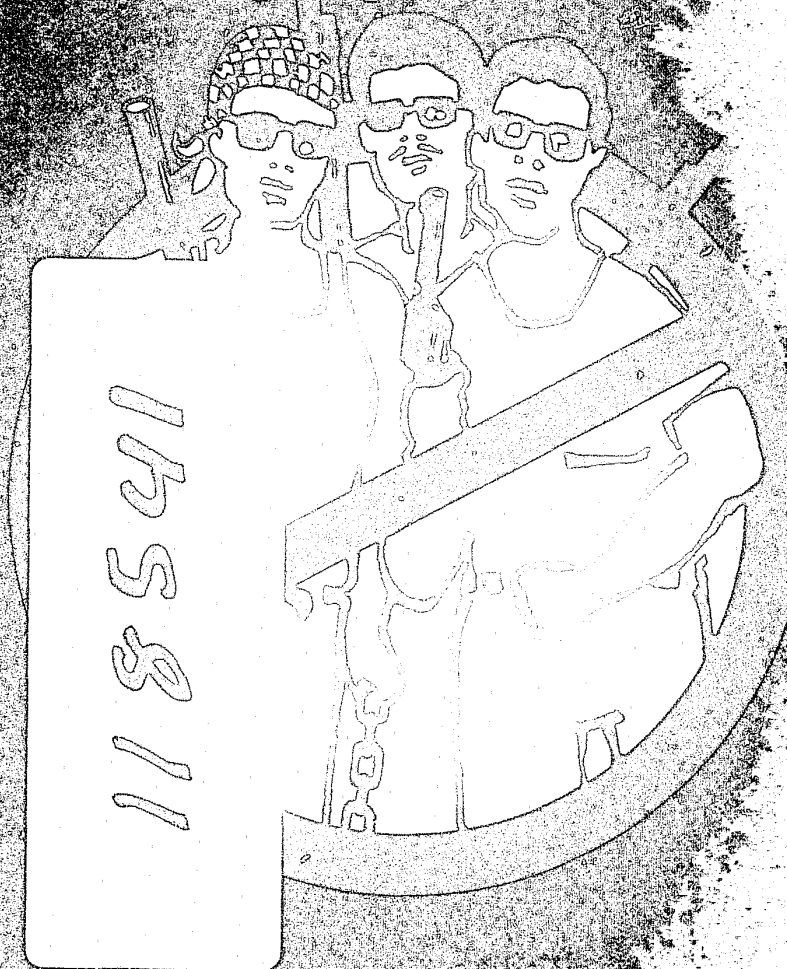
# Gangs

## Breaking Up is Hard to Do





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# Gangs in Schools

## *Breaking Up is Hard to Do*



NATIONAL SCHOOL SAFETY CENTER

## Introduction

***"I never had a conscience. I tried not to let things bother me. You got to survive. If I didn't do it [kill people]. . . I'd get my head blown off."***
*— Former gang member*

Youth gangs are not a new phenomenon in America. Philadelphians convened in 1791 to decide how to deal with bands of young people disrupting that city, and officials in New York City admitted to having gang problems as early as 1825. Over the years, many other urban areas have experienced the unrest resulting from gangs of young people banding together for a variety of reasons. Such youths may just want to occupy time, fill an emptiness in their lives or experience a sense of belonging. Whatever the reason, when a gang evolves, communities almost always suffer serious consequences.

During the past two decades, gangs in this country have assumed alarming new characteristics. Today, children as young as 10 or 11 are lured into gangs and commit acts of violence once associated only with much older, more sophisticated troublemakers. In some rare instances, 7- and 8-year-olds are taught to identify themselves with the gang of an older relative. Gangs have also spread into new territories or "turf," operate openly on school campuses and demonstrate more violent behavior. This behavior is often related to drug trafficking and abuse. But parents, educators and law enforcement officials, who may exert the most immediate and long-lasting influence on a child's development, should pay especially close attention to gangs and signs of gang involvement. With a little knowledge and understanding of the gang phenomenon, adults may help stem the tide of gang affiliation and its natural accompaniments: disrespect, disruption in school and a vicious cycle of community violence.

*Gangs in Schools* is intended to serve as an introduction to youth gangs for educators, law enforcers and other youth-serving professionals. The book provides a sketch of Hispanic, black and Asian gangs, as well as white "stoner" gangs and satanic cults. While fewer in number than other ethnic gangs, stoner groups and satanic cults are growing and thought by law enforcement to be responsible for bizarre and shocking crimes.

This handbook offers the latest information on gangs and practical advice on preventing or reducing gang encroachment in schools. Law enforcers, school principals, prosecutors and others who have become gang experts have contributed their valuable suggestions based on years of experience. They believe that establishing codes of conduct, diligent awareness of gang rivalries, prevention

courses, and community and parental involvement *can* make an impact in keeping gangs away from campus.

The first chapter of *Gangs in Schools* discusses general characteristics and attractions of gangs, and how to recognize potential gang involvement in a juvenile. Chapter 2 explains specific characteristics of Hispanic, black, Asian and "stoner" gangs, and satanic cults, including typical dress, behavior, style of graffiti and their favored kinds of gang activities. Chapter 3 suggests crisis intervention and conflict resolution techniques, while school and community programs are listed in Chapter 4. A list of publications and resources completes the book.

The National School Safety Center published *Gangs in Schools* in the belief that schools can play a major role in preventing juveniles from joining gangs and limiting gang influence at school. From kindergarten through 12th grade, school may be the one consistent, structured influence in a child's life. Schools can strike at the root of juvenile delinquency by refusing to allow gangs to exist on campus and providing an opportunity for young people to be productive and responsible citizens.

While schools cannot be expected to shoulder the full responsibility for socializing thus-far unsocialized youth, the educational system is, nonetheless, an anchor around which the family, community, church, and public and private social service agencies can build a cooperative network to reduce and eventually eliminate negative gang activity.

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As a national clearinghouse, the Center communicates the latest trends and effective programs in school safety to educators, law enforcers, the legal community, government officials, the media and the public.

Center activities include producing print and multimedia informational materials for practitioners; creating public service advertising to promote public awareness; providing technical assistance; developing legal and legislative resources; and presenting training conferences.

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## Chapter 1

# Gangs in perspective

***"Gangs are very mobile today. They don't just stay in one area. They are not just limited to poor areas of the county. They are all over the place."***
*— Ed Edelman, Supervisor, Los Angeles County*

"Youth," as defined in relation to the term "youth gang," usually identifies individuals under 18 years old. Larger gangs in major cities, however, often have members whose ages range from 8 to 55. In these cases, membership may be intergenerational with parents, children and grandchildren affiliating with the same gang.

Gang members today are much younger than those in years past. According to FBI statistics, children (not necessarily all gang members) under the age of 15 were responsible for 381 murders in 1985, as well as 2,645 rapes, 18,021 aggravated assaults and 13,899 robberies. And although nearly one-third of all juveniles are arrested once in their lives, only 7 percent are responsible for 70 percent of all crime committed by youths. This trend has prompted forward-thinking schools and communities to develop early prevention programs, strategies and curricula aimed at grades 3, 4 and 5. There is unanimous agreement that this type of early prevention is the most effective way to stem gang activity.

The importance of prevention cannot be overemphasized. Once in a gang, the odds are overwhelmingly against a boy (or girl) ever leaving it. Youths who try to leave are threatened; indeed, many affiliate with gangs because in their neighborhood it is, while dangerous, seemingly the best protection from other thugs.

Urban sprawl, population growth, high unemployment and urban recession "pockets" have moved some street gangs out of the inner city, their traditional territory, and into new settings, including rural towns and suburban communities. The Los Angeles area, now considered America's "youth gang capital," reflects this trend. Formerly, gangs were centered in low-income, inner-city neighborhoods where poverty, racial division, broken families, high unemployment and lack of recreational activities contributed to their formation. Today, there are at least 600 gangs with approximately 70,000 gang members within Los Angeles County alone. Of those, it is estimated that only between 15,000 and 18,000 of the gang members now live inside the city limits. Because of this

territorial shift, communities and schools not experienced with gang behavior are now forced to deal with it.

A 1983 U.S. Department of Justice study suggested a wide range of gang involvement throughout the nation, with Western cities plagued far more often by gangs than Eastern cities. Most youth gangs are still found in their traditional setting, major population centers. But local youth gangs are presenting a growing law enforcement problem in cities with populations under 250,000.

Like the population at large, gangs are more mobile than ever before. Large, well-established gangs frequently relocate from one city to another to establish themselves as the primary gang presence in town, often usurping the position of smaller, less sophisticated gangs. Miami law enforcement officers are now coping with the burden of Chicago gang leaders who have moved into Dade County and are demanding cooperation and acquiescence from local gang members. In response, some Miami-based gangs are moving away or disbanding.

