encourage and empower our students to achieve great things.

Please feel free to contact me anytime and thank you once again for your kindness. Enclosed are our shoe sizes and the corresponding students.

Sincerely,

  
Charmion Sanders-Bolden  
Outreach Consultant





# Francisco Middle School

2190 Powell Street

San Francisco, CA 94133

Phone: (415) 291-7900 Fax: (415) 291-7910

Dear Rauhmel Fox,

Francisco Middle School is a public school in the San Francisco Unified School District. We are located in North Beach. We currently have 490 students. I have been a physical education teacher here for 18 years. When I saw your offer on Craig's List, I was thrilled. Our students live in the Tenderloin, Chinatown, Mission and Western Addition areas. Many of our students are living in homeless shelters. They also come from single parent families. Approximately 83% of our students are on the free or reduced lunch program. New athletic shoes would help these students who do not get the chance to go out and buy new shoes very often. The list I compiled is made up of students who are in shelters or who are living with financial difficulties. Please consider us. If you need any more information please don't hesitate to get in touch with me. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Danielle Anderson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Danielle" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Anderson".

Danielle Anderson

Physical Education Dept Head  
Athletic Director

Email [dcape26@aol.com](mailto:dcape26@aol.com)



## Project Amigo

708 Gravenstein Hwy N # 183, Sebastopol, CA 95472

Phone in Mexico: 011 52 (312) 395-4485

Fax in USA: (775) 259-2773

e-mail: [pa@projectamigo.org](mailto:pa@projectamigo.org)

[www.projectamigo.org](http://www.projectamigo.org)

April 4, 2005

Mr. Rauhmel Fox, CEO  
WHOMentors.com, Inc.  
110 Pacific Avenue, Suite 250  
San Francisco, CA 94111

Dear Mr. Fox:

Thank you for your generosity in making children's tennis shoes available to non-profit groups! We know how important good-fitting shoes are in a kid's life. At our project site in Colima, Mexico, children are barred from public school if they don't have shoes to wear. It's pitiful to see what they sometimes show up in, just to try to get in the door to learn. Many more don't even try and are consigned to a continuing life of poverty.

Project Amigo is a 501 (c)(3) organization. Our tax-ID # is 68-0396073. The corporation supports our project site in Colima, Mexico, where we are dedicated to helping rural poor children develop the tools they will need to work themselves out of poverty. We provide scholarships for higher education (67 young people are receiving scholarships this year, 11 of them to University!), and provide incentive programs to nearly 200 primary school children. The incentive programs help keep them enrolled in school - if they're not in school they don't get to enjoy special trips during the year, and gifts of new clothing *and shoes* at our annual Christmas Fiesta.

If you could help us with the provision of the new shoes for our kids, you would free up enough funds in our budget to keep two young people in college next year! That would be a major contribution.

Please visit our website at [www.projectamigo.org](http://www.projectamigo.org) for more information about the work we do. We are not a Rotary organization. However, we are a Rotary International World Community Service site, and we follow the guidelines of Rotary: providing service where it's needed without regard to sex, religion or political persuasion.

Included is a list of the children in our program. We've also attached a sheet showing the quantity of boys and girls shoes needed in European sizes. And, finally, we have included a page with photos of some of the children we work with.

Please use the address in the USA shown above, or communicate with me directly by e-mail at [susan@projectamigo.org](mailto:susan@projectamigo.org), if you have questions or would like additional information.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Susan Hill  
Co-Director

cc: Catherine Munson, President



With your help, these primary school children and 180 more like them will receive new shoes and will be able to enter public school.



Your help with shoes for children and our scholarship students will free up funds in our budget to help this young scholarship student and others like him go to high school or college and lift his family out of poverty.



March 18, 2005

Mr. Rauhmel Fox  
CEO  
WHOMentors.com, Inc.  
110 Pacific Ave., Suite 250  
San Francisco, California 94111

Dear Mr. Fox,

On behalf of the over 2,000 homeless and very low-income youth we serve each year, I am requesting a shoe donation from WHOMentors.com to support the InnVision Step Ahead Shoe Project. This project supplies our clients with one of the most basic yet important necessities - shoes.

InnVision is the Silicon Valley leader in providing housing and services to over 16,000 people annually. Founded in 1973, InnVision is one of the area's largest providers of services for homeless men, women, children, veterans, and the mentally ill with programs tailored for each population. InnVision offers a full complement of housing and services from San Jose to Menlo Park. We provide a "continuum of care" that does not just supply band-aids but supports homeless individuals and families through each step toward independence. Our 20 locations include multi-service day centers, emergency shelters, transitional housing, and permanent affordable housing. Our comprehensive services include emergency care - such as food, showers, clothing, laundry, transportation assistance, mail and voicemail. We also offer self-help assistance - such as case management, healthcare, mental health and substance abuse counseling, job training, life skills workshops, youth development and after-school tutorial programs.

Homeless people travel primarily by foot through all sorts of weather. Their shoes go through a lot of wear and tear, yet homeless families and individuals do not have money to replace worn out or out-grown shoes. Homeless families have an especially hard time keeping up with their children's growing feet. Homeless children often must wear shoes that are too small. Children and adults suffer in shoes that are worn out, the wrong size, and that provide little protection from rain and cold. This can lead to various foot injuries that impede their ability to look for jobs and housing. Many do not have the appropriate shoes to wear to a job interview or to a particular job such as construction or in a warehouse. While we have some donated shoes in our warehouse, they are often too worn out to be used again. We have difficulty meeting the needs of all of our clients who need a decent pair of shoes.

Every 6-8  
weeks a  
homeless  
person wears  
out one pair of  
shoes.



A homeless family that was living out of their car came to an InnVision multi-service day center to get out of the cold, use the showers, and receive a warm meal. The four children, all under the age of 6, were visibly in pain. Upon taking off their shoes to get them dried out, we saw that their feet were raw. They were crying because their feet hurt so badly. We tried to dry out their shoes, but they were saturated. The cream and anointment we put on the children's feet did little to help because they had to put the wet shoes back on and go back out in the rain. Our donation warehouse had no shoes in their size that we could give them. A staff member used her own money to purchase all the children new shoes so that at least this suffering could be helped. However, our staff cannot buy shoes for every client who so desperately needs them. We need the community's help to meet this need.

