

A man in a red blazer is speaking into a microphone in front of a large student audience. The blazer has a Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. logo on the left chest. The audience is diverse and seated in bleachers.

The Kappa Alpha Psi Journal

An Official Publication of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.

LEADING AN INITIATIVE OF INTERNATIONAL IMPACT

Teaching Our Children How to Get Home
Safely When Stopped by the Police



**Kappa Alpha Psi's Learn 2 Live Social Justice Initiative
Presses On!
Preparing Our Youth for Law Enforcement Encounters,
Demanding Change in Policing!**

Jimmy McMikle, MBA (Alpha 1991), National Chairman of the Learn 2 Live Initiative and National Director of Organizational Effectiveness leads students through the day at Kaiserslautern High School.





Above: Joseph Bryant (Beta Sigma 1975), National Vice Chairman of the Learn 2 Live Initiative explains the important take-aways from one of the mock scenarios. Below: Mr. Reuben McClendon, a U.S. Airforce installation military police officer stationed in Germany addresses the youth audience.





Above: students engage in a simulation with law enforcement officials on what do do if one is stopped in a car in Orlando, Florida.

740 high school students filled the gymnasium bleachers at Kaiserslautern High School eagerly anticipating the opportunity to take part in a training that might literally save their lives one day.

The training was Kappa Alpha Psi's National Learn 2 Live Initiative. In short, the initiative teaches our kids how to get home safely when forced to interact with the police. The program was designed to provide information, education and training to prepare the youth in communities of color for the negative law enforcement encounters that they have a statistically high probability of experi-

encing during their lifetime. But this was no ordinary high school. These were not the population of students typically served by this initiative. And this was no ordinary location. Kaiserslautern High School is on the Vogelweh Military Installation in Kaiserslautern, Germany. Most of these students have never lived outside of a military community or in the continental United States. Furthermore, the majority have never experienced the issues that precipitated the fraternity's launch of this initiative four years ago. However, most if not all of these students will be transitioning back to the American mainland to attend a college or university after graduating high school. As

ironic as it sounds for a group of American youth, they'll be in a strange land by transitioning to the continental United States. They'll be immersed into a new lifestyle rich with an enhanced set of opportunities, options and temptations not typically available on a military base setting. They will encounter new experiences that will broaden their horizons and provide opportunities for growth and learning. But unfortunately, they'll be presided over by a new style of policing. Their impending transition creates the relevant need for this training in Kaiserslautern and is the reason why the Learn 2 Live initiative made its initial visit to foreign soil.

An official delegation from Kappa Alpha Psi journeyed overseas for the Learn 2 Live forum and to initiate the new members into the fraternity through the Germany Alumni Chapter. Those in attendance included the 34th Grand Polemarch Reuben A. Shelton III, Esq.; Junior Grand Vice Polemarch Evan R. Jackson; National Director of Organizational Effectiveness and Learn 2 Live National Chairman Jimmy McMikle, MBA; Northeastern Province Senior Province Vice Polemarch Ted Sanchious; Director of Undergraduate and University Affairs Ryan Tucker; National Vice Chairman of the Learn 2 Live Initiative Joseph Bryant and Chief of Staff to the Grand Polemarch Joe Lewis. The event was photographed by National Photographer Michael Hume.

“Learn 2 Live” is a social justice initiative in partnership with the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE). Each Learn 2 Live forum has three structured components. The first part addresses the con-

cept of policing and provides students with a strategic game plan and rules of engagement for the three occasions in which they are most likely to encounter law enforcement. Those situations are during a traffic stop, a community encounter or in a person’s home setting. Students are also provided steps to follow in the event that an individual believes that his or her rights have been violated in a police encounter. Three simulated mock police encounters occur during the second component of each forum, providing the visual context of what a police traffic stop, community encounter and home visit looks like and how it should and should not go. The mock scenarios reinforce critical concepts, ideas and instructions through visual learning. Student volunteers are selected from each forum’s audience to participate in the staged scenarios. The forum concludes with an interactive police panel discussion that allows student and community attendants to dialogue with local law enforcement personnel in a non-threatening question and answer format. The initiative

attempts to comprise a panel of officers representing local, state and federal law enforcement agencies in addition to persons from the court system, including judges and or attorneys in every city we visit. Student and community participants are able to ask the panel any desired questions related to policing policies, practices or procedures. This format also allows police intimate interaction and dialogue with the persons who they have sworn to protect and serve.