Chicago gangs have also infiltrated into Milwaukee and established branches of two major gangs: the Black Gangster Disciples and their rivals, the Vice Lords. Milwaukee Police Department statistics from 1986 show about 2,000 hardcore gang members and another 6,000 peripheral members. Yet this relatively small number of youth has scarred the city with violence, crime and fear. Several school administrators must now monitor gang-related activities to keep problems from developing. In some schools, any time a student draws a gang symbol or wears gang insignias, he is sent to the principal's office and a parental conference is called. Some parents are shocked to learn that their children even know about gangs; other parents are themselves gang members.

Today violence perpetrated by gangs takes a greater toll than before, with gang-involved students playing a disproportionate role in acts of violence, vandalism, extortion, and threats to students and teachers on school campuses. Gang warfare has become more lethal as the weapons formerly used by gang members — fists, chains, knives and small handguns — have been replaced by the heavier artillery of shotguns, automatic weapons and explosives. Law enforcers also report today's gang members are more likely to be involved in drug dealing and related criminal activities, which contributes to their more violent behavior and weapon use.

The trend of gang involvement in drug dealing is disturbing, and it especially concerns law enforcement officers. With its money-making potential, drug trafficking is turning more gangs into highly organized criminal organizations whose operations span the nation. Most rank and file gang members make relatively little money off drug dealing, but for kids who have never had anything, the lure of a steady and easy income is irresistible. Adult gang members frequently take over local drug dealing and make fabulous sums of money, shielding themselves by using juvenile members for pickups and deliveries and for

gang hitmen. Ten-year-olds are being used as weapons carriers and errand runners for the gangs. Gangs have learned juvenile criminals are treated far more leniently by the courts than adults when they are apprehended and convicted of drug charges or violent crimes. Schools are often used as drug distribution sites as well. These drug operations significantly increase the likelihood of serious violence and weapon use on campus.

Once in prison, most street gang members remain loyal to their gang. But others, who have learned more sophisticated and disciplined ways than were needed on the street, are recruited into the more ruthless, calculating and purposeful prison gangs. Where the street gang thrives on an emotional involvement with its turf or "family," prison gangs are cold and individualistic; disagreements in a prison gang may be resolved with the murder of a member, an alien concept to street gangs.

## Gang membership

***"I'm an ex-gang member. I do not come from a broken home. I do not come from the barrio. I do not come from the ghetto. I come from a middle-class white neighborhood. I became a gang member at the age of 13. I served three years in the state penitentiary for seven counts of attempted murder and was released when I was 21."*** *— Former (female) gang member*

***"There was one person that I'll never forget. It was a schoolteacher who had a lot interest in kids. She took me under her wing. She taught me how to read and write. She was probably the most important person in my life."*** *— Former gang member*

Gangs in contemporary society meet many of the same fundamental needs of other social groups: They provide companionship, training, activities, protection and a sense of belonging. Yet the anti-social behavior of youth gangs sets them apart from other affiliations and makes them unacceptable to society. A recent study in Wisconsin revealed most violent crimes by youths were committed by groups of three or more. This "pack" behavior seems to be responsible for a significant part of the socially disruptive activity of today's youth.

Gang activity is not limited to low-income youth. Some middle- and upper-class suburbs are facing problems caused by gangs whose members come from affluent homes. Their acts of vandalism, robbery and drug dealing are explained as the results of boredom or alienation from their families and peers. Often this gang activity can be traced directly to dependency on illegal drugs and the demands of supporting a drug habit.

**Who is likely to join a gang?**

Young people in trouble cry out for help in different ways. Some of these pleas for help are dangerous — running away, becoming involved with drugs or becoming sexually promiscuous. Some youths act tough, others commit suicide. But crises don't just happen. They develop gradually. Recognizing these warning signs may help a youth resist serious trouble, including joining a gang. These warnings include:

- Rumors or reliable ir formation that a youth has not been home for several nights
- Evidence of increased substance abuse
- Abrupt changes in personality and behavior
- Newly acquired and unexplained "wealth" often showered on or shared with peers (anything from sharing bags of candy with younger children to a flurry of more extravagant spending by older youth)
- Requests to borrow money
- "Hanging around," but being unable to discuss the problem
- Evidence of mental or physical child abuse
- A dress code that applies to a few: i.e., wearing of a color, style or item of clothing, a particular hair style, and symbols of identification

## Chapter 2

# Gang characteristics

***"Gang members tend to be chronic losers, who can accomplish nothing individually, or who live in so depressed an environment that only by banding together can they excercise any influence over their lives. In both cases, they are as much to be pitied as condemned."***
*— Sydney J. Harris, nationally syndicated columnist*

The United States has experienced many waves of immigration. Some immigrants came seeking freedom, some sought safety, others dreamed of wealth. Many eventually did find the security and prosperity they sought in their adopted nation, but often this came only after a time of hardship, sacrifice and adjustment. New immigrants initially faced discrimination by those who preceded them. The abuse usually continued until the newcomers were assimilated into American society.

Ethnic gangs often are rooted in this experience of discrimination, economic struggle and transition. Gangs historically have formed according to cultural ancestry. Larry Rawles, deputy director of Philadelphia's Crisis Intervention Network, explains, "When any ethnic group was at the bottom, they formed gangs — the Jews, the Irish, the Italians." Rawles notes that gangs provided young people many things society didn't offer, including status, a sense of self-worth, a place of acceptance and, perhaps most important, personal protection.

Youth gangs usually organize along geographic boundaries and are often composed exclusively of Hispanic, black, Asian or white members. But their gang behavior is not representative of their ethnic community. It should not be inferred that immigrants and cultural ancestry are a precipitating influence in gang formation since only a few persons from within any ethnic group choose to enter gangs. According to George McKenna, principal of George Washington Preparatory High School in Los Angeles, "It is a separate group within the ethnic subculture that forms the gang, rather than the ethnic diversity or even the systemic societal oppression which causes the formation of a gang." Studies indicate gang violence usually occurs between rival gangs of the same ethnic background, that is, black gang versus black gang, or Hispanic gang versus Hispanic gang. While conflicts between different ethnic groups do occur, such conflicts are

uncommon. Most gang members prey upon their own culture and ethnic group, not as a response to the oppression of others, but out of self-hatred and low self-esteem that they feel as individuals, who happen to be part of a group.

Some gangs organize around a specialty crime. For example, the Mazda Boys, a Miami-based gang primarily composed of Latins but also including whites, specialize in stealing Mazda automobiles. This specializing, though, has been their downfall. Nester Bustamante, assistant state attorney in Dade County, Florida, says that gangs who concentrate in one area of crime, like the Mazda Boys, become easier to track and, therefore, to shut down.

The dominant ethnic gangs today are composed of Hispanic, black and Asian youth. Less well known, but posing an increasing problem, are white "stoner" gangs, usually heavy metal music fans who, when carried to extremes, become involved in satanic activities. Each has a separate history, and, accordingly, their gangs are identified by distinctively different characteristics.

### Hispanic gangs

The term "Hispanic" is currently used to describe the various ethnic groups descended from Spanish-speaking cultures. The term refers to but is not limited to Mexicans, Mexican-Americans, Latinos and Puerto Ricans. The largest concentration of Hispanic youth gangs in America is in Southern California.

The leadership of Hispanic gangs tends to be less structured than in most other ethnic youth gangs. Those with specific abilities assume positions of leadership when situations arise requiring those skills. For example, a gang member with extensive fighting experience will be designated to lead other members in a battle triggered by a dispute over territory. Usually a team of members, each with a different area of expertise, shares leadership responsibilities according to the situation and the abilities needed.

In some cities, the gang hierarchy appears more fixed. In Miami, for example, Hispanic gangs follow a strict organizational structure where members and leaders are clearly distinguished, and all members must follow a rigid code of conduct.

Gang members are loyal to the death to their gang. If a member moves from the home gang turf, he may fight the new gang or strike a deal that allows him to retain his identity with his home gang. This is how new gangs often develop. Traditional gang members never inform on "homeboys," even if faced with prison or death. Nor will they testify against rival gangs who have victimized them, preferring to retaliate on their own.

Gang initiations often require a new member to prove his worth and fearlessness. The most common induction test requires the initiate to fight several established members. Sometimes the potential member must commit a purse snatching or robbery or a more violent crime. Such tests prove the initiate is

"macho" (manly) and help establish his reputation.

Each member who is initiated into a Hispanic gang adopts its code of dress. Various combinations of headgear, shirts, pants and shoes identify specific gangs. Some gangs wear the knit watch cap, primarily of a dark color, pulled down over the ears with a small roll at the bottom. Many gangs wear folded bandanas, worn just over the forehead and tied in the back. Colors vary and the gang member's name sometimes is embroidered on it. Favored hats include the "stingy" brim and, more recently, the baseball cap with the member's nickname and gang name written on the cap's turned-up "bill."

The Hispanic gang uniform also can include a tank-style undershirt, a T-shirt or a Pendleton, a traditional favorite of gang members who wear it buttoned at the collar and cuffs, leaving the remaining buttons unfastened to permit quick access to weapons.