For the Step Ahead Shoe Project, InnVision is collecting an array of new shoes in various sizes to distribute to InnVision clients as needed. We also have purchased vouchers to be used by clients at local retailers to buy a pair of shoes if we do not have what a client needs in our warehouse. As the summer approaches, we are in great need for children's athletic shoes. During the summer, InnVision conducts a free day camp for homeless youth. The program includes sports and other outside, physical activities. These activities are extremely important for the youth we serve. Many of them come from single parent households, most often single mothers who do not watch sports or take their children to sporting events. Therefore, the children know little about sports and do not participate in them. Over the summer we strive to get the youth familiar with sports and encourage exercise. However, many of the children do not have proper shoes so it is difficult for them to participate. The story below illustrates the children's need for shoes.

*The last week of our Summer Adventures day camp program coincided with the first week of the 2004 Athens Olympic Games. In order to teach the kids more about the spirit of the Olympics, we found someone who was willing to sponsor a sports camp at the local park. Many of the kids turned out for the sports camp in flip flops and other shoes inappropriate-*

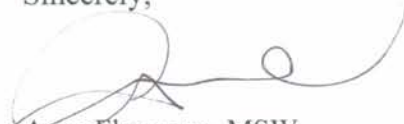


*-and even dangerous--for playing sports. When I asked one of the moms if her son had other shoes that he could wear for the following day's activities, she told me that her son had outgrown his good sneakers earlier in the summer and he was now making due with sandals that, while too small, at least didn't pinch his toes. When I went to the warehouse to look for shoes that might suffice for a day or two, all I could find in his size were well-worn shoes that were obviously intended for girls. I brought the boy the most gender-neutral pair of shoes I could find, but he wasn't fooled. "Those are girl shoes," he informed me as soon as I placed them in front of him. I managed to convince him that the blue stripes on the side indicated that they were shoes that boys could wear and that he certainly didn't have to keep them, they were just to protect his toes for the day. He played kickball that day with gusto and his feet were not hurt, but he chose to keep the shoes and I cringe to think that it may only be a matter of time before another young child his age recognizes that he is wearing "girl shoes" and he is hurt in other ways.*

We would like to have on-hand an array of youth athletic shoes, for boys and girls, so that we may distribute them as needed to the homeless youth we serve in the summer program. Because homeless youth move often, we can not supply the sizes needed for specific children. Last year our summer program served 65 youth. Therefore, we are requesting a shoe donation of 65 pairs of shoes in a range of sizes and styles to distribute to the youth as needed. If extras remain at the end of the summer, we will give the shoes to homeless youth in our shelter who will need shoes for the new school year.

Please take a moment to walk in the worn out, uncomfortable shoes of a homeless child and consider this important need in our community. If you would like further information, please contact me at 408-292-4286. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Anne Ehresman, MSW  
Chief Development Officer

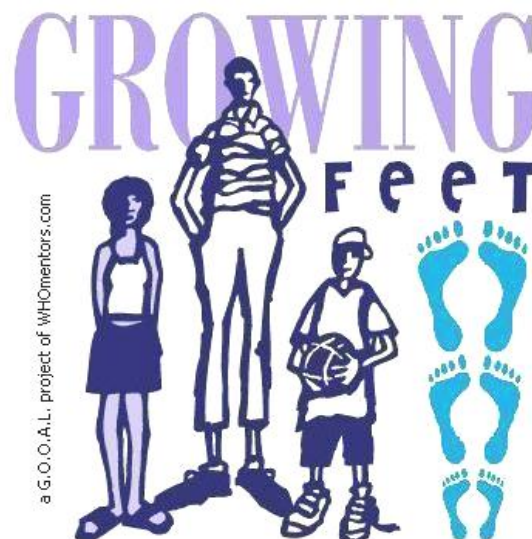




# “Shoes are incredibly important to a child’s self-esteem.”



Call me directly at 415-373-6767 or email [Rauhmel@WHOMentors.com](mailto:Rauhmel@WHOMentors.com) to schedule a brief video presentation to your group!



## Need New Shoes & Socks!

WHOMentors.com relies solely on the ongoing generosity of the general public to buy discounted skihls.com brand shoes, apparel and backpacks for abandoned, orphaned, and homeless children, and for those under the care of child protective services.



CONTRIBUTE TO  
**WHO?**  
**TORS.COM**  
**WHOMENTORS.COM**

What then will become of the children without new shoes and socks? They could become obese from inactivity or worse they could succumb to peer pressure and become robbers or murderers to get them. When we were kids, the child's shoe remained in its basic role of protecting the foot from the hazards of the outside world.

In today's environment, however, the shoe has changed from being a protective covering to becoming a **status symbol**. Kids all over the world are lavished with overpriced shoes because a television ad featuring a superstar celebrity says they are preternaturally hip, cool *and necessary*.

"Our commercials are about sport, they're not about fashion," says the director of public relations for the leading footwear manufacturer in the USA. But the industry's own figures make that assertion extremely questionable.

At least 80% of the athletic shoes sold in the U.S. are not used for their avowed purpose—that is, playing sports.

The report, *Promoting Better Health for Young People through Physical Activity and Sports*, from the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Secretary of Education asserts, "Our nation's young people are, in large measure, inactive, unfit, and increasingly overweight. Physical inactivity threatens to reverse the decades-long progress in reducing deaths from cardiovascular diseases. Ultimately this could have a devastating impact on our national health care budget."

While the successful promotion of a healthy, more active lifestyle to reduce sedentary behavior among children and adolescents requires the cooperation of activity coordinators, coaches and participants, it is the parents who shoulder the primary responsibility of encouraging a child to participate in organized physical activity.

I ask parents with kids playing youth sports about their perceptions of six potential barriers to their children's participation in important physical activities: transportation problems, lack of opportunities to participate in activities in their area, equipment expense, a parents' lack of time, program fees and concerns about neighborhood safety. The most expensive piece of equipment they say they must buy continuously is athletic shoes.

