



## Legendary Venture Capitalist Invests in the Amer-I-Can Movement

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## U.S. Marshal Collaboration with I-Can

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# AMER-I-CAN

## COMMUNITY NEWS & WORLD REPORT

MARCH 2007

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## Another Fold in the Chord: The Church of God in Christ Partners with Amer-I-Can



From left to right: Elder Melvin Lars, Ann Lars, Jim Brown and Bishop Nathaniel Wells, II

When Pastor Dick Bernal (Jubilee Christian Center, San Jose, California), John Mumford (Young Life) and Jim Brown linked arms in a Christian commitment

to social change in America – the cornerstone for a new movement was laid. Pastor Dick used a biblical reference to describe the alliance: "A three fold chord can never be broken." Another fold has been added – Bishop Nathaniel Wells II, one of the most influential ministers in the Church-of-God-in-Christ (COGIC) has spear-headed a campaign to bring the Amer-I-Can Movement to the state of Michigan.

The principals responsible for this historic alliance between Amer-I-Can

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## Owner of the Cleveland Browns' "Unprecedented" Contribution to The Amer-I-Can Movement



Randy Lerner

groundbreaking collaboration between the Cleveland Browns and the Amer-I-Can Movement is changing the fortunes of residents in the Greater Cleveland community profoundly. Cleveland Browns owner, Randy Lerner, has embraced the principles and practices of the Amer-I-Can Movement

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- Jim Brown**  
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- Dean Renfrow**  
President, Amer-I-Can
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**Pastor Dick K. Bernal**  
**Bishop Nathaniel Wells, II**  
**Elder Melvin Lars**  
**John Mumford**  
**Jerry Kaufman**

## South Florida Real Estate Tycoon Jerry Kaufman Plugs Into Amer-I-Can Movement



Adam Kaufman, Jerry Kaufman, Jim Brown, Seth Kaufman, Gerry Groh.

Jerry Kaufman, a fifth-generation developer and CEO of the Kaufman Organization, is the most recent business mogul to join the Amer-I-Can Movement. Kaufman is the developer of

the Blue and the Blue Monster golf course at the venerable Doral Country Club. Kaufman latest project is a 240-unit condominium hotel resort adjacent

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## DEAN RENFROW APPOINTED NEW PRESIDENT OF AMER-I-CAN

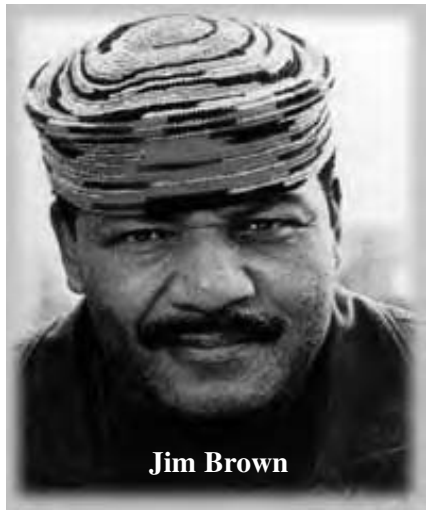


As of January, 2007, Dean Renfrow assumed the position as President and Chief of Operations for the Amer-I-Can Program

In 1991, at the behest of the Governor of the state of Oregon, Major Dean Renfrow, Commander of the Criminal Division for the Oregon State Police Department, attended a conference in Nevada that dealt with the proliferation of gang activity. The keynote speaker for the event was Jim Brown. The message delivered by Brown resonated – and changed Renfrow's life forever. He returned to

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## CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE



Jim Brown

Greetings:

The content of this paper illustrates the scope and breadth of the Amer-I-Can Movement. I would urge you to read about the activities, concepts, diversity and people who comprise the movement. My vision of one day having the top performers in our society interface with those looking up from the 'belly of the beast' is finally a reality. Amer-I-Can is the conduit for this diverse compilation of people, businesses, religious organizations and governmental agencies.

I'm elated to say to you that we have reached a major turning point in our journey. I recently turned 71 years old and I can tell you what is most important to me at this point in time – PEACE. I recently discussed with my dear friend, Bill Russell, the essence of life, our goals and our desires. We agreed that we love to help others, value friendships and selflessly want PEACE. In order to accomplish these objectives the next five years will probably be the busiest years of my life. When I leave this earth it is my goal to ingrain the methodology of the Amer-I-Can Movement into the fabric of our society.

The people and institutions now working for and with Amer-I-Can are making history. The movement is gaining such momentum that I'm confident that it will take on a life of its own. I'd always dreamed that the so-called 'little people' would have ownership in the movement – to assume the responsibility of self-determination and then go about the business of affecting positive

changes in their communities. As my dream unfolds into reality, I'm unencumbered by the disappointment, setbacks, deceptions and stumbling blocks along the journey. I'm especially heartened by the fact that negativity didn't alter my journey; that I never sought revenge against those who tried to sabotage the movement. I'm thankful that I was always able to look upward and find the positive elements of the journey – never trying to clear my name – I just kept working.

In light of how dysfunctional many urban communities are today, it will take all elements of society to rebuild them. Our nation is under siege. Homegrown terrorism, which can be defined as the undeclared wars between rival gangs, imperils the lives and livelihoods of Americans from sea to shinning sea. Yet, we've arrived at a place in Amer-I-Can history that affords us the right to be optimistic. We are circling the wagons. We are marshalling resources from high and low places. The 'architects for change,' which are the heart and soul of reconstruction, come from every social and economic strata. There is light at the end of the tunnel.

My greatest satisfaction at this point in my life is the one-on-one exchanges with people who have been favorably impacted by the movement. I experience the peace I'm looking for when I receive a call from someone who intimates they are a better human being as a result of graduating from the Life Management Skills curriculum – and it is happening frequently these days.

In closing let me simply say that the essence of happiness is directly connected to the quality of your life. More importantly, whether you are rich or poor, big or small, every human being has the prospect of a meaningful life. The human spirit is the most powerful aspect of our existence and that spirit sets us free. Keep living in the spirit and remember that our movement is inclusive – and you are welcome to come aboard.