Any one of a number of stimuli can set off gang violence: challenges; threats against a member, his family or "homeboys" (fellow gang members); breaches of territoriality; defacing the painted insignia of rival gang members; or even a pinning of eyes or staredown ("mad-dogging"). These provocations, together with criminal behavior, are identified by law enforcement as the principal cause of Hispanic gang violence and murder. Within the gang family, violent acts are strongly reinforced by praise, respect and reputation. The Hispanic gang creed includes the concept that gang "turf" is something of value, something worth defending. The philosophy also holds that the gang is more important than the individual member and his family, a concept which contributes to involvement in dangerous, and sometimes potentially fatal, activities.

Females are, with more frequency, involved in gang violence. This reflects a change from a few years ago, when females were not considered full gang members and were allowed to move in and out of rival gang territory without death threats. Tony Ostos, a counselor with the City of Paramount's (California) anti-gang program, says "Today, females are increasingly involved in criminal and other negative gang activities, including marking graffiti, carrying weapons and using drugs. Pregnancy rates are very high in this group, too."

Gangs traditionally mark their territory with graffiti. To a gang member, graffiti also declares the member's pride in his gang and advertises its presence in the neighborhood. Hispanic gang graffiti appears in very stylized lettering, frequently using three-dimensional or block letters and lettering with serifs. Gang members' street names are often listed in their graffiti.

Newer gang groups differ from the more established ghetto gangs because of their greater mobility and higher level of violence, including the use of high-powered firearms. One Hispanic gang member noted that this escalation in the

use of powerful weapons stems not only from a "keeping up with the Joneses" mentality, but also practical need.

"I used to get beat up a lot when I didn't carry anything," he said. "Then I got smart and started carrying a gun. Also, if everyone else is getting a double-barrelled shotgun, you want one, too."

### Black gangs

During the early 1920s, black youth gangs organized around street crime activity. Initially, most black gangs had no rival organizations, enabling them to concentrate on criminal activity rather than on defending territory. It was not until the late 1930s that a substantial increase in the number of black youth gangs occurred. Competition among them escalated, and inter-gang rivalry and warfare became commonplace.

Black youth gang development in Los Angeles illustrates this pattern. In the early 1920s, the "Boozies" gang formed and assumed control in the inner city. (Its membership came primarily from a local family named Boozie.) This gang retained a monopoly on black street crime until the late 1930s, when rival gangs formed. Additional new gangs emerged in Los Angeles during the 1950s and 1960s, taking names such as the "Businessmen," the "Home Street Gang," the "Slauson Gang" and the "Neighborhood Gang." Some of these grew powerful, while others failed to attract new recruits and disappeared as members aged or left for other reasons, often to serve prison terms.

In the 1970s, black gangs became dominated by the "Crips" gang, which still retains tremendous influence in Los Angeles' gang world. Since the mid-1970s, gangs have added "Crips" to their names, for example, the "Main Street" gang became the "Main Street Crips." Today, black gangs are affiliated either with "Crips" or their arch rivals, the "Bloods."

In the past 10 years, black gangs have also "graduated" from small local robberies to major narcotics trafficking, according to Sgt. Bob Jackson of the Los Angeles Police Department's Gang Crimes Section. Jackson, co-author of the 1985 book *Understanding Street Gangs*, says, "When an administrator sees black gangs at school, he can be sure drugs are around."

In fact, so pervasive is the black gang influence on drug trafficking that a front-page article in the *Los Angeles Times* (Jan. 11, 1987) stated that today's black gangs "act more like traditional organized crime groups." While Latino gangs have become less menacing in the recent past, the article said, black gangs have become so deeply enmeshed in the rock cocaine traffic that they are said to control at least 100 "rock houses" in the city. Black gangs also are setting up similar businesses throughout the Western states and as far east as Louisiana. A juvenile court judge in south-central Los Angeles said 75 percent of those ap-

pearing in his court have been arrested on cocaine-related charges and that the problem is often exacerbated by the youth's parents, who may also be gang members and expect their children to bring drug money home, lest they be punished. Parents who are also criminal offenders obviously perpetuate criminal behavior.

This trend points to the need for continued emphasis on preventing youths from becoming gang members in the first place. As Sgt. Jackson observes, "How can you tell a kid who's making $500 a week guarding a rock house that he really ought to be in school or that he ought to be getting up at 4 a.m. every day to ride his bicycle around the neighborhood to deliver the morning papers?"

Members of black gangs frequently use descriptive nicknames to identify themselves. Their monikers often describe the member's favorite weapon, such as "Little .45," while others are linked to the member's criminal talent. For example, "Greasy Mitt" identifies a good car thief, and "Sock-Eye" names a strong fighter.

During the 1970s, more sophisticated black gang members abandoned distinctive gang attire when they realized police and school officials used dress as a basis for detaining them. Routine searches often revealed concealed-weapon or narcotics violations. To reduce this threat, gang members adopted a more generic style of dress.

Members' hair styles frequently are patterned after those of their gang's leaders, who may have shaved heads or wear their hair in bushy "naturals," "cornrowed" or braided.

Black youth gangs use graffiti to mark territory and proclaim gang superiority much the same way other ethnic gangs do. Black graffiti, though, not only claims a territory, but also targets all students in the school as potential shooting victims by rival gangs, according to Jackson.

Unlike Hispanic graffiti, black graffiti has no stylized serifs or other flourishes. The lettering is plain and the messages crude: drawings of guns, dollar signs and a great deal of profanity mark black gang graffiti. It also champions the power of the individual gang member, in contrast to the group power declared by Hispanic gangs.

Tattoos are becoming more popular with black gangs, and members often wear colored scarves or "rags" as a means of identifying gang affiliation. Crips use blue or blue and black scarves, while Bloods normally carry red. The "rags" usually hang from a jacket pocket or from the back pocket of their jeans.

### Asian gangs

Asian gangs present a problem in most cities with a large population of recent Asian immigrants, including New York and areas around New Orleans, Houston, Los Angeles and Orange counties, Portland, Seattle and San Francisco.

According to Michael Popolizio, deputy district attorney in Santa Clara, California, and project head of the county-wide Youth Gang Violence Suppression Project, Asian gangs are more difficult to identify than other gangs because they do not wear distinctive clothing or tattoos or mark their territory with graffiti. Like Hispanic, black and other gangs, however, they adhere to codes of silence, the maxim "once in, never out," and initiation rites that include an oath of allegiance and commission of a crime, witnessed and approved by gang leaders.

Asian gangs do share several traits, including secretiveness, sophisticated organizational structure led by older, experienced leaders, and an emphasis on profit-making in their ventures.

### *Chinese*

Chinese gangs are the strongest, oldest and most sophisticated of the Asian gangs. They originated around the mid-19th century during a period of Chinese immigration to this country and formed groups called Tongs. Although at first respectable social organizations, Tongs later moved into gambling, prostitution and drugs.

"Wah Ching" (Chinese youths) were used as lookouts by the gang's elders. A Wah Ching gang, comprised primarily of immigrants from Hong Kong, arose in San Francisco in the mid-1960s and was known for its violence, especially in fights with rivals. This inter-gang violence climaxed in the 1977 "Golden Dragon Massacre" in which five people died and 11 were wounded.

Today, the Joe Boys and the Yu Li are both rivals to the Wah Ching and to each other. All three gangs exist in most major U.S. cities. Because of the Chinese community's reluctance to inform on the gangs, limited information has been gathered about their activities.

### *Samoan*

Samoan gangs share more in common with black and Hispanic gangs than other Asian gangs. For example, Samoan gangs mark their turf with graffiti and wear characteristic gang clothing. Some even affiliate with black gangs, as in the case of the Sons of Samoa. Recently, there have been efforts to organize Samoan gangs for drug trafficking, especially crack cocaine.

### *Vietnamese*

Since Saigon fell in 1974, the United States has opened its doors to a flood of Indochinese refugees, the largest segments of which are the "boat people" and other Vietnamese who fled the country after the Communist takeover. Many of these Vietnamese were very well educated and wealthy, the cream of society.

Michael Popolizio points to an irony in the phenomenon of Vietnamese

gangs: "Their inherent achievement orientation seems to work both ways: Most Vietnamese youth who accept the authoritarian, hierarchical family structure and tireless dedication to work will naturally excel. But when they do become involved with crime, they channel that achievement goal into developing successful, profitable criminal organizations."

Some youths are lured away from their cultural values by the extremely liberal attitudes they see around them in their American peers, Popolizio believes. "Actions that are considered a normal part of growing up in an American family become an outrageous rebellion in a Vietnamese family," he notes. "The parents' reaction is commensurately extreme, which can erode family relationships and lead to a complete breakdown in communication. A child's disrespect and wild behavior is only aggravated by the youth's higher proficiency in English. When outsiders must speak directly to children to communicate, the parents take it as a great affront. Eventually, the child may assume a self-importance in the family because of this language capability, escalating the conflict between the generations."

Vietnamese gang members travel freely and often from city to city and stay in "safe houses" when away from home. It is common for them to drive all night from Los Angeles to San Jose, a 350-mile trip, commit a series of crimes (often auto burglaries), then return immediately to Los Angeles.