Parents flout the hefty price tag of \$200 for the latest footwear trends and are overcome with a complete loss of hope when they learn their kids are wasting precious class time viewing internet websites in order to get their hands on premium kicks. To a destructive end, popular sneaker companies have become subconsciously ingrained in the minds of children, and it is next to impossible for teachers to get them to see any reality past a pair of athletic footwear priced higher than a set of encyclopedias. It's surreal.




Kids with clothes just falling off them deal with a superficial financial crisis since these shoes are not something they can buy with a meager monthly allowance or earnings from a part-time job. News reports of kids beating, shooting, and even killing their friends for their *status fashions* dramatically illustrate how far kids will go if they cannot handle the pressures and the outcome when no one intervenes.

*"Of course kids can stand up to the pressure from celebrities and the pressure from their peers and get along without costly products. Plenty of kids do. But it's not easy, nor is it fun. I believe kids shouldn't be put in that situation in the first place. Don't you? Give generously to support our nonprofit public benefit initiatives."*

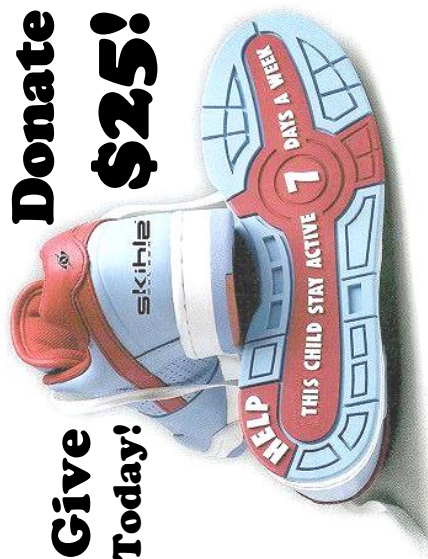
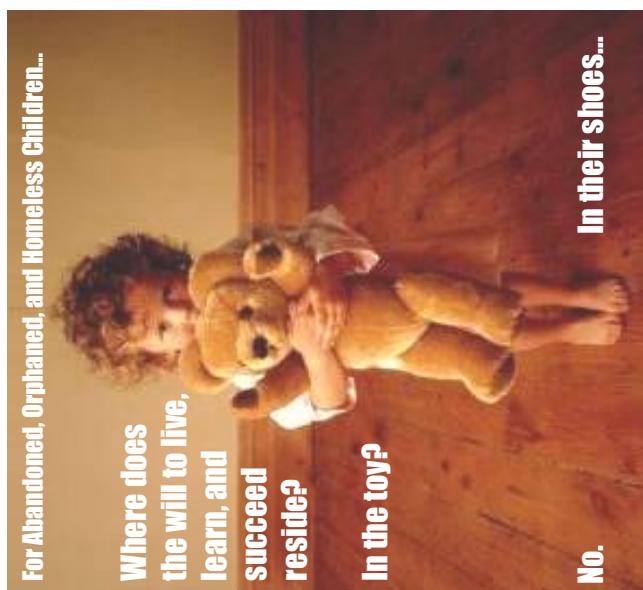
**About the Campaign:** WHOmentors.com, Inc., a national Nonprofit 501(c)(3) Tax-Exempt 509(a)(2) Research Corporation, EIN#: 76-0745699, relies solely on the ongoing generosity of the general public to buy discounted skihlz.com brand-named shoes, apparel and backpacks for abandoned, orphaned, and homeless children, and for those under the care of child protective services. Your unrestricted charitable donations assist WHOmentors.com, Inc. to effectively deal with the conditions that make a kid put so much importance on a pair of sneakers and feel they have no options, no opportunities. *\$25 will provide a child with one pair of running shoes. \$50 will provide a child with two pairs of shoes for running and for winter use. \$75 will provide a child with two pairs of shoes and a backpack.*

USE MAJOR CREDIT CARD 24-HOURS A DAY! [WHOmentors.com/donate.htm](http://WHOmentors.com/donate.htm)

Three other ways to give: email [donate@WHOmentors.com](mailto:donate@WHOmentors.com) or Fax to (415) 982-0234 or Detach and Mail.\*

CIRCLE Bill my VISA MasterCard American Express      Expiration:      /															PAID BY CREDIT CARD ONLINE OR THE PHONE?														
<div> <div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> </div> <div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> </div> </div>															I have enclosed a check or money order for the amount of      \$     .														
<div> <div>    </div> <div> <p>(BACK) Check Card Verification Number:     </p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> \$25    <input type="checkbox"/> \$50    <input type="checkbox"/> \$75    <input type="checkbox"/> \$_____      Total      \$      . </p> <p>Service Fee to Cover Shoe Distribution      \$      10.00</p> <p>TOTAL TAX DEDUCTIBLE AMOUNT      \$      .</p> <p>Employer Matching Gift: ( Y / N )      Unrestricted or Restricted (Circle)</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> \$25    <input type="checkbox"/> \$50    <input type="checkbox"/> \$75    <input type="checkbox"/> \$_____      Total      \$      . </p> <p>Dedicate donation <i>IN THE NAME OF:</i>     </p> </div> </div>															<p>Name: _____</p> <p>City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code + 4: _____</p> <p>Daytime Telephone: _____ Evening Telephone: _____</p>														
Signature: X															Email Address: _____														
Note that your donation will be renewed: <i>Every 6 months.</i>															IT IS NOT NECESSARY TO RETURN THIS FORM.														

† Mail Donation Form to: Rahmel Fox, CEO, WHOMentors.com, Inc., 110 Pacific Avenue, Suite 250, San Francisco, California 94111-1900



**WHO? MENTORS.COM**  
WHOMENTORS.COM

110 Pacific Avenue, Suite 250  
San Francisco, CA 94111

4110 Bobcat Court  
Colorado Springs, CO 80918



To: Potential Supporter

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address 1: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address 2: \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

**Donor Acknowledgement:** Gifts of \$250 or more will be acknowledged in writing and a letter will be sent in the mail. To enhance your gift, inquire about your company's **Employer Matching Gift Policy**. To initiate a matching gift request, simply fill out this form, check with your Human Resources Department to determine your eligibility and inform us of any special terms or restrictions. We can only verify your accepted donation, not pledges. Follow your company's prescribed steps for open enrollment in any online workplace giving campaign.

