



OJJDP FACT SHEET

Shay Bilchik, Administrator

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Investing in Youth for a Safer Future

by Sarah Ingersoll

For some years now, instances of youth violence have generated front-page headlines and corresponding public concern. Too often, however, this concern has failed to translate into significant investments in youth programs. Although many organizations are working diligently to provide policymakers, criminal justice practitioners, and the public with information about effective prevention and intervention programs, their efforts have not resulted in the support needed to ensure that all young people have the opportunity to lead productive lives—free from crime and violence.

We know what works. A range of programs have been proven to prevent and reduce crime by and against youth and to help young people turn their lives around. The Investing in Youth for a Safer Future public education campaign was designed to educate every citizen about the need to invest time, resources, and support in effective prevention and intervention strategies and to involve youth in this effort.

The campaign is the result of a partnership effort between the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) and the Bureau of Justice Assistance, working through the National Citizens' Crime Prevention Campaign and under the banner of the Ad Council. The Ad Council consists of major advertising agencies and corporate advertisers who volunteer their time and talents to develop public service advertisements (PSA's). The two advertising agencies contributing to this campaign are Saatchi & Saatchi and Vidal, Reynardus & Moya.

The National Citizens' Crime Prevention Campaign ranked number one among Ad Council campaigns last year, generating donations of advertising space and time worth \$85 million. In previous years, the campaign focused on the impact of crime and gun violence. The latest phase, Investing in Youth for a Safer Future, centers on informing individuals about solutions to crime and violence.

Youth PSA's

Research conducted by Saatchi & Saatchi with youth from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds found that the idea of

dispelling adult stereotypes of teenagers motivated them to get involved in crime prevention. Accordingly, the campaign's PSA's urge young people to "prove adults wrong by doing something right."

These youth-targeted PSA's build on findings from a 1996 Louis Harris poll that found that 9 out of 10 teenagers are willing to get involved in activities that prevent crime (Louis Harris and Associates, 1996). In fact, according to a 1996 study by Independent Sector, an organization that supports voluntarism and citizen action, 6 out of 10 teenagers already volunteer—a larger proportion than adults (Independent Sector, 1996).

The youth PSA's appear on television, radio, posters, billboards, and in magazines, and feature a toll-free telephone number. Youth who call 800-722-TEENS receive a free brochure that lists ideas and resources for getting involved in crime prevention. The brochure provides a resource directory with contact information for OJJDP's Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse, which offers Fact Sheets and Bulletins from OJJDP's Youth in Action series.

Adult PSA's

The campaign also educates adults as to the importance of providing the support that youth need in their communities to become and remain crime free. Reminding the audience that "less crime is no accident," these PSA's inform adults that prevention and intervention programs work and need their support.

The adult-targeted PSA's are used on television, radio, buses, billboards, kiosks, and in print media, and feature a toll-free telephone number. Adults who call 800-WE-PREVENT receive a free, 20-page booklet that shows how they can support community programs that work to prevent and reduce juvenile crime. Spanish-language PSA's feature the toll-free number, 800-727-UNETE, which offers a Spanish edition of the same booklet.

The adult PSA's also feature a Web site, www.weprevent.org, that provides information on effective program ideas and initiatives.

The adult PSA's are buttressed by nationally distributed news features on gang prevention, substance abuse prevention, teen victimization, and crime prevention. They are further reinforced through a community leader's kit that provides video segments, adaptable fact sheets, transparency masters, and a speaker's guide to encourage community leaders and organizations to identify ways in which they can support and promote effective anticrime programming for youth.

For Further Information

For further information about the Investing in Youth for a Safer Future public education campaign, please contact the National Crime Prevention Council, 1700 K Street NW., Second Floor, Washington, DC 20006-3817; 202-466-6272 (telephone), 202-296-1356 (fax), www.ncpc.org (Internet).

References

Independent Sector. 1996. *Volunteering and Giving Among American Teens*. Washington, DC: Independent Sector.

Louis Harris and Associates. 1996. *Between Hope and Fear: Teens Speak Out on Crime and the Community*. Washington, DC: National Crime Prevention Council.

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The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Assistance, the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, and the Office for Victims of Crime.

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