Vietnamese gang members nearly always victimize their own people. Once a youth is recognized as belonging to these "gangsters," he is feared and can walk into any restaurant or coffee shop, eat and leave without paying the bill. The Vietnamese fear retaliation from these gangs. In general, Vietnamese distrust police authority because of their experiences in Vietnam and rarely come forward to provide information to police that would help prosecute the gang members. Some may be willing to provide information anonymously.

Despite distrust of police authority, however, the Vietnamese hold educators in great esteem, and school officials are often able to obtain cooperation from the student when police cannot. Parents will also fully cooperate, as long as they feel secure from retaliation.

While it is rare to see a Vietnamese youth disagree directly with authority figures, Popolizio warns that a student's tacit agreement or conciliatory response is no guarantee that the school official's suggestions or guidance has been accepted. "Even the most committed criminal in the Vietnamese community will show respect to authority figures," he says. "Their courtesy and good manners convince many people they are law-abiding citizens who have, for some unknown reason, become involved in aberrant criminal behavior."

Families are likely to feel shame and disgrace in any confrontation with schoolteachers or administrators, and any overt accusation will be taken as an act

of hostility. The family must be made to understand that the school in no way intends to embarrass them and the conference is not meant as a punishment. An interpreter may be needed to facilitate the discussions.

### White "stoner" gangs and satanic cults

***"Punk rockers and heavy metalers come from all socioeconomic classes. They're of average intelligence and they're capable youngsters. They have very little parental authority. They're usually angry. Their dance is violent. Their music is violent. Their behavior is violent. They're into anarchy."*** *— Darlyne Pettinicchio, probation officer, Orange County, California*

White gang activity is a more recent phenomenon than that of other ethnic gangs, and it is also harder to define or neatly categorize. In trying to explain its origins, authorities cite the same reasons as for involvement in other ethnic gangs: decreased parental involvement and breakdown of traditional family values. Others point to the same reasons given to explain the rise of the punk-rock subculture in Britain: alienation from parents' values, a bleak outlook on the future and growing anxiety over the specter of nuclear war.

While some youths become involved in white supremacist gangs, the most troublesome and numerous of the white gangs are youths involved in punk rock and heavy metal music, which abounds with messages of drugs, violence, suicide and Satanism. New bands try to outdo one another in the explicitness and shock value of their lyrics, just as they try to create the most dramatic or bizarre names: Slayer, Venom, Bitch, Megadeth.

Punk rock and heavy metal are phenomena that have captivated the attention of hundreds of thousands of children across the United States. Fortunately, most children outgrow this fad in time, but for others it becomes a way of life, where alcohol, drugs, defiance of authority, preoccupation with death and even Satanism become an obsession for which they are willing to die.

Hard-core heavy metalers (sometimes called "stoners" because of their involvement with drugs) and punk rockers tend to resemble traditional street gangs in social structure and values. They adorn themselves with characteristic clothing, jewelry and other accoutrements, and they mar public property with graffiti.

Some juveniles cross the line of heavy metal/punk rock and become involved with Satanism, which perverts the values of organized religion and society in general. Law enforcement officers have in recent years discovered more and more crimes characterized by satanic paraphernalia and influences, such as candles, goats' heads, desecration of religious symbols and even shocking mutilations.

Parents, educators, law enforcement officers and counselors need to be aware of

the messages, beliefs and values that heavy metal and punk rock groups are sending. According to Darlyne Pettinicchio, a nationally recognized specialist in the area of punk, heavy metal and Satanism, and a probation officer in Orange County, California, "We need to abandon the notion that the ideas presented in punk and heavy metal lyrics are 'just for show' or simply 'a way to make money.' Only then can appropriate steps be taken to guide kids' growth into emotionally healthy, productive adults."

### *Punk rockers*

Punk rock began in England in the early 1970s as a movement of social rebellion by working-class youths. American punkers, in contrast, tend to come from the more privileged classes of society. But they also tend to play the role of societal victims, share a nihilistic perspective of America's social institutions and oppose acceptable American values.

Both in the United States and abroad, punk rock generally promotes anarchy as a response to concepts of law and order. Punk rock and heavy metal lyrics are rife with messages of self-mutilation, assault, suicide, Satanism and rebellion against all forms of authority. Some punk bands now in vogue include Clash, Dead Kennedys, Youth Patrol, G.I. (Government Issue), Youth Brigade, "X" and Human Sexual Response.

Punk rockers dress to shock the observer and draw attention to themselves. Punk fashions are influenced by the punk subgroup to which they belong, but there is no uniform dress code among the subgroups. Current fashions for girl punkers include net nylons, often with holes, black nail polish and heavy eye makeup, also black. White, blood red and black are the most popular colors in punk clothing and accessories.

Both girls and boys wear short, mohawked, skinned or unevenly shaved haircuts in flamboyant colors. Punk rockers also wear numerous pierced earrings, cross necklaces and cross earrings. Military or oversized men's dress shirts and T-shirts emblazoned with the name of a punk band are worn outside of well-worn jeans or military fatigues. Military or jeans jackets with torn-out sleeves are also popular, as are scuffed military boots and thick-soled shoes, including high-top tennis shoes.

Studded belts and boots, chains and spikes worn around the neck, wrist, waist, ankles and clothes are going out of fashion.

### *Heavy metalers*

Although heavy metal evolved from the hard rock bands of the '60s and '70s, the music has since become louder, faster and more aggressive. The main focus and theme of heavy metal is drugs, sex and rock-and-roll, defiance of authority and a

"live for today" attitude.

Pettinicchio notes that the American music industry markets heavy metal toward adolescent boys. "It promotes a chauvinistic attitude toward women that gives adolescent males a feeling of power and control," she says. Heavy metalers may also be identified as metal heads, head bangers, rebel riders, rivet heads, stoners, longhairs, hippies or rockers.

Dozens, if not hundreds, of new heavy metal bands are constantly vying for young people's attention. Many heavy metalers involved in the occult say that the bands AC/DC, WASP and KISS stand for Anti-Christ/Devil Children, We Are Satan's People and Knights in Satan's Service, respectively. The bands deny this. Other metal bands include Judas Priest, Black Sabbath, Iron Maiden, Motley Crue, Ozzy Osbourne, Def Leppard and Twisted Sister.

Album covers and lyrics of many heavy metal or black metal (satanic) rock groups encourage and pander to Satanism. Such songs as "Shout at the Devil" by Motley Crue, "The Number of the Beast (666)" by Iron Maiden, "Sabbath, Bloody Sabbath" by Black Sabbath and "The Hotel California" by the Eagles all fall in this category. ("The Hotel California" is a nickname for the first Church of Satan, located on California Street in San Francisco.) Album covers and posters of these rock groups graphically depict satanic symbols, such as upside-down crosses, 666, pentagrams, graveyards, demons, skeletons and references to hell and death.

Heavy metalers dress to reinforce group identity and like to copy the particular style of their favorite bands. Most boys simply wear Levis and T-shirts advertising a particular brand of alcohol (especially Jack Daniels) or drugs. Adolescent girls involved in heavy metal tend to wear short tight denim or leather skirts and heavy eye makeup.

Although this kind of music includes disturbing references to Satanism, juveniles who listen to it and wear the prevailing metal fashions are not necessarily involved with Satanism or the occult. It is nearly impossible to say at what point a preoccupation with death and the occult or use of satanic symbols actually signals serious involvement with these bizarre doctrines. However, evidence of crimes with satanic overtones, graffiti and other blatant signs should raise a red flag that youths are involved in the occult or satanic activities.

### *Satanic cults*

Satanists are interested in chaos, disharmony, earthly power and hedonistic gratification. Anton La Vey, a former circus performer and police photographer, founded the first Church of Satan in San Francisco in 1966. La Vey, who refers to himself as the High Priest of Satan, wrote two of Satanism's most important and widely read handbooks, *The Satanic Bible* and *Satanic Rituals.*

La Vey wrote: "Satanism represents a form of controlled selfishness. The Satanist, being a magician (occultic sense), should have the ability to decide what is just, and then apply the powers of (black) magic to attain his goals."

The primary enemies of Satanists are God, traditional religious tenets and institutions, and conventional societal values. For them, Satan is the supreme deity, the god of the materialistic world (frequently depicted as an inverted pentagram), grantor of pleasures and the punisher of foes.

In their worship of Satan and denial of traditional religion, Satanists invert or reverse religious symbols. For example, Jesus Christ was crucified on a cross. Consequently, a Satanist will display an upside-down cross. They also write backward, frequently using the ancient rune or witches' alphabet, and write or display "666" (the number of the beast, Satan, as written in Revelation 13:18). Their religious ceremony, the Black Mass, is a reversal, mockery and desecration of the traditional Catholic Mass.

Satanism has enjoyed a surge of interest among young people recently, a trend that is beginning to be recognized and reckoned with by law enforcement officers, educators and parents. "Satanic activities can no longer be ignored," says Pettinicchio. "Law enforcement officers have especially been struck by the dramatic increase in violent and perverse crimes that are at least partially attributable to the occult and Satanism."