**24-HOUR SERVICE OR DONOR SUPPORT, SEVEN DAYS A WEEK! 1-415-373-6767**

*Unsure of Your Employment Benefits? Search Employer Matching Gift Database: [WHOMentors.com/hepsemgd.htm](http://WHOMentors.com/hepsemgd.htm)*

OFFICE USE / TO AUTHORIZATION CODE:		<input type="checkbox"/> SEND TAX-EXEMPT INFORMATION (FOR COMPANY SPONSORS ONLY)	
<b>Donor Profile—Please Tell Us About Yourself:</b>		<input type="checkbox"/> INVOICE MY COMPANY ATTENTION:	
○ Title: Mr. Ms. Dr. HON      ○ Education: HS JC T TS BA/BS Graduate Doctorate ○ Gender: Female Male      ○ Volunteer: Year-Round Seasonally Once-in-awhile ○ Age:      ○ Interests: ○ Birth Date:      ○ Available for <i>Loaned Executive</i> Program: ( Y / N ) ○ Annual Income: \$100,000+      ○ Language(s) Spoken: ○ Annual Income: \$75,000+      ○ Best Time of Day To Be Contacted: ○ Annual Income: \$50,000+      ○ Position: ○ Annual Income: \$25,000+      ○ Board Affiliation(s): ○ Annual Income: <\$25,000      ○ State Registered as a Professional Fundraiser: ○ Annual Income: STUDENT      ○ Typical Work Week: ○ Industry / Occupation:		Company:  Address:  City:      State:      Zip Code + 4:  Daytime Telephone:      Extension:      Mail Stop:  Approving Supervisor:      Title:	





WHOMentors.com, Inc. is a Nonprofit Public Benefit 501(c)(3) Tax-Exempt 509(a)(2) Research Corporation

From: Rauhmel Fox, CEO

Wednesday, November 18, 2009

## DONATION ACKNOWLEDGEMENT LETTER

Name  
Address  
City, State and Zip Code  
Phone:  
E-mail:

Dear Mr. Ms. Mrs. Dr. :

It is my pleasure to acknowledge your recent charitable donation. WHOmentors.com, Inc., a Colorado Nonprofit Public Benefit Corporation, EIN#: 76-0745699, and qualified to transact business in the State of California, relies on investment income, gross receipts from activities supporting its exempt functions and the ongoing generosity from permitted sources to be primarily engaged in interdisciplinary applied research to gain knowledge or understanding to determine the means by which a specific, recognized need may be met. Your unrestricted support allows the organization to generally fulfill its authorized purpose and meet the 509(a)(2) Public Support test. On behalf of the corporation or for the 501(c)(3) fiscal sponsorship of a nonexempt entity, I thank you for your generous contribution of (*Specify Amount in dollars*) received on **Month, Day, Year**, to be used for the general operating fund.

WHOmentors.com, Inc is recognized by the IRS as a public 501(c)(3) nonprofit tax-exempt organization, and as such all contributions made to the corporation are wholly tax-deductible. For a brief discussion on the 50% limitation on charitable deductions by individuals, please consult 26 CFR Sec. 1.170A-8. A corporation is allowed to deduct charitable contributions up to 10% of the corporation's modified taxable income for the year. Reference: 26 USC Sec. 170(b)(2)(A). For contributions of \$250.00 or more, "*The federal income tax law requires that before cash or non-cash charitable contribution of \$250.00 or more can be claimed as a tax deduction, the taxpayer must have written substantiation from the charitable organization acknowledging the donation.*"

Please retain this letter as your gift receipt to be used for tax purposes. **This receipt acknowledges and also serves as verification that no goods or services were provided to you as a result of this contribution.** In addition, when gross receipts exceed \$25,000, WHOmentors.com, Inc. is required to make its IRS Form 990, Return of Organization Exempt from Taxes, when subject to available for public inspection for three years after the date the return is filed. WHOmentors.com, Inc. is also required to make available for public inspection its exemption application, any supporting documents, and its exemption letter. WHOmentors.com, Inc. fulfills this requirement by placing its exemption letter on the Internet at [http://www.WHOmentors.com/501\(c\)\(3\).htm](http://www.WHOmentors.com/501(c)(3).htm). Copies of the other documents will be provided to any individual upon written or in person request without charge other than reasonable fees for copying and postage. Requests for the financial statement or any questions regarding your gift should be sent to my attention.

◦ **How to Document Gifts to Charity:** When you itemize your deductions (IRS Form 1040, Line 37 and Schedule A or IRS Form 1120, Line 19) for gifts by direct deposit, cash, credit card, or check, IRS regulations do not stipulate that you have to attach this receipt to the return or report. However, it is recommended that you do or keep records of your donations should the IRS perform a *general audit* to substantiate the amount you claimed as a deduction.

Please contact me directly with any questions regarding this contemporaneous written acknowledgement.

Sincerely,

"Rauhmel Fox" Robinson, CEO  
1993 Alumnus, United States Air Force Academy

110 Pacific Avenue, Suite 250, San Francisco, California 94111-1900 • Toll Free: 1.888.WHO.MENTORS • Fax: 415.982.0234



INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE  
P. O. BOX 2508  
CINCINNATI, OH 45201

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Date: **JUNE 23, 2006**

WHOMENTORS.COM, INC.  
4110 BOBCAT CT  
COLORADO SPRINGS, CO 80918

Employer Identification Number:  
76-0745699  
DLN:  
17053346012035  
Contact Person:  
ANDREA SPECK ID# 95504  
Contact Telephone Number:  
(877) 829-5500  
Accounting Period Ending:  
January 31  
Public Charity Status:  
170(b)(1)(A)(vi)  
Form 990 Required:  
Yes  
Effective Date of Exemption:  
February 5, 2004  
Contribution Deductibility:  
Yes  
Advance Ruling Ending Date:  
January 31, 2009

Dear Applicant:

We are pleased to inform you that upon review of your application for tax exempt status we have determined that you are exempt from Federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions to you are deductible under section 170 of the Code. You are also qualified to receive tax deductible bequests, devises, transfers or gifts under section 2055, 2106 or 2522 of the Code. Because this letter could help resolve any questions regarding your exempt status, you should keep it in your permanent records.