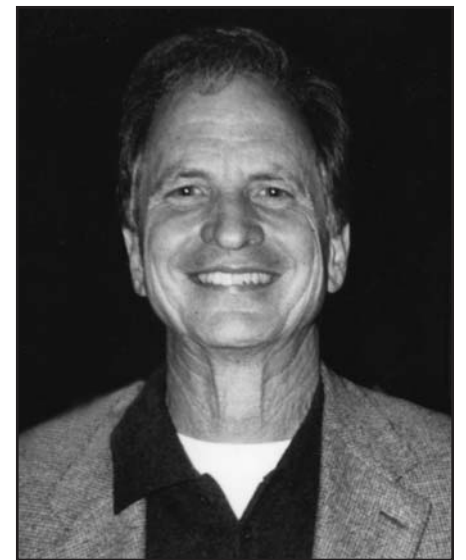
— Jim Brown

## Legendary Venture Capitalist Invests in the Amer-I-Can Movement

By Bobby Glanton Smith

For 35 years John Mumford revolutionized American enterprise. "As an entrepreneur and seed venture capitalist, I have been fortunate to have been a founder of four public companies (Ariba, Hello Direct, Inmac and Office Club (Office Depot)) and I've worked with entrepreneurs to plan and launch many successful ventures," reflected Mumford. In a foreword he wrote for the seminal book, "E-volve-or-Die," he spoke prophetically about the brave new business world that was emerging: "As an investor, I watched the fury and pace of change...the brave new world in which individuals could dream, work hard with undying commitment and prosper." He portended that "the principles of the new economy" would reshape the distribution of wealth around the world – in a matter of years, not decades. After climbing the mountain to business success, John Mumford has embarked on a journey that has intersected with the Amer-I-Can Movement.

Mumford's association with another shining star in the Amer-I-Can Movement, Pastor Dick Bernal (Jubilee Christian Center), has led to a convergence of like-minded men of power, wealth and influence. Mumford's personal commitment to Young Life, a faith based organization of national prominence, is equally yoked to his desire to affect change in the 'belly of the beast'. When he met Jim Brown two years ago and discovered how encompassing the Amer-I-Can Movement was, Mumford immersed himself into the movement. "I realized that the work of Young Life was missing a key aspect," Mumford said. He enlisted Kirk Davis (Hunter's Point in northern California) to engage members of Young Life into the Amer-I-can methodology and two years later the momentum of the movement is spreading throughout northern California. Mumford also began



John Mumford

recruiting others to support Amer-I-Can. Ronnie Lott, NFL Hall of Fame defensive back, was one of the first to lend his name to a fundraising golf tournament in the Bay Area two years ago. Mumford's investment in the movement is wedded to the confidence he has in the architects of the movement. "Jim Brown is a man that comes to serve, not be served. I'm also impressed with the managerial skills of Dean Renfrow. I hope that we can set the framework to attract new partners from the private sector – the abundance of resources needed in this movement can be found in the private sector." And his aim is to find, recruit and activate men and women of means. "I'm looking for the other John Mumford's."

The magnitude of John Mumford's commitment to the Amer-I-Can Movement has already changed many lives. He brings to the movement one of the great minds in modern business, a compassion for the human spirit and the willingness to use his resources to advance the Amer-I-Can movement. Most importantly, John Mumford understands the value of lives that too many people in society have forgotten about or fear to associate with; and he is anchored in the belief that positive changes begin in the urban core.

The upshot of John Mumford's allegiance to the Amer-I-Can Movement will someday equal the contributions he made to the birth of Silicon Valley, the Internet and e-commerce. This time he's investing in the human spirit.

## You Can Help!

YOU CAN HELP AMER-I-CAN HELP OTHERS WITH A CONTRIBUTION TO THE AMER-I-CAN FOUNDATION FOR SOCIAL CHANGE. THE CHANGING AND SAVING OF LIVES IS MADE POSSIBLE IN PART BY CONTRIBUTIONS FROM PEOPLE LIKE YOU. MAKE YOUR TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATION TO: **THE AMER-I-CAN FOUNDATION FOR SOCIAL CHANGE, 1851 SUNSET PLAZA DRIVE, LOS ANGELES, CA 90069**

## Former Predators - To Soldiers of Social Change: Marcus Bell & Ronnie Barron

Simply put, the bedrock of the Amer-I-Can Movement is the Facilitators. Two seminal examples of the transition from predators to peace makers are Master Facilitators Marcus 'Big Shipp' Bell and Ronnie 'Looney' Barron. "When I started Amer-I-Can it was immediately apparent that the program had to produce models of possibility. 'Big Shipp' and 'Looney' represent the evolution of that vision. These men have changed their lives and went back into communities around this country with the skill and expertise that has saved and changed thousands of lives," Amer-I-Can's Founder, Jim Brown, proudly proclaims.

Ronnie Barron, now 38, has the distinction of being the youngest inmate ever sent to a level 5 maximum security facility in the state of California. He was 17 years at the time. 'Looney' has soared above the stumbling blocks that obstructed him from the time he was born. "I believe in manifest destiny; my record has become my resume," Barron exclaims. "My mother was killed in a robbery and my father was killed by the police." Known in the streets as "King Ron" Barron, Looney's father's legendary status provided the youngster with a shield from predators on the prowl. His fortunes in the streets were enhanced by his striking features, fearlessness and innate intelligence. He learned how to

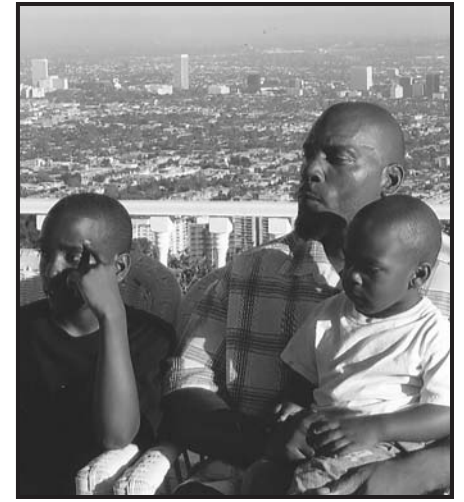
hustle and prosper – but the money stays in the game and eventually the best of the best get pinched. At 17 years old he was facing 25 to life for attempted murder. The epiphany he experienced while confined is readily apparent when he speaks – he used prison time to gain knowledge, articulation and wisdom. An attorney that believed in his potential kept working his case and secured his freedom after 5 years of confinement. Back on the streets, he couldn't resist the allure of fast money and applied his intellect once again in the belly of the beast. Then, his beloved baby brother was struck down by a fusillade of bullets fired by tortured souls lost in the wilderness of gang violence. He vowed at that point in time to be an agent for change – to save lives as opposed to taking lives. In 2002 he met Jim Brown through a mutual friend and discovered the tools he needed to affect change – in the Life Management Skills curriculum. After graduating from the curriculum he went back into his West Los Angeles community and went to work. In five years he's traveled around the country, teaching the curriculum in schools, prisons and hard-core communities. He is most proud however of the loving relationship he has with his kids: Anthony 'Baby Boy' Barron, 20, a student at the University of Memphis, and his precocious daughter Ronni



Ronnie 'Looney' Barron

Princess Barron, who is 8 years old. His professional collaboration with Marcus Bell has produced amazing results and serves as a great example of the possibilities.