Satanic references and symbols have been associated with the "Son of Sam" serial murders (New York, 1977), the McMartin Preschool child molestation case (Los Angeles, 1984) and, most recently, the "Night Stalker" homicides (Los Angeles and San Francisco, 1985). Animal mutilations, exhumation of bodies and church desecrations are becoming alarmingly prevalent.

Heavy metalers and those involved in Satanism use the same graffiti to make their mark. This graffiti is often placed underground — under bridges, in flood control channels, and under freeway overpasses — to be closer to hell and the devil. Also, no one can see them defacing these areas. Youths who simply dabble in the occult ("devil players") sometimes write this kind of graffiti on their notebooks, folders, clothing and bodies.

Wes Mitchell, assistant chief of police for the Los Angeles Unified School District, has also reported the appearance of graffiti with satanic symbols and messages on some campuses. Mitchell says, "We're seeing a lot of '666' and 'F.T.W.,' a heavy metal rock group that stands for f--- the world. They (stoners) are totally anti-social. In some schools, it's all over the campuses."

Some teachers and administrators perceive the stoners' school behavior as a real problem. One teacher reports the vast majority of the stoners not only are inattentive in the classroom and have poor attendance records (like many gang members), but they also are quite disruptive both in and out of the classroom. If

they are supposed to be in school, their attendance is sporadic at best. But, like most troublesome students, if expelled or suspended, they will not stay away from campus.

Today's mass media includes far more material suggestive of the occult and Satanism than most people realize. Aside from more than a dozen heavy metal magazines, young people have easy access to movies on television, in theaters or in any video store. Some heavy metal experts say movies such as "The Exorcist," "Damien," "The Omen" and "Rosemary's Baby" have done more for furthering interest in the occult than any other social trend in the past 20 years. Satanic literature also sells briskly in bookstores across the country.

Minors who become obsessed with the occult and Satanism are likely to include occult themes in reports, essays and poetry, in addition to writing symbols on folders and books. Themes of murder, suicide and death permeate their thoughts and writing. Those seriously involved in devil worship, especially in an adult satanic group, may tattoo themselves with symbols or cut or gouge their bodies to draw blood for their rituals.

Heavy metalers and others involved with Satanism will sometimes vandalize and desecrate churches and synagogues with satanic signs and symbols. Religious articles may be stolen and rituals performed with them. These stoner groups are increasingly desecrating graveyards by knocking over headstones, smashing open crypts, and even breaking into coffins and taking body parts for satanic rituals.

Crimes of arson, especially those involving gasoline torchings, are sometimes associated with occultists because occult activities are carried out in the utmost secrecy, and sites where their illegal activities have taken place may be burned to destroy evidence.

Pettinicchio believes these crimes usually involve drugs. In fact, she says, "Many heavy metalers become drug dealers for their friends and other heavy metalers."

This combination of drugs and satanic activities has had lethal results in this country. "To the best of my knowledge, all heavy metalers convicted of murder in the United States and Canada have been involved in Satanism," she says. "They have killed parents, brothers and sisters, and peers."

Satanism is considered an organized religion and is afforded First Amendment protections, which complicates the job of stemming satanic activities. Students may even identify Satanism as their religion and try to excuse, justify or condone their criminal actions as a significant part of their religious practices.

However, schools are obligated to provide the safest possible learning environment. The California Constitution even requires that schools be "safe, secure and peaceful." Just as many schools successfully control criminal youth gang

influence on campus through consistent enforcement of behavior codes, so can schools control the violence and delinquency associated with punk and heavy metal groups on campus.

A noteworthy characterization of gang members and cults comes from Washington Prep's Principal McKenna, a school administrator who has experience "in the trenches." McKenna says: "Persons in gangs [and cults] need to be seen as having individual characteristics who are joined together to fulfill a personal need. The negative behavior is reflected by a group because the leadership of the group is stronger than the members, and the leadership chooses to engage in negative behavior. The members may just as easily be led by a positive force, who is stronger, and engages them in positive activity. This would therefore not make them 'chronic losers who can accomplish nothing individually,' because they could be engaged in constructive group activity."

Chapter 3

# Prevention and intervention strategies

***"Children will dress the way we allow them to dress. They will speak the way we allow them to speak. Schools should be institutions that form values, not conform to the attitudes of children. Schools must be responsible and must accept the responsibility. If we don't, no one else will."***
*—George McKenna, Principal, George Washington Preparatory High School, Los Angeles*

Prevention, whenever possible, is the best way to avoid the disruption youth gangs cause. Once educators are familiar with the kinds of gangs on campus, they can effectively plan their responses to squelch threatening gang activity.

Robert Eicholtz, former principal of Pioneer High School in Los Angeles and now a member of the Los Angeles County Effective Schools Project, began a successful conflict-prevention program at Pioneer, once a bastion of gang activity. He says, "Schools must adopt a solution strategy that will improve attitudes of gang members and assimilate them into the mainstream. Gangs ultimately damage the school by fostering insecurity in students, staff and parents. To ignore the problem invites disaster."

Schools may safely assume that violent and anti-social gang behavior usually suggests psychological, emotional, attitudinal and cultural assimilation problems, a weak family structure, or a combination thereof. Additionally, gang members are likely to remain gang members because of fear, poor self-esteem and a genuine inability to understand or cooperate with others outside their group. Trying to work with gang behavior through fear and intimidation only compounds the problem, particularly because fear and intimidation are used by gang members themselves. On the other hand, a positive, consistent approach to discipline and conflict prevention can achieve long-term and far-reaching results and improve the overall school climate.

Educational achievement can change a young person's life, but often it is difficult to make educational programs succeed. Usually, it is very difficult to convince someone who cannot plan beyond tomorrow to prepare for the future.

Realistic programs are needed that show young people they can escape the poverty cycle by setting realistic goals and preparing themselves, through training and study, to achieve them.

### Behavior codes

One step toward building a safer, more peaceful campus is to enforce behavior codes firmly, fairly and consistently. The following are suggested school district policies that successfully establish standards of dress and conduct to ensure safe campuses. To be effective, these rules must be written and distributed so they can be understood by each student. Administrators may want to have both the student and parent or guardian sign these agreements and return a copy to school.

- Students should display a friendly, cooperative attitude toward other students and teachers at all times.
- Students should dress for success. Appropriate attire includes shirts or blouses with sleeves and collars, and clean and untattered clothing that covers the body and is free of safety hazards. A "powerful" appearance is more desirable than a "powerless" appearance.
- Students should not wear hair styles or clothing with colors that identify with particular gangs.
- Students should not give gang signs.

### Graffiti removal

Graffiti is more than just an eyesore; it encourages violence, and writing it is a crime. Gangs use graffiti to mark their territory, advertise their existence or claim "credit" for a crime. For many gangs, the sheer act of marking graffiti on a wall is a direct challenge to rivals to fight. There is no greater humiliation for a gang than having its symbols degraded by rivals. Writing the graffiti of opponents upside-down, marking over it or similar written taunts have incited several fights. Flaunting one's territorial authority through graffiti has caused many homicides.

Removing graffiti as soon as possible discourages kids from writing it and keeps the intended messages from being transmitted or interpreted by others. Since most gangs write graffiti to stake a claim to territory, removing their "mark" invalidates that claim. School principals who have the greatest success in limiting gang activities make sure graffiti is removed from school within a few hours after it appears.

As part of the anti-gang activities of the Chicago Intervention Network, administered by the city's Department of Health and Human Services, an anti-graffiti program has trained and hired more than 80 youth in graffiti removal projects. Anti-graffiti block parties helped motivate juveniles to get involved.

The Department of Health and Human Services provided hot dogs, buns, soda, balloons, streamers, T-shirts, paint and other supplies. In a three-month period in 1986, graffiti was removed from more than 1,716 sites throughout the city, and more than 1,831 volunteers assisted.

Hope Ricewasser, administrative assistant at Lincoln High School in Los Angeles, suggests daily checks for graffiti on campus, especially on restroom walls and doors. "We make sure graffiti is gone within an hour of finding it," Ricewasser says. "That way, the gang who did it doesn't have the satisfaction of knowing other people even saw it."

Ricewasser also recommends keeping a supply of paint and paintbrushes on hand, and assigning students who are tardy or who have disciplinary problems to paint over the area. Other suggestions include:

- Photograph graffiti before removing for disciplinary or criminal action when offenders are identified. Involve law enforcement immediately to have them interview suspects. Photograph paint on the hand or clothing that matches the graffiti paint color. Store evidence such as paint or paint-spattered clothes in a safe place for later prosecution.
- Begin a Campus Pride campaign, including a poster contest, slogans printed on buttons, folders and posters; assign tardy students to trash pickup after nutrition and lunch breaks; and involve the horticulture class in a beautification project. Gang members won't participate, but the peer pressure by other students may help.
- Learn to identify groups on campus responsible for graffiti, as well as their nicknames and style of graffiti they use. Call them to a conference to discuss campus pride and ways to eliminate graffiti at school.
- Keep all schools neutral territory.
- Have students design and paint murals, and make sure to recognize their contributions publicly. A Miami high school principal approved of a drawing proposal by a "graffiti artist" to paint the school's slogan on one wall. The new mural is respected by all rival gang factions and has not been defaced.