Organizations exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Code are further classified as either public charities or private foundations. During your advance ruling period, you will be treated as a public charity. Your advance ruling period begins with the effective date of your exemption and ends with advance ruling ending date shown in the heading of the letter.

Shortly before the end of your advance ruling period, we will send you Form 8734, Support Schedule for Advance Ruling Period. You will have 90 days after the end of your advance ruling period to return the completed form. We will then notify you, in writing, about your public charity status.

Please see enclosed Information for Exempt Organizations Under Section 501(c)(3) for some helpful information about your responsibilities as an exempt organization

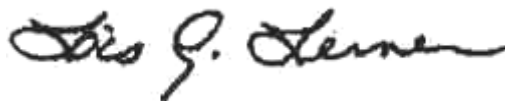
If you distribute funds to other organizations, your records must show whether they are exempt under section 501(c)(3). In cases where the recipient organization is not exempt under section 501(c)(3), you must have evidence the funds will be used for section 501(c)(3) purposes.

Letter 1045 (DO/CG)

WHOMENTORS.COM, INC.

If you distribute funds to individuals, you should keep case histories showing the recipient's name and address; the purpose of the award; the manner of selection; and the relationship of the recipient to any of your officers, directors, trustees, members, or major contributors.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Lois G. Lerner". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lois G. Lerner  
Director, Exempt Organizations  
Rulings and Agreements

Enclosures: Information for Organizations Exempt Under Section 501(c)(3)



STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
FRANCHISE TAX BOARD  
PO BOX 1286  
RANCHO CORDOVA CA 95741-1286

In reply refer to  
755:AFF:CAM

May 12, 2008

WHOMENTORS.COM, INC.  
RAUHMEL FOX ROBINSON  
110 PACIFIC AVE STE 250  
SAN FRANCISCO CA 94111-1900

Purpose	:	CHARITABLE
Code of Section	:	23701d
Form of Organization	:	Foreign Corporation
Accounting Period Ending	:	January 31
Organization Number	:	2439327

#### EXEMPT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT LETTER

This letter acknowledges that the Franchise Tax Board (FTB) has received your federal determination letter that shows exemption under Internal Revenue Code (IRC) Section 501(c)(3). Under California law, Revenue and Taxation Code (R&TC) Section 23701d(c)(1) provides that an organization is exempt from taxes imposed under Part II upon submission of the federal determination letter approving the organization's tax-exempt status pursuant to Section 501(c)(3) of the IRC.

R&TC Section 23701d(c)(1) further provides that the effective date of an organization's California tax-exempt status is the same date as the federal tax-exempt status under IRC Section 501(c)(3). The effective date of your organization's California tax-exempt status is 03/03/2004.

Under R&TC Section 23701d(c), any change to your organization's operation, character, or purpose that has occurred since the federal exemption was originally granted must be reported immediately to this office. Additionally, organizations are required to be organized and operating for nonprofit purposes to retain California tax-exempt status.

May 12, 2008  
WHOMENTORS.COM, INC.  
ENTITY ID: 2439327  
Page 2

For filing requirements, see FTB Pub. 1068, Exempt Organization - Requirements for Filing Returns and Paying Filing Fees. Go to our website at [ftb.ca.gov](http://ftb.ca.gov) and search for 1068.

Note: This exemption is for state franchise or income tax purposes only. For information regarding sales tax exemption, contact the State Board of Equalization at (800) 400-7115, or go to their website at [www.boe.ca.gov](http://www.boe.ca.gov).

C MARTIN  
EXEMPT ORGANIZATIONS  
BUSINESS ENTITIES SECTION  
TELEPHONE (916) 845-5145  
FAX NUMBER (915) 843-0202

RTF:

CALIFORNIA STATE BOARD OF EQUALIZATION

**SELLER'S PERMIT**



ACCOUNT NUMBER

04/23/04 SR BH 19-791335

WHOMENTORS.COM, INC.  
110 PACIFIC AVE., STE 250  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94111

THIS PERMIT DOES NOT  
AUTHORIZE THE HOLDER  
TO ENGAGE IN ANY  
BUSINESS CONTRARY TO  
LAWS REGULATING THAT  
BUSINESS OR TO  
POSSESS OR OPERATE  
ANY ILLEGAL DEVICE.

IS HEREBY AUTHORIZED PURSUANT TO **SALES AND USE TAX LAW** TO ENGAGE IN THE  
BUSINESS OF SELLING TANGIBLE PERSONAL PROPERTY AT THE ABOVE LOCATION

THIS PERMIT IS VALID UNTIL REVOKED OR CANCELED BUT IS NOT TRANSFERABLE. IF YOU SELL YOUR  
BUSINESS,  
OR DROP OUT OF A PARTNERSHIP, NOTIFY US OR YOU COULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR SALES AND USE TAXES  
OWED BY THE NEW OPERATOR OF THE BUSINESS.