At first glance Marcus Bell is imposing, menacing-looking. Big, broad-shouldered and athletically built, he could make the uninitiated wet their pants. There was a point in his life when those attributes kept him alive on one hand and brought him close to death in other situations. Today, Marcus 'Big Shipp' Bell, 42, is a responsible father, great friend to humanity and one of the finest facilitators in the Amer-I-Can Movement. He grew up terrorizing the streets of Gardena, California until fate brought him to the doorstep of his destiny in 1999, when he accepted the 'responsibility of self-determination' and went to work for Amer-I-Can. "I've learned so much and it is a privilege to go back into my community and put in work that heals rather than hurts the people of my community," Bell said.



Marcus 'Big Shipp' Bell and Sons

Together, Marcus Bell and Ronnie Barron form a most dynamic duo. They developed a proposal four years ago and negotiated a contract at two schools: Jonas Salk and Alliance Charter Schools in Los Angeles. The measure of their success is their longevity – they are still at both locations, teaching 4 classes and 100 students the Life Management Skills curriculum three days per week. Sunday through Tuesday they work the streets of Northern California (San Francisco, Richmond, Oakland, San Jose and Hunter's Point) in conjunction with the faith based initiatives of Pastor Dick Bernal (Jubilee Christian Center) and John Mumford (Young Life). Additionally, they are training facilitators and teaching community classes in both Northern and Southern California – six days a week!

The severity of urban dysfunction commands this level of commitment and the Amer-I-Can Movement is made possible by frontline soldiers and innovators like Marcus 'Big Shipp' Bell and Ronnie 'Looney' Barron.

## U.S. Marshal Collaboration with I-Can Evolves Into Innovative Fugitive Safe Surrender Program

On a sweltering summer day in August of 2005, Mount Sinai Baptist Church opened its doors to fugitives to surrender under the leadership of Rev. C. Jay Mathews. Over the next four days, 850 persons turned themselves in for a wide range of criminal violations. In total, 340 felony cases were processed including individuals wanted for rape, felonious assault, burglary, and high level drug offenses," according to United States Marshal Peter Elliot.

The Fugitive Safe Surrender was conceptualized by Elliot after the murder of Cleveland police officer Wayne Leon in 1999. A career law enforcement officer (24 years of service) with a long history of working with Amer-I-Can and other organizations in Cleveland, Elliot methodically developed an alternative route for fugitives to surrender. He

recruited Jim Brown to testify in support of the Fugitive Safe Surrender concept before a committee in Washington, D.C. Once he received authorization to implement the program he engaged Cleveland's law enforcement authorities, judicial officials, the clergy, the media and Amer-I-Can to participate.

Marshal Elliot realized that desperate people commit desperate acts, sometimes with tragic consequences. He believed that many non-violent fugitives wanted a second chance at life but were apprehensive about turning themselves in to police officers, sheriffs or the Marshals Service. The alternative was to turn a church into a courthouse so fugitives could turn themselves in an atmosphere where they feel comfortable. The benefits included making it safer for the community and the reduction of risk to

law enforcement officers who pursue fugitives.

After a year of planning the surrender guidelines were established, a detailed project was developed, an IS/IT infrastructure was constructed in the church, security measures developed, mobile LEADS and AFIS technology were secured, community volunteers were recruited and trained, and a media/grass roots campaign was launched. As a result of the success of the effort, Marshals Service Director John F. Clark instituted a Fugitive Safe Surrender initiative for the nation.

Another product of Marshal Elliot's grass roots approach to law enforcement is the Gang Resistance Educate and Training (GREAT) concept. "We can't arrest our way out of this crisis, the key is to reach the children before they get into trouble," says Elliot. He believes in the work of



U.S. Marshal Peter Elliot

Amer-I-Can and considers the program an asset to Cleveland and communities across the nation.

Phoenix, Arizona conducted a Fugitive Safe Surrender recently and more than 1,400 fugitives turned themselves in to authorities.

## Gene Berg: Numbers Don't Lie



**G**ene Berg is working feverishly, incessantly – his mission is to construct the specifications for building a state-of-the-art database for the Amer-I-Can Movement. “Dean Renfrow (President of Amer-I-Can Programs) inspired me, the work of Amer-I-Can is changing lives and I wanted to help,” Berg said. Berg is responsible for managing data for the Oregon Judicial Network and he’s using his expertise to develop a system that will enable Amer-I-Can facilitators to input data and distribute outcomes in real time throughout the administrative network of the organization. “This will be a great management tool, we will be able to go to our website and analyze data in real time, make assessments and adjustments when necessary,” opined Dean Renfrow.

Berg has an intimate understanding of the need for social change in America. His father was killed in the line of duty while serving in the Oregon State Police Department. The tragedy was a crushing blow and Berg went through a personal crisis that he weathered with the help of people like Dean Renfrow. Berg turned his life around and is now a firm believer in the concept of human redemption. Working with the court system for 18 years has afforded him the opportunity to assess the costs and benefits of the judicial system. “We are spending an inordinate amount of money incarcerating criminals instead of investing in crime prevention,” Berg asserts.

Thanks to his technical contributions the Amer-I-Can Movement will soon have the information network that will promulgate and quantify outcomes of the work done in schools, prisons and communities around the world.