It must be noted that this initiative is not an indictment, proclamation, sweeping generalization or statement of condemnation on police or policing. Kappa Alpha Psi and NOBLE both acknowledge the need for and the importance of policing, recognizing the thousands of dedicated upstanding persons who wear a badge with honor and dignity throughout the United States. However, the historical systemic issues in policing and the consistent actions of those who dishonor the badge make initiatives like this one necessary.

We had a chance to sit down and talk about Learn 2 Live with the initiative’s National Chairman and Kappa Alpha Psi’s National Director of Organizational Effectiveness, Jimmy McMikle, a Spring 1991 initiate of the Alpha Chapter, Indiana University.

Q: You were tasked in 2015 as a member of the Grand Board of Directors with designing, developing and implementing a social justice initiative for the Fraternity. As a result, the Learn 2 Live initiative was launched in 2016. When we last spoke to you in the spring of 2017 about the initiative, the committee had performed approximately 20 forums in 15 different cities and had trained close to 10,000 kids. How has the program progressed since then?

McMikle: There has been a significant amount of movement since that time. When the initiative launched, our initial goal was to facilitate 100 forums by the 84th Grand Chapter Meeting



Learn 2 Live Forum in Fayetteville, North Carolina with FBI Agent, Brother Greg Jones.

in Philadelphia in August of 2019. I'm pleased to report that we facilitated the 103rd forum as a kick-off to the Grand Chapter meeting in Philadelphia for all of the guide right students who attended the Grand Chapter Meeting's National Guide Right Conference. So, to recap the facts; we hosted 103 forums in 45 cities over three and a half years, which provided critical and potentially life-saving training to approximately 50,000 kids during that time frame.

The 34th Grand Polemarch, Reuben Shelton vowed to continue the fraternity's work in this arena after he was sworn into office. On the heels of the 84th Grand Chapter Meeting he charged me with conducting another 100 forums over the next four years to provide this essential training for our youth in the communities that we will serve during his administration. In response, we conducted 17 forums in the eight months following that charge, now totaling 120 forums conducted and approximately 60,000 kids trained since the initiative's launch. We had another six forums scheduled to occur before the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) epidemic placed the country on quarantine. But we'll resume forums once it's safe to travel again. We have to! The lives of our young people are at stake!

We've also been able to expand Kappa Alpha Psi's footprint in the social justice arena by including Learn 2 Live as a programmatic component during the Congressional Black Caucus's Annual Legislative Conference for the past two years in Washington, D.C. Learn 2 Live has also received the, "Diversity and Social Justice Initiative Award" from the National Association of Fraternity and Sorority Advisors, a "Civil Rights Award" from NOBLE and a \$25,000 corporate sponsorship award from Nationwide Insurance Company to help fund our continued efforts. We're trying to form more partnerships and gain more funding to multiply our effectiveness.

Q: Most recently, you facilitated a forum in Germany. Why bring an initiative

that was designed for students in the United States to Germany?

McMikle: We've learned a lot through a series of conversations with our fraternal military personnel (stationed stateside and abroad); the military police (who patrol military installations) as well as administrators in the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA). In general, students who reside on military installations on foreign soil live in an insulated world, largely absent of the profiling and police difficulties that are experienced in the continental United States. The installation existence offers an environment with a large sense of commonality and community of which the military police are an integrated component of that military culture. It's a very relationship driven place with thin lines of separation. Due to the nature of that sense of community structure, students are policed different. A funny inference was made by a military police officer referring to his job as more sheep herding than policing.

Many of those students have grown up on military bases all of their lives, never experiencing racial profiling or negative interactions with police. Many aren't aware or believe that negative interactions, racial profiling or community trust issues with law enforcement exist in the continental United States. Students of all racial and ethnic backgrounds don't even view a routine traffic stop as a potentially dangerous situation, because it never is in the communities in which they exist.