*Not valid at any other address*

**FOR GENERAL TAX QUESTIONS, PLEASE TELEPHONE OUR INFORMATION CENTER AT 1-800-400-7115.**

BOE-442-R REV. 13 (6-00)

**A MESSAGE TO OUR NEW PERMIT HOLDER**

**As a seller, you have rights and responsibilities under the Sales and Use Tax Law. In order to assist you in your endeavor and to better understand the law, we offer the following sources of help:**

- Visiting our website at [www.boe.ca.gov](http://www.boe.ca.gov)
- Visiting a district office
- Attending a Basic Sales and Use Tax Law Class offered at one of our district offices
- Sending your questions in writing to any one of our offices
- Calling our toll-free Information Center at 800-400-7115

**As a seller, you have the right to issue resale certificates for merchandise that you intend to resell. Conversely, you have the responsibility of not misusing resale certificates. While the sales tax is imposed upon the retailer;**

- You have the right to seek reimbursement of the tax from your customer
- You are responsible for filing and paying your sales and use tax returns timely
- You have the right to be treated in a fair and equitable manner by the employees of the Board
- You are responsible for following the regulations set forth by the Board

As a seller, you are expected to maintain the normal books and records of a prudent businessperson. You are required to maintain these books and records for no less than four years, and make them available for inspection by a Board representative when requested. You are also expected to notify us if you are buying, selling, adding a location, or discontinuing your business, adding or dropping a partner, officer, or member, or when you are moving any or all of your business locations. If it becomes necessary to surrender this permit, you should only do so by mailing it to a Board office, or giving it to a Board representative.

If you would like to know more about your rights as a taxpayer, or if you are unable to resolve an issue with the Board, please contact the Taxpayers' Rights Advocate office for help by calling toll-free: 888-324-2789 or 916-324-2798. Their fax number is 916-323-3319.

**Please post this permit at the address for which it was issued and at a location visible to your customers.**

THE STATE BOARD OF EQUALIZATION

Sales and Use Tax Department

The parallel between “banned” colors in the NBA and odious “discriminatory policies” is all too clear.

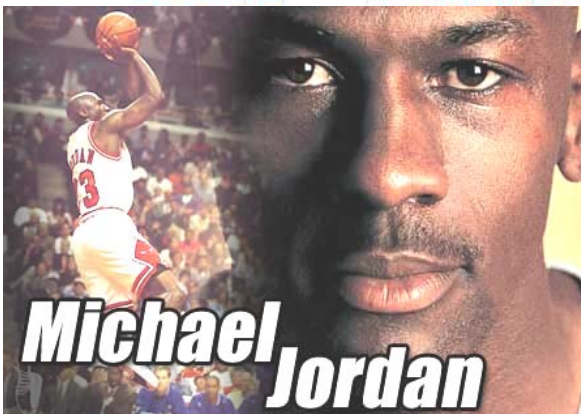


**NO COLOREDS ALLOWED!**



**WHITES  
ONLY!**

**\$5,000 PENALTY!**  
**-For Uniform Violation-**



Before the introduction of the Air Jordan I, most basketball shoes were white, but the styling of the Nike's shoes flouted this convention. The black/red model was banned by the National Basketball Association due to color rules and David Stern, NBA Commissioner, assessed Michael Jordan with a \$5,000 uniform violation for wearing non-conforming shoes.





"Goodlife" feat. Common & Pharrell



# T.I. KING.



**"DON'T GET ME WRONG...I NEVER BEEN  
A FOOL. I JUST PUT OFF GRADUATING  
FOR A PAIR OF TENNIS SHOES."**



# REALsports

## with Bryant Gumbel

**Bernard Goldberg: Real Sports on HBO correspondent**

To: Rauhmel Fox  
Fr: Andrew Bennett  
Dt: February 23, 2007  
Re: Interview Request

Rauhmel,

As we discussed on the phone, I am producing a segment for the April episode of Real Sports that is going to take a look at the recent launch of the “Starbury” shoe line. In evaluating the importance of the release of Stephon Marbury’s \$15 sneaker, we are hoping to speak with individuals who can describe firsthand the importance that sneakers hold in our current culture. Therefore, we would like to set up a time to speak with you regarding the program you have established as well as with some of the kids and parents you have worked with. Regarding the kids, we are hoping to do a group interview with middle-school/high school aged students who can describe their experiences of dealing with the pressures of having to wear the newest and most expensive sneakers. For the parents, we would like to speak with mothers and fathers who have felt the pressure of providing these items for their children and to get their take on the escalating prices of high-end sneakers. Essentially, through our on-camera interviews, we want to capture what it’s like dealing with our “sneaker-crazed” culture and how that mentality can affect many of nation’s youth and their families.

I look forward to talking to you further about the project.

Thanks.

Andrew Bennett  
Segment Producer  
HBO Sports  
1100 6th Avenue  
New York, NY 10036  
(212) 512-1645-phone  
(212) 512-1497-fax





Real Sports with Bryant Gumbel examines Stephon Marbury's initiative on affordable athletic shoes; tells the inspiring story of therapeutic horsemanship riding, and revisits the proliferation of "Tommy John" surgery among young pitchers.

## Stories



Episode 121 April 16, 2007

Story 1:  
Marbury's Starburys

Story 2:  
Therapy Ride



## Marbury's Starburys

For years, high-end basketball shoes, especially those endorsed by NBA stars, have been the ultimate status symbol for inner-city kids. Often priced in excess of \$100, the shoes are unaffordable for many, which results in kids being robbed, beaten, and even killed for their sneakers. While few pro athletes have addressed this issue, New York Knicks star Stephon Marbury, who grew up in the hardscrabble Brooklyn projects, has tackled the problem head-on with an initiative on affordable athletic shoes. Correspondent Bernard Goldberg examines this disturbing trend and profiles one athlete's campaign in this REAL SPORTS/Sports Illustrated collaboration.

Correspondent: Bernard Goldberg  
Producer: Andrew Bennett







# STEPHON, LEBRON IN SHOE WAR

By **MARC BERMAN**

[marc.berman@nypost.com](mailto:marc.berman@nypost.com)

**March 30, 2007** -- Stephon Marbury gave his sneaker rebuttal to LeBron James and said the Cavaliers superstar didn't do his "homework."

James, who has a \$90 million endorsement contract with Nike, took a shot at the quality of Marbury's sneaker/apparel line

before Wednesday's Knicks game. The discounted Starbury shoes go for \$14.98 and his T-shirts and sweatshirts for \$9.99. By comparison, James' Zoom LeBron IV retails for \$150 and a James' T-shirt for \$55.

"I laughed," Marbury told The Post when he saw the remarks. "I'd rather own than be owned. When he retires, he's not going to own anything. "I don't think he did his homework," Marbury added. "We're putting out the same stuff he's putting out, just at an affordable price. But I understand that he's got to say that because it's part of the business." James said Wednesday he would never have a discount line.