# National News

### Connecticut:

The Amer-I-Can Program will be returning to Connecticut. The program produced quantitative and qualitative results up until a budget shortfall in 2004. Thanks to a collective effort that includes state legislators, Speaker of the House, James Amann (D) and Minority Leader Lawrence Cafero (R), clergy and community advocates, funding for implementing the Life Management Skills curriculum will be introduced to the legislature. From 1998 to 2004 grade point averages increased 16%, absenteeism fell 27%; disciplinary actions decline an astounding 73%. The proposed bill will fund 5 schools (200 students per school) in three demographic areas: one area 100,000 population; 50-100,000 population and under 50,000 population.

### Delaware:

Speaker of the House, Terry Spence has introduced legislation that will fund the Amer-I-Can Program to teach the Life Management Skills curriculum in 4 schools and the Department of Corrections. I-Can’s Jim Brown and Dean Renfrow met with school officials in Wilmington to discuss implementation of the program.

### California:

The curriculum is being taught in schools, correctional facilities and communities throughout Southern and Northern California with ever-increasing success. The involvement of Jubilee Christian Center (Pastor Dick Bernal), Young Life (John Mumford) and a host of other collaborators is widening the net of the movement. John Mumford has also joined the Amer-I-Can Board of Directors.

### Florida:

A plethora of developments are transpiring in the Sunshine State. I-Can officials Dr. Warren Chavers, Dean Renfrow and Jim Brown recently met with state legislators from the House and Senate Criminal and Civil Justice Committees. Jim Brown testifies before both committees for the purpose of establishing parameters for collaboration. The Attorney General of Florida, Bill McCollum, is well-versed in gang intervention. Lieutenant Governor Jeff Kottkamp alerted the media that funding will be provided to implement the Life Management Skills curriculum in 4 middle schools and 4 high schools in Tampa and Melbourne, Florida. Gospel Music legend Dr. Bobby Jones recently interviewed Jim Brown on his television show (which airs on “The Word Network”) and invited Brown to participate in the International Gospel Industry Retreat held in Broward County, Florida. Jones, who holds three doctoral degrees, is keenly interested in developing a collaboration with the Amer-I-Can movement. There is broad-based legislative support for an initiative to expand the program to include Peace Squad operations in high crime areas. Jerry Kaufman, a fifth-generation developer, was a primary sponsor of a fundraising golf tournament during the Super Bowl weekend and is committed to the Amer-I-Can movement. Jerry Groh, Floyd Ragland and Peggy King Williams also made significant contributions to the success of the golf tournament that was held at the venerable Doral Country Club in Miami, Florida.

### Michigan:

See feature article in this edition page 5.

### Ohio:

See feature article in this edition.

### Rhode Island:

Another state with an extended history of engagement with the Amer-I-Can Program. A detailed report of developments will be promulgated in the next issue of this paper.

### Washington:

The Rev. Bob Jeffrey, New Hope Missionary Baptist Church, Seattle, reached out to Amer-I-Can seeking solutions to the spread of gang violence in Ranier Valley, Capitol Hill and the Kent area. In conjunction with Catholic Charities, New Hope Missionary Baptist Church funded two Amer-I-Can Gang Intervention Specialist (Rudolph ‘Rock’ Johnson and Tyrone Cosby) to conduct an assessment and prescription for abating gang violence in those areas. A diverse committee of law enforcement officials, school officials, clergy and community leaders developed an action plan that will focus on schools, the judicial system and high crime areas. State Senator Kline proposed a bill that calls for Life Management Skills training and intervention measures. The courts will offer as a condition of probation Life Management Skills training. Appropriated funds will be used to integrate the program in schools and communities in Seattle and Tacoma. Democrat and Republican legislators are supporting this community-based initiative.

## Amer-I-Can Vision:

**A**mer-I-Can has moved far beyond just a gang intervention and a life management skills program. It has evolved into a powerful movement. It is a catalyst for positive change, built upon the development of personal relationships, its character and reputation; those intangible qualities that spur individuals from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds into action. It is a spiritual connection

between people, tied to a common cause, ignited by a passion to help stop the needless violence and offer willing individuals a way to improve their lives. Therefore, when implementing the program, to be truly effective, some unconventional methods at odds with common practices from time to time will occur because we are dealing with the human element, our highest priority. It is our connection to the people at

ground level, our sensitivities to various cultures, building prolonged partnerships and our ability to adapt to changing conditions that is critical to the continued success of Amer-I-Can. As the momentum of the movement advances, we must hold steadfast to these values and beliefs. These principles, tied to a solid plan, are the precursors toward the accomplishment of our mission and the reality of the vision.

# California High School Student Qualifies the Value of Amer-I-Can Life Management Skills Curriculum

Amer-I-Can Facilitators Marcus 'Big Shipp' Bell and Ronnie 'Looney' Barron teach the Life Management Skills curriculum at the Jonas Salk Charter Development School (CDS) three days a week to 100 students. Robert Uth, a journalist for the school paper, submitted the following article for publication in "The Voice".

## 'THE VOICE'

### AMER-I-CAN TEACHING DECISION MAKING SKILLS THROUGHOUT THE CITY

By: Robert Uth

Recently the valley fell into fortune. They now have Amer-I-Can providing services in their CDS program. That means teens in the valley, like us at Jonas Salk CDS, will now participate in counseling sessions which address effective decision-making skills. Amer-I-Can is about the responsibility of self-determination. This program was created in 1988. It was created by Jim Brown, the president of this program.

This book (Life Management Skills curriculum) has 15 chapters, and each chapter can help me or you become a better person. The road to success reveals that success is a journey, not a destination, meaning it doesn't end. To be successful, it must be realistic, worthwhile, and attainable. Attainable means you can hold on to it, or can

you get it, worthwhile means it has to be worth doing it, and realistic meaning to me it has to be real life, and not fiction. I have to seek success, even though there will be obstacles in my way. Chapter 3 is my favorite chapter, condition myself for success. That is my favorite chapter because changing doesn't involve negative thought. I have to condition myself to a positive attitude in a positive way in order to reach success. The phrase, "eliminate the negative, and choose the best option," tells me that if I'm in a bad position, like if a friend tells me to get in a stolen car, I should stop, think, eliminate the bad thing, and choose a positive option. Think of the consequences, either be at home, or go to jail. Jim Brown says it is never too late to be successful or to change my life.