### Conflict prevention strategies

The conflict-prevention model that follows relies on a combination of community partnerships, staff training and student counseling, and special staff appointments to enforce school rules.

*Program objectives*

- Overall improvement of the school learning environment.
- Eliminate on-campus confrontations between members of different gangs.
- Eliminate gang intimidation of students.

- Assimilate gang-oriented students into the mainstream — academically, extracurricularly and socially.
- Facilitate better relationships between students and staff.
- Help parents of gang-involved students get back in charge of their children.

*Program components*

- Offer staff development sessions for staff and provide as much knowledge as possible about the dynamics of gang involvement. This training helps school administrators and teachers identify gangs operating within their schools, recognize gang characteristics and respond to gang behavior.

  Staff members must learn techniques that help build self-esteem in young people. Procedures for dealing with physical conflict in the classroom and elsewhere on campus should be discussed in detail. School objectives should be clearly identified, and then a plan of action created and made ready to go.

  In these in-service sessions, the leader(s) should:
- Emphasize practices the teacher can use in the classroom to reinforce positive self-image, behavior and attitudes. Giving teachers the names of gang members facilitates this objective. Teachers must communicate with others who are working with gang members about behavior, tardiness, absences and academic progress. (This information should be disseminated with discretion, though, so that gang members are not prejudged or have negative expectations attributed to them.)
- Discuss the solution strategy with student gang leaders and solicit their support. Some students resent the special attention given gang members, but student leaders and staff members can help diffuse this resentment by communicating the program's objectives and the resulting benefits to the school and to gang members.
- Ask law enforcement or school security to monitor security around the perimeter of the campus. The officer's activity could include protecting cars in the parking lots and preventing non-students, including gang members, from entering the campus. Establishing this security alone will eliminate a large percentage of potential problems.
- Develop an "alert" supervision schedule for all staff in the event the school is warned about antagonistic gang members coming on campus. All staff is assigned to a specific response plan for complete campus safety. It is necessary to provide the deans, the principal or both with a hand radio so they can maintain contact with each other.
- Identify all known gang members on campus and provide this list (with nicknames) to selected staff members (to be determined by the administrator). Contact local police for assistance; they know them well. High schools can

contact junior high or elementary schools to get the names of incoming students who are gang members, so these students can be integrated into the monitoring process as soon as possible. Gang involvement may start as early as the third grade. *All* members of the staff should serve some role in combating gang members.

- Hire non-teaching personnel to help monitor behavior, enforce tardy and truancy policies, provide information and make sure students are in their classrooms. These aides should be instructed on ways to approach students and how to handle difficult cases. Conflict management techniques can prevent the need to physically restrain violent or disruptive students. Staff can also learn to identify gang-oriented students and seek assistance. They must be able to explain and enforce firmly, fairly and consistently disciplinary policies and rules. When this approach is used, students more readily accept the rules.
- Install a decorative (wrought iron rather than chain link) fence between campus buildings where gates can be locked at night to reduce vandalism. Some gates can be locked during the day to control campus traffic patterns. This provides excellent vandalism control and prevents non-students from entering the campus.
- Remove graffiti as soon as possible after it appears. If the vandals are known, involve them in the cleanup. Report the crime to the local law enforcement agency and take school disciplinary action. In schools where positive learning climates are developed, graffiti disappears.
- Establish open lines of communication with local law enforcement to share useful information and provide mutual support. This relationship can be developed with officers who assist with perimeter security. This kind of interagency communication is effective in addressing gang problems.
- Create a strong cooperative learning component within each classroom. Cooperative learning gives individual gang members real opportunities to work toward common goals shared by other students outside the gang. If possible, ensure heterogeneity by assigning only one gang member to each learning group and closely follow the established techniques of cooperative learning.
- Offer evening parenting classes or counseling programs that involve the entire family to help parents deal effectively with their children and divert them from gang involvement. These programs can dissuade younger siblings from joining gangs while helping youth already involved to get out of gangs. In addition, such counseling supports parents who understand the dangers of gang membership.

Helping parents gain control of their children is one of the most difficult tasks to accomplish, yet it is also one of the most viable solutions to prevent gang involvement. Often, fathers must be taught to assume a stronger male

role model for their children. In some areas, county crisis intervention personnel are available to conduct the parenting sessions for schools.

- Establish boys' and girls' "teams" on campus, made up of students involved in the various gangs and organizations represented on campus. These groups provide the basis for intensive group interaction. Staff members assigned to these groups must know about gangs in the neighborhood and have a proven ability to deal with gang members. It is very important not to provide activities that might serve to further coalesce the gang. When this program is successful, team members provide valuable information that helps school security, and students assume some responsibility for helping to diffuse situations before conflicts occur.

  The teams should meet once a week. In addition to bringing in role models to work with members and monitor academic and citizenship progress, the advisers involve the groups in school fund-raising activities, planning and carrying out projects and field trips. The long-term objective of the counseling process is to mainstream the members. Although difficult, it is worthwhile to try getting them involved in extracurricular activities. Techniques to help them develop a positive self-image as well as a sense of responsibility and self-discipline are used extensively.
- Offer sports, drama, music and other programs to provide recreational activity and help develop a sense of self-worth and self-respect in young people. Youths involved in worthwhile extracurricular programs are less likely to seek reassurance from gang membership.
- Refer students to work experience and employment opportunities. These healthy diversions are among the most effective alternatives to gang participation. Often, "borderline" youths will reject gang membership if they can find jobs. Training and work experience programs needed for youth in high-risk areas should target both gang members and potential gang members. Communities can encourage the participation of private business and industry by seeking "enterprise zone" designation for economically depressed areas. Such zones provide economic incentives to firms employing workers from low-income areas.
- Learn to distinguish between minor disruptive events and actual crimes. School administrators easily recognize in-school drug use or trafficking as a violation of law but may not report other crimes, like vandalism, fights and petty theft, to police. Some administrators gloss over these events in trying to help troubled students. But when fights are not distinguished from assaults, thefts not separated from burglaries, and crimes against persons and property are combined, administrative responses are unclear. Taking a firm, consistent and fair approach to student disruptions helps foster a positive, caring atmos-

sphere at school and sends an unequivocal message to gang members and other troublemakers that their crimes against the school and society will not be tolerated. Consult your local school district's legal adviser or district attorney for definitions of criminal terms such as assault, attack with a deadly weapon, robbery, extortion, substance/chemical/alcohol abuse, sex offenses, weapons possession and property crimes. If a crime is committed on campus, report it to police.

- Develop a simple, efficient information-management system to track crime incidents in school. The most useful system will provide administrators with an overview of school disruption patterns that answer the following questions: What happened? What characterized victims and perpetrators? Where did the incident occur? How serious was the incident? What response was taken?

  Software programs designed to run an information-management or incident-reporting system have been written for computers ranging in size from microcomputers to mainframes. Brief incident reports can be written during the normal processing of students referred to the central office for violations. Frequent analysis of this data may reveal a systematic pattern of victimization against a certain group, by a certain group. Armed with this information, administrators can anticipate future problems and plan intervention strategies, while determining if law enforcement should be called (see *School Discipline Notebook*, chapter 3, National School Safety Center, 1986).

Utilizing these program guidelines requires that a school's curriculum and level of instruction are effective, that the school has a well-defined and enforced citizenship policy, that these regulations are communicated regularly to students and parents, and that a comprehensive daily supervision schedule is in place.

As students receive positive reinforcement for acceptable behavior and develop a more positive self-image, attitudes, behavior and style of dress will improve. The gang-oriented student will rely less on the gang and more on school as a source of building self-esteem. Effecting these changes takes a real investment of time for school staff, but it pays big dividends in helping to resocialize gang members and to create a positive school environment.

Once young people join gangs, different approaches are needed to return them to responsible social behavior:

- Understand that a youth will only remain in a gang as long as the gang makes him feel powerful and needed. It is possible for schools to offer activities that will foster a healthy feeling of self-worth, independence and responsibility, thus replacing the need for gang membership. Such activities emphasize cooperation and collaboration, which add to the student's sense of control over his life and learning. This also increases investment in the school.

Examples of these activities include cooperative learning, peer tutoring and other student-centered involvement activities that reinforce the power of peer teaching. Additionally, these programs offer staff new opportunities for supervision and counseling since teachers are relieved from feeling they are the only source of learning.