"Me being with Nike, we hold our standards high. And we do a great job of putting out great merchandise, great shoes. It does come with a price that is pretty high, but at the same time you're getting great quality for it."

Marbury, who makes \$17 million this season on his Knicks' contract, said he's not in it for the money. James is making \$5.8M on the tail end of his rookie-scale deal.

*Note: LeBron James never once considered or attended college; Stephon Marbury dropped out of college after completion of his freshman basketball season.*

Comments 0 | Recommend 0

# 14-year-old shot, robbed of sneakers

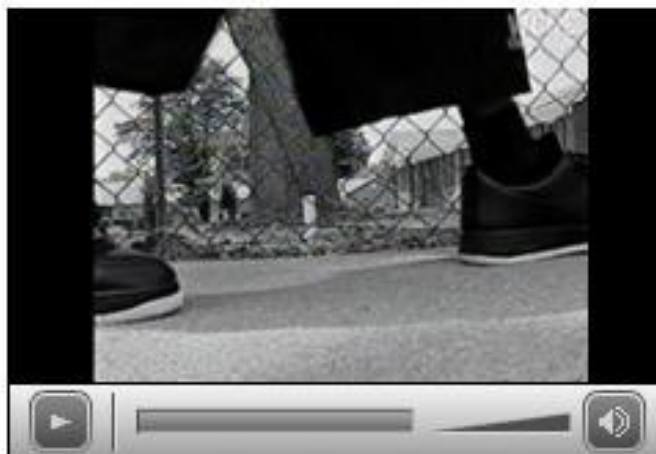
7:33 AM **Video**

07:33 AM EDT on Thursday, June 12, 2008

By **MARIO ROLDAN / WCNC**  
E-mail Mario: [MRoldan@WCNC.com](mailto:MRoldan@WCNC.com)

CHARLOTTE, N.C. -- A 14-year-old boy was robbed of his sneakers. Now, the teen is fighting for his life after taking a bullet to the shoulder.

"I heard the shot," said neighbor Martha Lampkin. "He wasn't crying. To stop the bleeding I came in and got a towel."



**Video** 14-year-old shot for shoes

The teen was walking along a dead end path near Kenhill Drive in west Charlotte. His 15-year-old friend was accompanying him during the robbery, which happened Tuesday just before 6:30 p.m.

Both teenage boys were wearing popular sneakers. One had on a pair of Nike's "Air Force Ones."

"I peaked from my bedroom window and saw the young man sitting down and hurt," said Lampkin.

Three unknown men approached the teens. One of the suspects shot the 14-year-old. Then the other two crooks stole the boys' sneakers, some praying-hand earrings, a cell phone and \$30 cash.

"(The blood) was like oozing out and then all of a sudden it's like something opened up and it really started coming," said Lampkin. "I wonder if they got him on one of the arteries?"

Medic took the teen to Carolinas Medical Center. He was listed in critical condition.



## Local News

Comments 0 | Recommend 0

### Teen says she was shot for her shoes

7:32 AM **Video**

07:32 AM EDT on Friday, June 27, 2008

By GLENN COUNTS / WCNC  
E-mail Glenn: [GCounts@WCNC.com](mailto:GCounts@WCNC.com)

CHARLOTTE, N.C. -- A teen is recovering at home after she was shot five times, apparently over shoes.

Crystal Rowland has always been enterprising. She holds a job and she had a shoe business on the side. That business almost cost her life.



**Video** Teen shot for Nike shoes

"I help my mom out with certain things because she needs help paying certain things," Rowland said.

Rowland is an athlete. At West Mecklenburg she was on the track team and played basketball, but if you look at the 19-year-old now she needs a walker to get around.

"A wound right here. There a wound in the left thigh, wound in my inner right thigh," she said, pointing out the places where the robbers shot her.

Those are only half the injuries she sustained when she was shot five times with a .45 during a June 18 robbery.

She just got out of the hospital two days ago. She met the suspects in the parking lot of the Church's Chicken on West Trade Street to sell them four pairs of Nike Air Force One shoes. They robbed her and did worse.

"One of the young men hit me in the back of the head, and me and he began to physically get in a fist fight and the other young man shot me," Rowland said.

Police arrested three suspects. Rowland said believes they should spend some time in jail, but she is not bitter about it.

"I just can't have any evil in my heart towards somebody," she said.

Rowland said she is in constant pain from her injuries. Despite her close brush with death, she says the possibility never entered her mind.

"I had the strength and the willpower to get up after I had been shot," Rowland said. "I got in my car and I knew I wasn't going to die. I didn't have the willpower to die."

Rowland can walk, but it may take three to four months before her cast is removed and a year before she can participate in athletics.



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Aug 21, 2008 9:44 am US/Central

## Cops: Gary Teen Shot Himself Over Shoes

GARY, Ind. (Post-Tribune) —

A 14-year-old Tolleston boy died Wednesday from a gunshot wound to his head despite efforts by his cousin to intervene in the shooting.

Vernon Elkins, of the 1700 block of Arthur Street, was pronounced dead at The Methodist Hospitals in Gary about two hours after he shot himself with a .38-caliber revolver found in the alley near his home, police said.

The teen had been shopping with his family, but was unable to get the shoes he wanted for school because the store didn't have them in his size, Detective Cpl. Arturo Azcona said.

When he returned home, he went downstairs to his cousin's bedroom in the basement and put the gun to his head, Azcona said.

About 2:30 p.m., Vernon's 17-year-old cousin entered his bedroom and saw his younger cousin with the weapon.

Azcona said the older teen tried to grab the gun away, but the weapon discharged.

Police and medics arrived within minutes and Vernon was rushed to the hospital, where he died.

He is the second teen to die this week from a gunshot wound. Tyaty'Anna Crayton, also 14, died Friday night at her home in Aetna. She and her brother were playing with her parents' gun when it discharged.

The Lake County prosecutor's office is reviewing the evidence.

Azcona said he will present his case to prosecutors for review also.  
(Source: Sun-Times News Group Wire © Chicago Sun-Times 2009. All Rights Reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.)



