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## MONT PLEASANT MIDDLE SCHOOL

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June 4, 2002

Mayor Jerry Jennings  
Albany City Hall  
24 Eagle Street  
Albany, NY 12207

Dear Mayor:

I am writing to commend a speaker who recently gave a presentation to students at Mont Pleasant Middle School in Schenectady. Mr. Ron "Cook" Barrett currently works for The Department of Youth and Family Services for the City of Albany as a Gang Prevention Coordinator. As you are aware, gangs are becoming a more prevalent problem in the cities and communities of upstate New York. Subsequently our responses, and more importantly, our proactive actions, have to exceed those of organized subcultures.

At my request, Mr. Cook came to our school and spoke for over an hour to a group of about 30 students. He then took some individual time with a few of the more "involved" students. To say his words were inspirational, insightful, and heartfelt would be a gross understatement. Ron's dedication and concern for our youth is clearly apparent from his captivating presentation. His knowledge of today's street culture(s), gangs, and all which influences our young people in that respect is overwhelming. Hopefully, due to Ron's efforts, our students will have a greater ability to separate fact from fiction and reality from media glorification, when contemplating gangs or the inevitable consequences associated with its lifestyle.

Feedback from the experience has been completely positive, leaving my students and staff very impressed. My team and I plan to follow-up by opening the lines of communication with our students on this important topic. We would like to extend our gratitude and appreciation to Mr. Barrett for his time, motivation, and professionalism.

Respectfully,

Robert J. Cosmer  
Special Education Teacher  
Mont Pleasant Middle School

xc: Ron Barrett  
Dr. John Falco  
Gail Smith  
James Masi  
Gary Comley  
Sherri Townsend