This program can help me or you



Jonas Salk Charter Development School Students of the Amer-I-Can Life Management Skills Curriculum and Amer-I-Can Facilitator Ronnie 'Looney' Barron.

become successful. I asked a question to two great people who graduated from this Amer-I-Can program and who now serve as facilitators, Looney, and his comrade, Big Shipp. My question was "how did this program change their life?" Looney said, "Amer-I-Can helped find his place and purpose," Shipp said, "Amer-I-Can helped change my attitude from I can't to I can. It gave me the tools to change my habits and routine, and it didn't happen over night."

This Amer-I-Can program can help

a person be motivated to be successful. Looney and his comrade, Shipp, come three days a week to Jonas Salk to help each kid become a better person, and to help one another. From what I know, they go all over California, teaching kids and adults, changing lives and making a difference.

\* Amer-I-Can will host the First Annual Jonas Salk CDS Skate Fest in April. Stay tuned and stay up on your chapters.

## The Mosaic of the Movement: Quantitative Data

The axiom that a picture is worth a thousand words holds true in some circles, but it falls short of describing the outcomes of the work done by soldiers for change in the human spirit. For years the Amer-I-Can Program for Social Change has toiled in the communities ravaged by gang warfare without the benefit of quantitative data to support successful outcomes. The absence of supportive documentation is about to be corrected thanks to the efforts of people like Steven and Rebecca Edwards.

In a recent report published in the International Journal on School Disaffection ("Keeping Students Engaged in School Through the UK-I-CAN Program"), Steven and Rebecca chronicle the advances of the students who participated in the Life Management Skills curriculum. Thirty (30) 8th grade students at Saint

Benedict Catholic School and Performing Arts College in Derby, England underwent the training. Of the 30 students selected to participate in the UK-I-CAN pilot program, 29 completed the entire course, which represents a 97% completion rate. The quantitative and qualitative data collected on the 29 students was used to assess progress in five areas: quality of work, effort, behavior, attendance and life management skills. 2004-2005 School Year: Average work (grades) increased 16%; work effort increased 16% and absences fell 26% in just 14 weeks!

Steven, who is presently an Assistant Professor of Education Leadership at George Washington University, and Rebecca, who is Executive Director of Edwards Educational Service, have extensive ties to the Amer-I-Can curriculum.



UK-I-Can – Jim Brown with Students at Saint Benedict Catholic School

They helped revise the curriculum and now find themselves immersed in the construction of a world class web site that will house the data of the Amer-I-Can Movement.

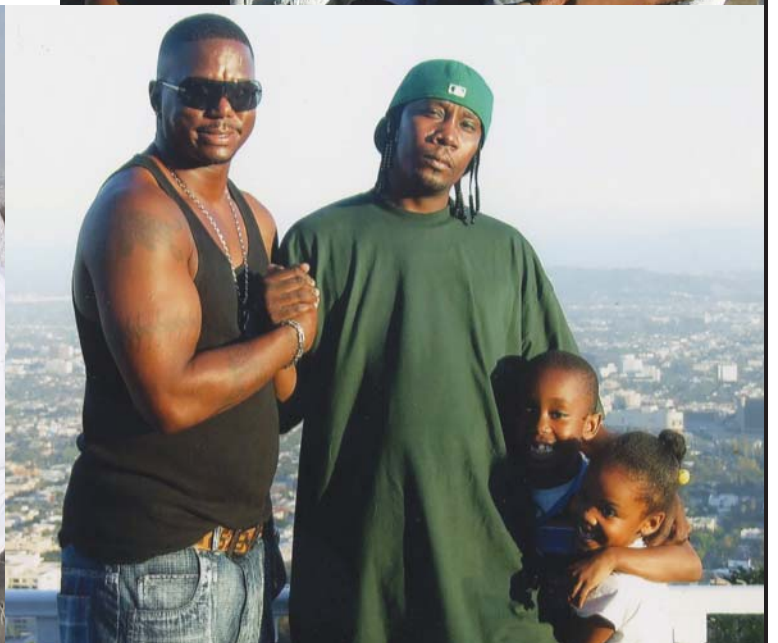
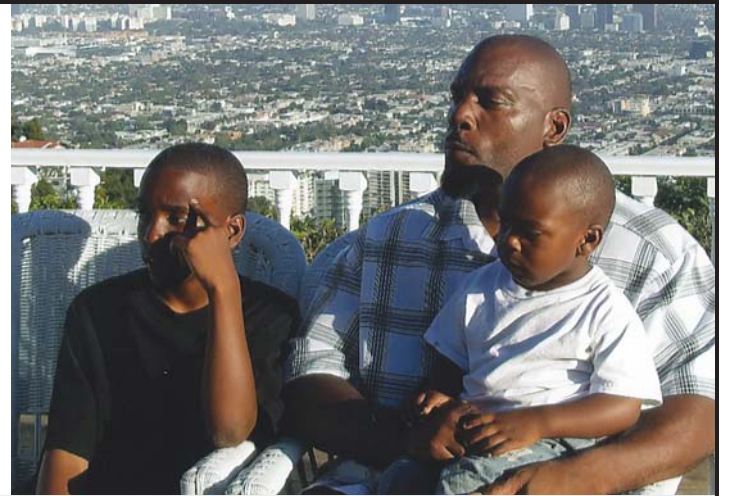
Collecting and processing data in real time will give Amer-I-Can the platform needed to tell the success stories quantitatively – and that is a picture worth more than words.

# The Amer-I-Can Movement

## *A Family Affair*

On a sun-splashed day in the Hollywood Hills fathers and their children gathered at the home of Jim Brown. These men are the heartbeat of the Amer-I-Can Movement. They eliminated the negative, established the

facts and chose their best options. One choice was to become responsible fathers. These pictures speak to the outcome of a movement that is saving and changing lives and reuniting families.



# Faces of the Movement



## Owner of the Cleveland Browns' "Unprecedented" Contribution

(Continued from the front page)

and committed \$1.6 million dollars to the implementation of a comprehensive initiative in the schools, court systems and communities of Cleveland.