To put it in perspective, we pose the following question at the start of every Learn 2 Live forum: "How many of you have ever had a negative interaction with law enforcement or feel as though you've been unjustly profiled, harassed, stopped or have felt as though your civil rights were violated during an encounter?" We have seen with unfailing consistency, upwards of 80 percent of hands (of middle and high school students) that raise in response throughout the one hundred plus forums held to date. Conversely,

when that same question was asked to the students in Germany, maybe 10 percent of hands went up. And most of those were students who had transitioned from the United States as older students and had experienced those issues stateside.

Don't get me wrong! It's great that those students have lived a life harmonious with the police. However, the challenge is that these youth will be graduating high school returning to the continental United States to attend college and or enter the work force unprepared for the reality of the climate of which we are all quite familiar when it comes to troubling policing practices.

Q: So, does this signify a focus shift to conducting forums outside of the United States?

McMikle: No...there is not a focus shift. I anticipate that most of our remaining 80 forums will be facilitated in cities and on college campuses in the continental United States. However, conducting forums on military installations on foreign soil provides an opportunity to widen our impact to places where the relevancy exists on a global scale.

Q: I understand that the initiative is working to create formal partnerships with police departments across the country and challenging them to accept a charge?

McMikle: Yes. That is on tap for the fall of 2020. We will begin asking police departments throughout the county to stand in unison with Kappa Alpha Psi and accept (in writing) our program's "Five-Point Pledge" for accountability in operation.

Point #1: Zero-Tolerance Policy - The first point of our five-point pledge is a "Zero-Tolerance Policy" on biased policing, racial profiling and police brutality. We have defined bias-based policing as the collection of practices that systematically and intentionally incorporate prejudiced judgments based on race,



Each forum allows a group of students the opportunity to play police officer roles during a traffic stop scenario to experience both sides of a situation. Grand Polemarch Shelton and Junior Grand Vice Poelmarch Jackson participate as passengers in the car. These photos (viewed clockwise) show the progression of a traffic stop gone bad!





While we cannot control the actions of officers during a real-life police encounter, the Learn 2 Live Initiative provides a critical game plan, the visual context and intellectual understanding of how a police encounter should (and should not) progress and the steps to follow in the event that your rights have been violated.



ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, economic status, religious beliefs or age.

Point #2: Police Training - Our second point is a commitment to ongoing and regular cultural diversity and sensitivity training for all departmental personnel to ensure fair and equitable practices in law enforcement.

Point #3: Workforce Diversity - The third point calls for a concentrated departmental effort to recruit officers of statistically underrepresented cultural groups in order to present a department representative and reflective of a diverse 21st century population.

Point #4 – Community Engagement & Empathy - Point four calls for a commitment to consistent outreach and constructive conversations and interaction by law enforcement agencies with members and leaders of the African American community, including events and activities. These steps are important to break down social and cultural barriers to cultivate ideal interactions between police and cultural communities.

Point #5 Youth Initiatives - The final pledge point calls for active police involvement in youth initiatives. This pledge point not only provides a benefit to community youth, but also exposes law enforcement personnel to the persons that they police, providing a familiarity and fostering a comfortable working relationship to decrease tensions and foster growth and “bridge building” opportunities.

Q: Why is this five-point plan important?

McMikle: We’re all sickened by the recent murders of our people at the hands of police officers (Breonna Taylor, George Floyd and Rayshard Brooks). We’re beyond tired of the historical consistency of these acts (whether we’re talking Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Tamir Rice or Botham Jean). And we’re fed up with the institutional racism and systemic policing issues that continually go unchecked and unchanged. We understand that it’s going to take a multipronged approach and a large effort to overall complete change, but (now more

than ever) Kappa Alpha Psi is committed to playing a larger role in the demand for change and the follow up until it happens. The five-point plan is one strategy in our attempts to change policing practices through measured action.