[Click to enlarge](#)

AP

1 of 1

### Related Slideshows



Athletes Chase Olympic Gold In Beijing



Celebrities Who Died Too Young



2008 Celebrity Deaths

## Report: Teen shot in park fights for life 2 suspects denied bond, police seek 1

By HOLLI DEAL BRAGG, hbragg@statesboroherald.com, 912-489-9414

Posted: April 7, 2009 9:11 p.m., Updated: April 7, 2009 9:08 p.m.

A teenager still fights for his life after a March 10 shooting at Luetta Moore Park, and two of four suspects arrested were denied bond Tuesday. Police still seek a suspect they say actually did the shooting.

Gregory Lee Wallace, 15, suffered multiple gunshot wounds during what police say was a gang-related attack, and has had one leg amputated at the hip, said Statesboro Police Det. Ken Scott Tuesday during a preliminary hearing for the case.

After a request by Ogeechee Judicial Circuit Assistant District Attorney Daphne Jarriel to deny bond based on concern that the suspects could intimidate witnesses, Bulloch County Superior Court Judge John R. Turner denied bond for two of the four suspects in custody; Reginald Hagins, 18, Harvey Wilson Road, Portal, and Myron Eugene Johnson, 17, Lindsay Court.

Two other suspects are juveniles and face similar court hearings at a later date. Police are offering a \$500 reward for information leading to the arrest of Dante Ravon Williams, 17, who remains at large.

Further arrests are possible as the investigation continues, Scott said.

Scott said during Tuesday's hearing Williams is believed to be the suspect who fired one of two guns suspected gang members had in their possession during the shooting incident, which spawned from an arranged fight between two local gangs — "The Squad," also known as "The Soldier Squad," and "The Bottom Boys," also known as "The Fast Lane."

Jarriel said the case is expected to be sent to grand jury in early May.

Hagins is charged with aggravated battery, aggravated assault, and participation in criminal gang activity. Johnson is charged with aggravated battery, aggravated assault, participation in criminal gang activity, and giving false statements to police officers.

Scott said in Johnson's initial statement he denied being at the park during the shooting, but later admitted being involved, stating he had been afraid to admit being there, he said.

The two juveniles in custody are being held at the Claxton Regional Youth Detention Center. One of the 16-year-old males is charged with aggravated battery, aggravated assault, possession of a firearm

during the commission of a crime, carrying a concealed weapon and participation in a criminal street gang.

The second 16-year-old male is charged with aggravated battery, aggravated assault, giving false statements to police officers and participation in a criminal street gang.

#### After-school fight

Scott told the court how he arrived at the scene around 8:25 p.m. March 10 about the same time Bulloch County EMS arrived, and saw 20-year-old Gregtavian Wallace lying on the ground bleeding from his leg. He said he could not see 15-year-old Gregory Wallace's injuries due to EMT's treating him, but said the juvenile victim was not conscious.

Scott said the victims were surrounded by a crowd of people who witnessed the shooting, including Garrett Taylor, a third victim who suffered a grazing wound. All three victims are brothers, he said.

Scott testified about witness statements regarding the shooting, and said the incident stemmed from an argument earlier that day at school where another juvenile brother of the victims told his cousin, an alleged gang member, "he didn't care about his Squad."

Then the cousin, also a juvenile, said "his Squad was going to 'do' them," Scott said.

The suspects in the shooting were involved with the "Squad," while the victims were connected to "The Bottom Boys," he said.

But Gregory Wallace's mother, Keisha Taylor, denied her sons were involved in a gang.

"They (members of The Squad) wanted them to be in a gang and they said no," she said. Gang members harassed Gregory Wallace's older brother, age 16, at school and got angry when he said he wasn't interested, she said.

As a matter of fact, Gregory Wallace wasn't even involved in the arguments — he was "just at the wrong place at the wrong time," she said.

Taylor said there is no "Bottom Boys" gang — it's just a group of family members.

"Police say it is a gang, calling it a gang, but they are just family," she said. "Those boys just hang together."

***The tension between the two groups began at The Tremble Club in Brooklet, Scott said. Arguments stemmed from a member of one group "stepping on the shoes" of another; showing disrespect, and over girls, he said.***

After the argument continued at school, a fight between the two groups was arranged to take place later at the park, he said.

Several people, including Johnson, met at a Roundtree Street residence to plan the fight, he said witnesses told him. One witness gave statements that he and others were “chilling and smoking weed” with ‘The Squad’ members before going to the park for the fight, Scott said.

Scott related how he communicated with Wallace at the hospital by writing, since the teen “could not speak.” He is on a ventilator and on dialysis due to his injuries, he said.

Gregory Wallace confirmed, through written communication, that Hagins and Johnson were present during the shooting, Scott said.

Teen critical, not responding

Scott told the court Tuesday Wallace “had just been sent back to emergency surgery” that morning and was still listed in “very critical condition.”

“He has been in Shock Trauma (at the Medical College of Georgia in Augusta) the entire time since the shooting and has been returned to the operating room several times” during his stay.

The teen’s leg was amputated at the hip because doctors could not save it, as the “tissue was dying,” he said.

Taylor, speaking via cell phone as she waited at the Medical College of Georgia for her son to recover from surgery, said Wallace “had a set-back” Friday and was not responding to treatment and visitors. He has kept a fever, she said, but added his kidneys have begun to show signs of recovery.

A fundraiser car wash last week, organized by local youth James Hicks, 17, who knows Wallace, netted about \$1,050, said Hicks’ mother, Gayla Donaldson.

The efforts by local youth who know Wallace took place at Donaldson Square on Martin Luther King Boulevard, she said. “We had a lot of support and donations.” The money was placed in a fund set up at First Southern National Bank, the Gregory Wallace Fund, she said.

Love offerings have also been taken at church, and the public is invited to the Historical First African Baptist Church Sunday, where services begin at 11 a.m. and another love offering will be collected for the Wallace family, she said.

Other fund raisers are in the planing stage to help the family she said.

Holli Deal Bragg may be reached at (912) 489-9414.