- Investigate community gang intervention programs that could benefit your school. Former gang members, for example, are used as community street workers who work directly with gang members in many model intervention programs. Mobile units with two-way radios advise intervention teams of gang disputes. In addition, confidential hot lines allow individuals to remain anonymous while reporting gang rumors, crimes, fights and other activities. Because most gang codes require retribution, it is especially important to protect sources and witnesses.
- Share information on gang activity among state agencies, law enforcement, educators and others involved in gang control to increase the effectiveness of other gang supression efforts. Areas with clearly identified youth gang problems should consider establishing gang information systems and clearinghouses for those involved in such programs. This information sharing becomes even more vital considering that when gang leaders are incarcerated, the gang's activity is greatly reduced. The gang becomes extremely vulnerable to attack from rivals, but members are also more open to intervention by community workers or law enforcement agents.
- Utilize experts in the police or sheriff's department to learn about gangs on campus. Under a special grant given to the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Office, one deputy sheriff works full time responding to requests from school administrators in the district to teach them about gangs and how to deal with them on campus. Effective methods of coping with gangs only result from awareness and understanding of the problem.
- Arrange an agreement with the media not to publish names of gangs involved in crime-related incidents. This reduces the motivation by rival gangs to get equal attention. Gangs like to take "credit" for their criminal actions through publicity. Many gang members keep scrapbooks of news clips describing their exploits. In Tucson, where media outlets generally avoid using gang names, the cycle of gang activity has been slowed significantly.
- Learn about the special gang units that have been established by local law enforcement agencies to collect and disseminate information on gang activity and membership, and how schools can assist in these efforts. By analyzing and combining arrest information and incident reports, a gang unit can provide a complete picture of gang activity in its area.
- Establish school-based programs that combine gang and drug prevention les-

sons taught jointly by teachers and law enforcement personnel at school sites.

- Encourage strict standards to prevent gang activity or membership in custodial institutions where gang members are detained if they are made wards of the court or state. When these offenders are returned to the community, it is desirable to have a special unit in the probation department that provides intensified parole supervision.

### Crisis management

When violence or vandalism has occurred or drug use is already a fact, law enforcement officials should be called to help control the situation. Law enforcement officers are a valuable community resource who are often overlooked or viewed strictly as a punitive force. They are experienced in working with volatile youth and eager to cooperate on prevention efforts. It is critical that a relationship with law enforcement officers is established before a crisis flares up. This cooperative, networking approach eases the job of educators. Working with fellow professionals will improve communication and increase the probability of success.

Maintaining good communication with the public is always important, but especially during a crisis situation, such as a campus shooting. Even less serious incidents may escalate into an emergency without set procedures for dealing with the school population and the community. While no one can ever be completely prepared for an emergency, risks can be minimized with an organized plan that assures constant and consistent communications and designates responsibilities to specific staff members and administrators.

The plan should include procedures for communicating facts to the proper authorities, parents and the general public. Reports should be made as quickly as information is known and as often as new facts become available. Especially during a crisis, it is important to keep the news media informed. It can be extremely destructive to try to cover up something instead of being open and truthful. Level with people. Tell them what happened and what you are doing about it.

NSSC recommends the following action in a campus crisis:

- Have a media policy worked out in advance. Spell out who will be the media spokesperson, and make it clear no one else should speak *officially* for the school or agency. At the same time, keep school employees and students informed on the situation. They will likely be *unofficial* school representatives.
- Route all media inquiries to one person or, at least, to one office.
- Prepare an official statement responding to the particular crisis situation. Read from or distribute this statement when media inquiries are made. This will maintain consistency.

- Anticipate media questions and prepare and rehearse answers. Play devil's advocate and develop answers to all potentially sensitive and controversial questions.
- Don't be afraid to say, "I don't know." This is better than lying or responding with the offensive phrase, "No comment." Volunteer to get the answer and follow up within a specified time.
- Start a rumor control center, if the situation warrants. Publish a number for media representatives to call if they hear a rumor or need information.
- Provide the news media with updates as events unfold, even after the initial crisis is handled.
- Keep calm and maintain a professional manner. Once calm has returned, it is imperative to begin work that will prevent a recurrence of the crisis.

### Community involvement

In communities where rapid changes in ethnic makeup are occurring, the city or county government should establish community-wide educational programs to deal honestly with the issue. One of the primary objectives of the program would be to change attitudes and perceptions of school personnel, parents, churches, city officials, business leaders and the media about the scope and nature of gang problems and the role that each can play in dealing with them in a positive sense.

Parents, law enforcers and members of the community should be aware of neighborhood gangs, as well as popular heavy metal and punk bands. With this awareness, parents must control negative activities, concerts, music and literature that their children may be exposed to. Anything that promotes the use of alcohol and other drugs, sexual activity or devil worship should not be available to children. Parents can also apply pressure to theaters, radio and television stations, magazine and book publishers, and recording companies that sell such suggestive products by boycotting them.

Many adults tend to shrug off some illegal activities, including vandalism and even cemetery desecrations, because they say, "Kids will be kids." But educators, law enforcement officers and parents must recognize the seriousness of these crimes and emphasize strict enforcement of laws banning such activities.

Unfamiliar or suspicious individuals or activities, including kids obviously under the influence, drug sales, or satanic symbols or accessories (burned or mutilated animals, satanic graffiti) should also be reported to the police.

Chapter 4

# School and community programs

*"We do a lot of work helping separate gang members from gangs. We want to give them a shot at making something of themselves. It's not easy."*
*—Nester Bustamante, Assistant State Attorney, 11th Judicial Circuit, Dade County, Florida*

Several communities have achieved tremendous success with anti-gang programs. Some are preventive in nature and are aimed at very young students, while others deal with youths already on the streets and in trouble. The following is a partial listing of some of these community and school programs.

**Operation Safe Streets**
Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department
11515 S. Colima Road
Whittier, CA 90604
213/946-7916

The objective of this program is to prevent and significantly reduce street gang violence in targeted areas of Los Angeles County. Operation Safe Streets directly attacks the total gang problem by dealing firmly with hard-core gangs and giving them the highest enforcement priority. Community residents, school officials, informants, peripheral gang members and relatives of gang members are utilized in aiding OSS investigators whenever possible. The program's proactive method has proven effective in preventing gang violence as well as in apprehending and convicting serious gang offenders.

**The Community Access Team**
Hayward Police Department
300 W. Winton Ave.
Hayward, CA 94544
415/784-7013

The goal of this program is to obtain employment and develop educational programs for 25 youth gang members a year. Project participants are given job and educational counseling and training to help them develop good work habits. They are also encouraged to participate in employment and educational programs as well as community service projects. A corollary function of the Team is its role as liaison between youth gangs and the Hayward Police Department, the state labor board and the local Chamber of Commerce.

**Gang Violence Reduction Project**
California Youth Authority
4629 E. Brooklyn Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90022
213/269-7401

This project tries to redirect the energies of youth gang members into more positive activities, to end gang feuding and to reduce local gang violence. The project hires gang consultants who live in gang neighborhoods and will promote the project.

Mediation to resolve long-standing disputes is the principal strategy used to end feuding. Gang members are also encouraged to participate in organized recreational and social events, including fishing and camping trips, picnics, handball tournaments and trips to amusement parks.

**Gangs Network Project**
1200 A Ave.
National City, CA 92050
619/336-4400

This program develops college options for youth involved in gang and other criminal activity and others who failed in the public school system. The project arranges for financial assistance and provides counseling, support services and educational programs.

A corollary objective is to educate the public and members of government and non-government agencies about youth gangs through training sessions, barrio council discussion meetings, public forums and support for programs to benefit youth. The project also helps coordinate activities of the city's other social service organizations.

**The Paramount Plan: Alternatives to Gang Membership**
Human Services Department
City of Paramount
16400 Colorado Ave.
Paramount, CA 90723
213/531-3503

The highly regarded Paramount Plan stresses disapproval of gang membership while working to eliminate the future gang membership base and to diminish gang influence. The program sponsors neighborhood meetings and provides anti-gang curricula and posters on request. Community meetings are led by bilingual leaders and are held in neighborhoods identified by the sheriff's office as "under gang influence." They are aimed at parents and preteens.

A fifth-grade anti-gang curriculum was introduced in the Paramount Unified School District in 1982 that emphasized constructive activities available in the neighborhood.

**Vietnamese Community of Orange County, Inc.**
3701 W. McFadden Ave., Suite M
Santa Ana, CA 92704
714/775-2637

This non-profit organization oversees four programs to assist the Vietnamese community in family relations and related issues. Their Youth Counseling and Crime Prevention Program works in conjunction with prosecutors, educators, probation officers and law enforcement officers to prevent young Vietnamese youth from joining gangs. Trung Le, youth counselor, visits area schools regularly and talks to students and guidance counselors and also encourages parents to become more involved in their programs. The organization also offers English tutoring, housing and employment services for refugees.

**Say Yes, Incorporated**
3840 Crenshaw Blvd., Suite 217
Los Angeles, CA 90008
213/295-5551

This program offers crisis intervention, field monitoring and workshops for school staffs. The workshops teach staff about the gangs operating in the neighborhood and describe gang characteristics and problems.

Say Yes teams monitor selected athletic events to stop violence in its formative stages. These teams supplement regular school, security and law enforcement personnel. The staff also monitors elementary, junior and senior

high schools, provides rap sessions, and sponsors Neighborhood Watch, athletic and summer job programs.

**Senior Tutors for Youth in Detention**
1301 Solano Ave.
Albany, CA 94706

Every Tuesday at 1 p.m., the boys in San Francisco's Youth Guidance Center (the detention site in the city's probation department) line up to await their visitors: Not parents, but retirees from the Rossmore retirement community in Walnut Creek, an hour's bus ride away. The seniors, one of whom is 91 years old, tutor the boys for two hours in written and verbal skills, vocational opportunities and mock job interviews, parenting skills, and ethics and morality through stories written for adolescents.