Thanks to the historic support of Mr. Lerner and the Browns, Amer-I-Can has successfully collaborated with the Cleveland Municipal Court System via an innovative venture that is aptly named the "Get on Track Program". Amer-I-Can provided Life Management Skills curriculum training to participants in the "Get on Track" program in part because of the resources now available from a two-year \$1.6 million commitment by Lerner and the Browns. The Cleveland Municipal Courts underwrote the cost for the curriculum for this specific cycle of the "Get on Track" program. 68 participants in the "Get on Track" program graduated from the Amer-I-Can Life Management Skills training. Reggie Rucker, a former standout wide receiver for the Cleveland Browns (and a consultant to the team and Amer-I-Can) opined: "In the many years that I've been associated with the NFL, I've never heard of a financial commitment to a grass roots movement similar to what Amer-I-Can has received from Mr. Lerner and the Browns; it is truly unprecedented and history making."

The resources made available to Amer-I-Can will be used to support Life Management Skills curriculum training at five (5) Cleveland schools and the adjoining areas. Dr. Warren Chavers, Mid-West Regional Manager of Amer-I-Can and the Rev. James Box are formidable contributors to the success of this project. Chavers, who resides in Canton, Ohio, takes a spiritual approach to the Amer-I-Can Movement: "I've been a pastor for 27 years and for the past 14 years I've taught the Life Management Skills curriculum all over the country. Every church should teach the curriculum because the principles are consistent



Cleveland Municipal Court Judges in Support of "Get on Track"

with the teachings of the Bible. Everything in the curriculum is in the Bible." In his administrative role of Mid - West Regional Manager of Amer-I-Can Chavers continues to bring diverse organizations and powerbrokers into the movement.

Rev. Box epitomizes the essence of the movement, he works the streets as adroitly as he advocates for the movement in political, religious and community circles. Before funding was available he taught the curriculum in schools, communities and dispensed

"Peace Squads" to hot spots around the city. The ultimate objective is to create enough financial resources to perpetuate community stability and create economic development.

The work of the Amer-I-Can Movement, with the underwriting support of Randy Lerner and the Cleveland Browns can now be quantified and qualified. Thousands of area residents will have the opportunity to change the course of their lives and raise their standard of living.

## Making A Change For The Better For One And For All



Kurt "Puppet" Bonner & Son

By Dennis J. Freeman

To Kurt "Puppet" Bonner, the Amer-I-Can program is much more than that. It's a movement, said the 42-year-old former gang member.

"It's a movement," said Bonner. "It's educational. It's taking responsibilities for self-determination. It's about what steps are you willing to take. What work are you trying to put in for you? That's what we teach-it's life management skills. We put a squeeze on negativity because we've got strong people on the streets that want to bring about change. It (the program) brings purpose and understanding to life. Success is a journey. There are no quick fixes. It is an ongoing thing."

Bonner knows that more than most folks. He's struggled with inner demons that guided him to a life of criminal behavior, which landed him in and out of the judicial system more than he can remember. After over 22 years of putting in work on the streets as a hustler and gang member, Bonner finally decided he'd had enough of that type of lifestyle.

Actually, he's had that thought in the back of his head for a long time. He just didn't know what to do with it. Bonner said there wasn't a day that went by that he didn't think about trying to find a way out of that life. The Amer-I-Can program gave him that ticket out. Bonner is now employed through the Amer-I-Can program (I-Can Liaison and Assistant to Jim Brown) and trying to pass on the knowledge he's received from being part of this "movement."

"I feel this is my destiny," Bonner said.

## Empowering Others With Life Skills While Empowering Himself

By Dennis J. Freeman

Leon "Sleep" Taft has spent just about half of his life behind bars. At 11, Taft found his way into the street life of dealing drugs. A year later, Taft was fully engulfed in the drug trade and was head-deep into gang life. At 24, he was sentenced to prison. He wound up doing nine years in a state prison.

After spending so much time locked up, Taft was eager for a change of direction in his life. He found it through the Amer-I-Can program. Taft credits the program, founded by former

NFL star, actor and social activist Jim Brown, for saving his life.

Today, at the ripe age of 38, Taft is the program manager for the Amer-I-Can program at a correctional facility where he teaches the curriculum of the program to about 60 inmates every three to four weeks on a revolving schedule at LA County Jail.

"It's basically all about change, change and attitude," Taft said. "The program focuses on the responsibilities of self-determination."

Taft says the program gave him a one-way ticket towards a better existence.

"It gave me a road map," Taft said. "I wanted to change. But just how was I going to go about finding the change, enacting the change, once I was released, that was kind of one of my biggest fears. Being introduced to the program and going through the process, it kind of put everything in perspective for me. Now I know how to utilize the decision-making process on a daily basis. I now understand what a goal is-what a goal should be. I understand effective communications now. I've just been following the concepts...now I'm on my journey."

## Real Estate Tycoon Jerry Kaufman Plugs Into Amer-I-Can Movement

(Continued from the front page)

to the Doral golf course.

Kaufman spearheaded a fundraising golf tournament during Super Bowl weekend at the Doral Country Club in Miami, Florida. Hall of Fame participants included Emmitt Smith, Eric Dickerson, Marcus Allen, Gale Sayers and present NFL stars Ronnie Brown, Reggie Bush and Marshall Faulk.

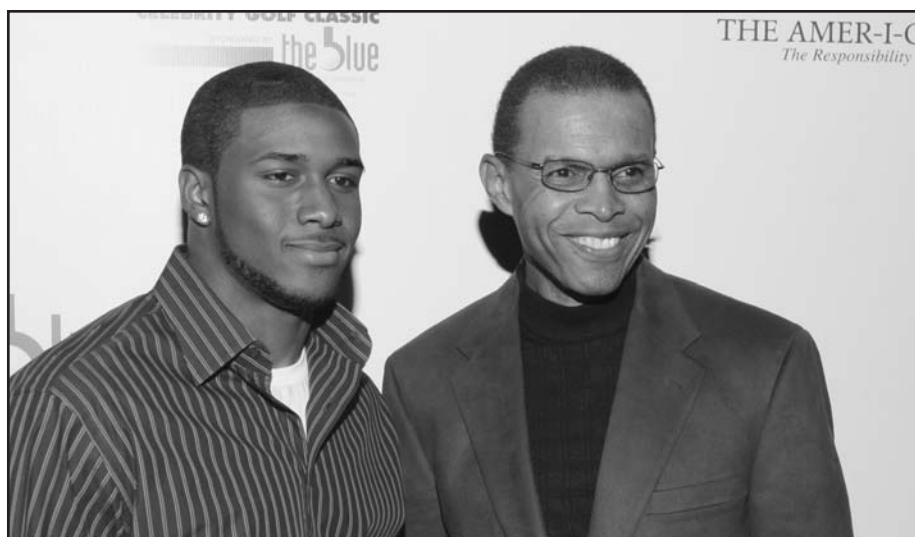
One of the supporters of the golf tournament and the Amer-I-Can Movement, Elyahou Lallouz, a world renowned Artist and Philanthropist, featured Jim Brown in Lallouz International Magazine. The following excerpt reflects the ever-expanding scope of the Amer-I-Can Movement:

"I believe in Amer-I-Can and what Jim is trying to do," says good friend Jerry Kaufman. It's one thing to write a check for charity and another to empower people. Jim never takes any of the credit...he's a catalyst with the affinity and understanding of putting people together with the intellectual capacity to make this a better world."