In addition to legislation efforts, change has to be instituted at the top levels of law enforcement, more specifically in the Chief’s office, to be effective. This pledge challenges departments to establish levels of accountability and allows us to create partnerships with those departments who are truly committed to eradicating the practices and procedures that place us in harm’s way. With 80 forums left for us to facilitate, we will charge (at least) 80 departments to stand in unison with us and work to create effective change by measurable standards across the board.

Q: Can individual brothers get involved with this initiative? Can any chapter host a forum? Is there a process?

McMikle: The answers are: Yes...Yes...



Learn 2 Live on location in Gary, Indiana. The panel discussion also provided the opportunity for audience members to engage in Q&A.



Learn 2 Live in Germany at Kaiserslautern High School. Students line up for Q&A with the panelists. Below: one half of the students look on as Jimmy McMikle, National Chairman of the Learn 2 Live Initiative, sets the stage for the simulations ahead.





Photos by Michael Hurne.

Above: Students participate in a traffic stop simulation. Below: Philadelphia (PA) Police Officers engage students in a simulated community encounter.



and reach out to me so that we can schedule one. It's that simple. We have a (Grand Chapter approved) budget for these forums which alleviates any cost to chapters. We have a team of facilitators standing by to travel to any chapter's location. Let me pause for a moment and give recognition to our incredible team of facilitators who have been on the road working hard for Kappa these past years. Kudos to the initiative's Vice-Chairman Brother Joseph Bryant (a NOBLE chapter president and retired police chief), Brother Dominique Calhoun, Brother Shawn Byrd and Brother Craig Chisholm for being the road warriors on this initiative. There have been times where we have all facilitated forums in different cities on the same days. We are currently training more facilitators so that we can be more effective and efficient in expanding our reach.

All Learn 2 Live forums must be coordinated through our team. Please do not schedule one and try to execute it without coordinating through us. There's a reason. The forum follows a specific structure. It has a set program format and has to include a certified NOBLE presenter. Our team coordinates with NOBLE and law enforcement personnel. We have a responsibility to maintain the integrity of the program and ensure quality control so that our youth receive correct information and instruction. If a chapter is interested in hosting, my direct email address is: jimmy@themcmiklegroup.com

Q: How have non-minority law enforcement officers responded to the Learn 2 Live effort?

McMikle: We make a conscious effort to try and diversify the cultural make-up of participating officers at each forum. We've been successful in yielding a diverse array of law enforcement in about half of our forums. As a result, there have been a large number of non-minority law enforcement officers who have volunteered for our forums, both as a part of the mock scenarios and as participants on our interactive police

panel portion of the forum. Those officers have been tremendously supportive, helpful and valuable to our efforts. But, then again, I don't expect voluntary participation from the non-minority officers that we're truly concerned about or for whose actions this initiative was created.

Q: I understand that there is a website launch for the initiative coming soon?

McMikle: We are now live. Visit us at: learn2livemovement.com. We will be adding a number of downloadable resources and forum videos during this upcoming fraternal year for everyone's benefit.

Q: Is there anything else new and exciting for this initiative's future?

McMikle: We're working on the development of the Learn 2 Live mobile app! This app will create a virtual community where information can be shared and exchanged without limitation. The Learn 2 Live mobile app will give us access to service youth in places that we don't have the resources or bandwidth to reach. It will allow anyone from anywhere to plug into the information and knowledge that we are sharing with this initiative, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Those who download the app will have access to information such as rules for the traffic stop, community and home encounter. They'll be able to view content and receive notifications of breaking news including national incidents; legislative updates; new recommendations and any other pertinent content that we deem appropriate or necessary to share for the protection or safety of our target population.

The app will also have GPS functionality to provide information relevant to a person's geographic location. For example; imagine driving down the highway and as you cross state lines, you receive a notification welcoming you to the new state. As a part of that welcoming announcement, you may

receive information of any significant law changes (regarding the state you're entering) pertaining to police practices and procedures; search and seizure, important statistics, etc. You would also have access to state specific resources to leverage in your time of need.

Q: We'll be sure to check back with you in the near future to see how things are progressing?

McMikle: I'll be glad to update you! Thanks for updating the membership about this initiative. φνπ

