

May 10, 2002

Ms. Sheri Townsend
Commissioner
Department of Youth and
Family Services
7 Hoffman Ave.
Albany, NY 12209

Dear Sheri,

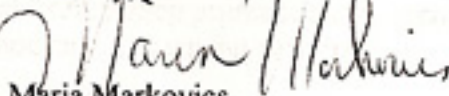
I have been working with the Human Services Department at Hudson Valley Community College for several years as an Adjunct Instructor. I am still active with United Tenants (for nearly thirty years) but have more recently been involved with various programs through Hudson Valley Community College.

In April, the Human Services Department sponsored the annual MACHS Conference (Mid-Atlantic Consortium of Human Services) which brings together faculty and students from five states who are part of Human Services Programs. The theme of this year's conference was *Transcending Violence and Discrimination*. At this Conference, Ron "Cook" Barrett did a workshop on gangs. The workshop participants, both students and faculty, were enthralled with his presentation. He clearly cares deeply about the young people he works with and he is so effective in getting the message out about the hurt that comes with violence. Throughout the conference weekend people made frequent references to how impressed they were with his presentation on gangs.

I commend you for having this type of program available to all segments of the Capital District community. Cook certainly represents well the strong commitment of the City of Albany's Department of Youth and Family Services to address the issue of gangs and ways to give young people realistic alternatives to gang participation.

Hope all is well with you.

Sincerely,


Maria Markovics