The article says that Brown and Kaufman are developing a 2007 Summer Pilot Project for the Amer-I-Can Foundation that will provide California – based rural gang communities economic opportunities. The project involves participation in 'warehoused construction' (modular homes), educational and vocational training and 'business role opportunities' in hope that such 'gang corporate power' can be transformed



Artist Charles Fazzino and Miss Florida Jenna Edwards unveiling Jim Brown portrait at Jim Brown Celebrity Golf Tournament in Miami, Florida.



Reggie Bush and Gale Sayers at the Fundraising Golf Tournament during the Super Bowl Weekend at the Doral Country Club in Miami, Florida.

into 'power for good'.

The economic and social implications of this project reflect the growing capacity of the Amer-I-Can Movement. The aim is to teach the

responsibility of self-determination and create sustainable ventures that empower the adherents of this compelling methodology.

## I-Can in Massachusetts



Senator John F. Kerry

Senator John Kerry (D) sponsored a federal grant that produced \$1.5 million in funding for Life Management Skills training in his home state of Massachusetts. The bill called for two years of funding at \$750,000 per year and represents the second appropriation sponsored by Senator Kerry. The training is being conducted in three (3) Massachusetts high schools: English High School (Boston); West Roxbury High School (Boston); and Boston Adult Technical. The four (4) facilitators of the curriculum have produced eye-opening results. The students participating in the training have improved their grades, attendance and behavior dramatically. John Hennessey, local director for I-Can has been promoted to Assistant Regional Manager of New England. Barry Hickman's fine work has resulted in a promotion to Lead Facilitator.

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The mailing address for Amer-I-Can Programs: 2410 Gibsonwoods Court, NW, Salem, Oregon 97304

## DEAN RENFROW APPOINTED NEW PRESIDENT

(Continued from the front page)

Oregon and recommended to his superiors that the Amer-I-Can Program be instituted in schools in Portland and the prison in Salem, Oregon. In 1994 Lt. Colonel Dean Renfrow retired from the Oregon State Police after 25 years of exemplary service and went to work as a consultant for Amer-I-Can. As of January, 2007, Dean Renfrow assumed the position as President and Chief of Operations for the Amer-I-Can Program for Social Change.

Renfrow, 59, considers the promotion as an opportunity to apply his skill set to a movement he lives and breathes. During the course of his career in law enforcement (he spent a number of years as the director of the criminal division) he watched gang violence spread from the Los Angeles area into the Northwest. The success of the Amer-I-Can Program in schools

and prisons was the impetus for Renfrow's decision to become a part of the movement. His first assignment was to consult the organization and assist with the preparation of proposals. Renfrow went to Rhode Island and established a successful training program in schools. Ultimately he established programs in Connecticut, Massachusetts and Mississippi. Renfrow ascended to the position as Director of New England and subsequently became the National Director of Operations.

Renfrow's law enforcement experience, organizational acumen and genuine passion for the mission of saving and changing lives are a factor in the growing success of the movement. "When I was a young kid growing up in the projects of Seattle, I admired Jim Brown the football player.

I'm not surprised that we have become close friends and teammates – as fate would have it, we share a common desire to affect change in the lives of people that will accept the responsibility of self-determination."

In 2004 Renfrow traveled to the United Kingdom with Amer-I-Can consultant Steve Edwards and laid the foundation for what has become UK-I-Can. "The program's success in England proves the curriculum is applicable universally," Renfrow proudly opines. The growth and expansion of the program keeps Renfrow traveling constantly. "We are in the midst of a tremendous outreach and it is paramount that we establish continuity of operations," Renfrow said. The organization is refining processes that will result in greater efficiencies. "We recognize the importance of measures and statistics; to that end we are developing systems that will make our accomplishments

more transparent to those entities looking for quantitative data."

According to Renfrow the Amer-I-Can way is inclusive. "You have to involve the people at the bottom rung of society. Jim has never forgotten the stakeholders at the bottom. At the same time everybody plays a vital role; for example, the police have to be approached in a way that allows them to understand that we have a common goal – crime prevention and crime reduction. We are dealing with human beings and it takes a comprehensive approach to solving a myriad of problems – that is why we advocate personal responsibility – that is where change begins, at the point of I-CAN.

The Amer-I-Can movement is a product of the sum total of their agents for change. At the top of the hierarchy is a man with skill, intellect and undying commitment to affecting positive change in the human condition – Dean Renfrow.

## Another Fold in the Chord:

(Continued from front page)

and COGIC are Elder Melvin Lars (Holy Trinity COGIC) and Dr. Warren Chavers (Mid-West Regional Manager). Elder Lars, a retired educator and CEO of Brighter Futures, reached out to Dr. Warren Chavers in hopes that an alliance could be formed between the Church of God in Christ and the Amer-I-Can Program for Social change. What transpired in the ensuing months is a prototype for social, economic and spiritual uplift in the urban centers of America and the world.

The Church of God in Christ, headquartered in Memphis, Tennessee, has more than 5.5 million members in 53 countries and is the largest Pentecostal denomination in the world. By virtue of the immense reach of the Church of God in Christ, the emerging partnership with Amer-I-Can has far-reaching social and economic implications.