The program began in 1983 and is the brainchild of Dr. Sondra Napell, psychologist, attorney and educator. Napell began the project to help enhance the self-esteem of the boys and to foster positive experiences with caring adults. For many boys in the center, who remain from 30 to 90 days, these visits with the tutors are the only such consistent, positive exposures they have had. Napell adds that the boys are eager to learn and are extremely solicitous of their tutors, most of whom are from different socioeconomic backgrounds than their students.

Now funded by the Luke B. Hancock Foundation in Northern California, Napell has been asked to begin a senior tutor program at the Byron Boys' Ranch in Contra Costa County, where boys remain for longer periods than at the Youth Guidance Center.

**Gang Awareness Resource Program**
Los Angeles County Sheriff's Office
11515 S. Colima Road
Whittier, CA 90604
213/946-7916

This grant project from California's Office of Criminal Justice Planning provides for one deputy sheriff to work full time in the Los Angeles County School District, responding to requests for information and orientation on gangs. The sheriff does not patrol, although arrests have taken place as a result of his presence on campus.

**Youth Development, Inc.**
1710 Centro Familiar SW
Albuquerque, NM 87105
505/873-1604

This program offers gang members and leaders a safe way out of the gang and guidance into more positive activities. The staff has also worked with warring gangs to mediate conflicts. Some projects include a Mentors Project, in which youths interested in a particular profession are matched with mentors who help them learn about the field and assist with career planning. Interns compete for $20,000 college internships offered by the American Express Company.

Other projects include an after-school recreation program offering sports and other activities, graffiti removal, river restoration and landscaping projects, and a youth employment and drop-in counseling center.

**B.U.I.L.D. (Broader Urban Involvement and Leadership Development)**
1223 N. Milwaukee Ave.
Chicago, IL 60622
312/227-2880

Non-profit B.U.I.L.D. works with gang members on the streets, trying to involve them in athletic or social recreational events and to encourage them to participate in education and job training programs. Many of the streetworkers are "graduates" of street gangs who were helped by the organization.

B.U.I.L.D. also runs a prevention program for 28 junior high school students identified as at-risk for joining gangs by school and police authorities. The program includes a weekly class session and after-school activities to teach kids about the dangers of joining gangs and offers positive alternative activities. The project is supported by Chicago's social, civic and corporate sectors.

**Chicago Intervention Network**
Department of Human Services
500 Pershitgo Court
Chicago, IL 60611
312/744-1815

The Chicago Intervention Network (CIN) is a city-wide coordinated approach to youth crime prevention based on strong neighborhood participation and extensive

networking among social service agencies and law enforcement agents.

CIN operates nine field offices in low-income, high crime areas of Chicago, targeting four main areas of interventions: alternative youth programming, parental and family support, victim assistance, and neighborhood empowerment programs such as Neighborhood Watches and parent patrols. CIN also operates a 24-hour telephone hot line that can dispatch a team of mobile social workers to deal with crises involving youth demanding immediate attention. Program staff have intervened in gang fights both on school campuses and on the streets.

### Gang Crime Section

Chicago Police Department
1121 S. State St.
Chicago, IL 60605
312/744-6328

Begun in the late 1960s as an intelligence gathering organization, the Gang Crime Section has expanded to include investigations and training for officers assigned to gang-related incidents. The section offers a training seminar for officers and a bilingual speakers' program for schools, civic organizations and community groups.

Through the related Gang Target Program, gang crime specialists identify active street gang members. When targeted members are arrested, a police computer alerts the section and other appropriate agencies. Data on gang-related crime are also analyzed by staff to determine what areas need special gang missions.

### El Centro De La Comunidad Unida

Delinquency Prevention/Gang Intervention Program
1028 S. 9th St.
Milwaukee, WI 53204
414/671-1483

El Centro offers high-risk Hispanic young people alternatives to anti-social behavior through education, employment and recreation. The staff works to assist youth who are having trouble in school or in the community. In addition, they offer individual, family and group counseling, as well as referral and follow-up, gang mediation, and job placement.

**Crisis Intervention Network, Inc. (CIN)**
415 N. 4th St.
Philadelphia, PA 19123
215/592-5600

CIN, launched in 1974, is similar in its goals to the Chicago Intervention Network and deals with the rising number of gang fatalities and injuries, mediates neighborhood and interracial youth disputes, and tries to control gang leadership through the probation unit. CIN's network of specialists in community organization, social service, crisis intervention and mediation, along with a cadre of probation officers, works to improve Philadelphia's neighborhoods. CIN dispatches its five crisis teams throughout the city to help prevent trouble, as well as responding to emergency calls on its 24-hour hot line. CIN serves as a resource center for community services and offers a speakers' bureau, workshops, seminars, counseling and training, and referrals.

**House of Umoja (Unity)**
1410 N. Frazier St.
Philadelphia, PA 19131
215/473-2723

Known as the first urban "Boys' Town," the house has taken in more than 700 youths since it began in 1969. With limited city funds, the house provides between 15 and 25 boys at a time with food, shelter, $10 per week, surrogate parenting and employment opportunities. For many, the house is an alternative to juvenile institutionalization.

The house's outreach program has sponsored the Black Youth Olympics, cultural exchange programs with boys from Belfast, Ireland, and local cultural programs. One of the greatest accomplishments of the House of Umoja is the 1974 pact negotiated to end gang warfare in Philadelphia. After an arranged meeting attended by 100 members of 32 gangs, gang-related deaths in the city dropped from 43 in 1973 to 32 in 1974, six in 1975 and one in 1977.

**TIES**
The Dorchester Youth Collaborative
1514A Dorchester Ave.
Dorchester, MA 02122
617/288-1748

TIES prevention clubs steer youth into structured, goal-oriented activities with a

special focus on community organizing. The Common Ground prevention club brings youths of diverse ethnic backgrounds together to work on a variety of projects and performances. Community service teams may shovel snow or clean garages for community residents; others may become involved in youth leadership programs. Common Ground groups have given song/rap performances in six states and have become very visible locally through their anti-drug audio and video public service media announcements.

**Andrew Glover Youth Program**
100 Center St.
Manhattan Criminal Court, Room 1541
New York, NY 10013
212/349-6381

A privately funded organization, the Andrew Glover Youth Program works to protect neighborhoods in New York's Lower East Side from crime. Another objective is to steer youth away from negative and illegal activities. The program serves a large number of black and Hispanic young people by working with police, courts, youth services and social services to provide counseling, gang mediation, family counseling and housing assistance. Youth workers are in contact with kids where they spend most of their time: on the streets. The youth workers also live in the community and are available for assistance 24 hours a day.

**Teen Troubleshooters**
Washington Heights — Inwood Coalition, Inc.
652 W. 187th St.
New York, NY 10033
212/781-6722

The majority of Teen Troubleshooters are immigrants from the Dominican Republic between the ages of 12 and 19. They participate in a number of community service activities, which diverts them from potentially falling into a gang. In the past two years, they have fixed up a local park and decorated it with a mural; made a presentation about lead paint poisoning to classes in their junior high school and distributed flyers about the topic in the neighborhood; written a safety newsletter for entering junior high school students; and escorted elderly residents through the neighborhood to protect them.

**U.S. Department of Justice Community Relations Service**
5550 Friendship Blvd.
Chevy Chase, MD 20815
301/492-5929

This service specializes in race-related conflicts on school campuses. They have been called in to ease tense transitions in school desegragations in Boston and New York and other related incidents. There are Community Relations Service branch offices in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Atlanta, Chicago, Kansas City (Missouri), Denver, Dallas, Seattle and San Francisco. Phone numbers of branch offices should be listed under the U.S. Department of Justice, Community Relations Service, in local phone directories.

**Miami Police Department Gang Detail**
Community Relations Section
400 N.W. 2nd Ave.
Miami, FL 33128
305/579-6620

The Gang Detail works closely with the Dade County School Board and the Miami Countywide Gang Task Force on a variety of intervention programs. Among the Detail's projects are a "drop-in" program for gang members who want to re-enter school, and a "Respect Patrol," in which rival gang members and potential gang members encourage positive school behavior, such as getting to class on time and avoiding gang activities, in each other and in other students. "Respect patrol" members meet daily with a school adviser for special assignments and weekly for rap sessions and program reports.

**Turning Point Family Services Program**
12912 Brookhurst Ave., Suite 150
Garden Grove, CA 92640
714/636-3823

Turning Point is a private, non-profit organization that provides counseling and educational services to youth and young adults (ages 13 to 26) in Orange County, California. Programs include family and individual counseling, diversion counseling, drug and alcohol abuse counseling and classes, parenting classes and special youth activities.

Early prevention and intervention programs are a primary focus in its effort to combat gang involvement. Staff members present an eight-week educational

curriculum designed to discourage students from joining gangs and provide positive alternatives to youth gangs. The program is conducted in local elementary and junior high schools.

## Resources


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