The straw that is stirring this human development concoction is Bishop Nathaniel Wells II. From his position of leadership in the Church of God in Christ – he is a General Board Member and Prelate, Western Michigan, Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction, Benton Harbor, Michigan, and the Senior Pastor at Holy Trinity Institutional Church of God and Christ, Muskegon, Michigan – Bishop Wells is boldly stepping out on faith to embrace the Amer-I-Can Movement. He brings to the movement a plethora of resources

and the willingness to use his power and influence. He oversees 71 pastors and their churches; he's been a Senior Pastor for 29 years; he served two (2) terms on the National Trustee Board; he's currently serving his second term on the Presidium of the General Board, which oversees the day-to-day administration of the Church of God in Christ; and he oversees the National Housing, Urban and Community Development Program, worldwide (in his area of jurisdiction alone he has developed over \$130 million in multi-family and senior citizen housing throughout the Midwest).

"I'm so blessed to have as my pastor a man with vision; Bishop Wells quickly recognized the value of partnering with Amer-I-Can – this will allow us to bring to dysfunctional communities a proven recipe for restoration of people and property," proclaims Elder Melvin Lars. Equally effusive about this groundbreaking collaboration is Dr. Warren Chavers, of Amer-I-Can. "When Elder Lars shared with me the scope of his intentions I realized that we had an opportunity to develop a pilot program that will change thousands of lives in the Midwest and provide a model for replication around the country and the world," Chavers said. By the time Jim Brown, Dean Renfrow and Dr. Chavers met with church and community leaders in Muskegon, the structure of the collaboration had been agreed

upon. The church is spearheading the project by identifying funding sources (initial funding will be raised from within the church) from public and private entities, securing an operational headquarters through the Muskegon Heights Housing Commission in the East Park Manor area of Muskegon Heights, Michigan and integrating the Amer-I-Can Movement into existing and planned projects of economic development. The scope of the collaboration will expand into several cities: Muskegon, Grand Rapids, Battle Creek, Benton Harbor, Kalamazoo and Detroit. Ultimately the movement will target schools, correctional facilities and communities throughout the state. Meetings are already scheduled with state legislators, including a meeting with Governor Jennifer Granholm's husband, Dan Mulhern, who has expressed an interest in using the Life Management Skills curriculum in a statewide mentoring program.

One of the key stake holders in this collaboration is McKinley Copeland, Executive Director of the Muskegon Heights Housing Commission. According to Mr. Copeland the devastating impact of the economic downturn throughout the 'Rust Belt' has left cities like Muskegon vulnerable. "The biggest employer in Muskegon County is the three (3) prisons. Our young people are isolated, dropping out of schools and

dropping into gangs," Copeland lamented. He believes that positive changes can result from the partnership between the church, Amer-I-Can and the housing commission. Mr. Copeland is developing a plan that includes job training, housing redevelopment and is keenly interested in adding the Life Management Skills curriculum to the package. The idea as proposed to me of including life management skills training to the jobs training program is logical; many young people today lack the basic understanding of responsibility and that is an indisputable prerequisite to completion of any job training program," Copeland said.

During remarks to a rapt audience at the Holy Trinity Church of God in Christ in Muskegon, Jim Brown acknowledged the significance of the occasion by saying: "Bishop Wells is a man of vision and what he's doing through this partnership will change thousands of lives. I will leave here motivated by the prospects of coming back and implementing a plan that is historic and unprecedented."

The addition of Bishop Nathaniel Wells II and the Church of God in Christ to the fold of faith based organizations linked to the Amer-I-Can Movement is an inspiring development. The multi-facets of this developing story will be continued in future issues of this newspaper.

## Breaking News from Michigan

The partnership with the Church of God in Christ (Bishop Nathaniel Wells II and Elder Melvin Lars) resulted in a meeting (March 13th) with prominent Michigan legislators at the State Capitol in Lansing, Michigan. Jim Brown, Dr. Warren Chavers and Dean Renfrow accompanied Bishop Wells and Elder Wells to Lansing. The purpose of the meeting was to bring the Amer-I-Can Program to 16 schools in Michigan; 12 schools in Detroit (six high schools and six middle schools) and six (6) in Grand Rapids (four high schools and two middle schools). Legislators in attendance at the meeting included: Speaker of the House, Andy Dillon (D); Speaker Pro-Tem, Michael Sak (D); Rep. Morris Hood II (D), a member of Michigan Legislative Black

Caucus; Rep. Virgil Smith (D), Vice-Chairman of the Michigan Legislative Black Caucus and Assistant Majority Whip; Rep. Coleman Young II (D), Michigan Legislative Black Caucus; and George Cushingberry, Jr. (D), member of Michigan Legislative Black Caucus. The meeting will produce legislation requesting \$2 million in appropriation from the Education Assistance Funds.

The First Gentleman of the State of Michigan (husband of Governor Jennifer Granholm), Daniel Mulhern, met with the Amer-I-Can contingent and discussed a proposed volunteer mentoring program and a prison re-entry program. The prison re-entry program will be accommodated through negotiations with the Director of Corrections, Patricia Caruso.

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# COMING ATTRACTION: FRONTLINERS

**A**riveting docudrama, *“Frontliners”* is a ground-breaking story of “hope, courage and the power of self-determination”. The backdrop of the film project is Los Angeles – the LA that produced a crime wave that spread like cancer across America and has spilled into neighboring countries of South and Central America. This film features the architects of pain and suffering who become the unlikely progenitors of peace.

Filmmakers Aurora Ferlin and Keith Cardwell document the

enthralling journey of former rival gang members as they reconstruct themselves; evolving from predators to peace-makers. A lifetime of mayhem and carnage prepared them to become the perfect candidates for change agents. This film takes you into the ‘belly of the beast’ – which is the epicenter of Jim Brown’s Amer-I-Can Movement.

*“Frontliners,”* offers a rare view of the culture that has wreaked havoc on urban America. The graphic depiction in the film of cold blooded gangsters is at times shocking –

yet necessary. The grim reality of dysfunctional communities is captured frame-by-frame in the epic docudrama. On the other hand this film expands the realm of possibilities by focusing on the capacity for change in the human spirit. This roller coaster ride takes you from the ‘belly of the beast’ to the pomp and circumstance - from predator to peace-maker. Witness the evolution, see how any person – at any given time - can change the course of their lives affirmatively. Coming Soon – *“Frontliners”*



Aurora Ferlin



## COMING IN THE NEXT EDITION:

*“Amer-I-Can Outreach in Belize”*

*featuring*

Ms. Monique Brown (center of photo to left) and Ms. Shabazz (center of photo above)



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