REDUCING GUN VIOLENCE

WHAT COMMUNITIES CAN DO

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National Crime Prevention Council
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TAKE A BITE OUT OF
CRIME®

The National Crime Prevention Council is a private, nonprofit tax-exempt [501(c)(3)] organization whose principal mission is to enable people to prevent crime and build safer, more caring communities. NCPC publishes books, kits of camera-ready program materials, posters, and informational and policy reports on a variety of crime prevention and community-building subjects. NCPC offers training, technical assistance, and national focus for crime prevention: it acts as secretariat for the Crime Prevention Coalition, more than 130 national, federal, and state organizations committed to preventing crime. It also operates demonstration programs and takes a major leadership role in youth crime prevention. NCPC manages the McGruff "Take A Bite Out Of Crime" public service advertising campaign, which is substantially funded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Proceeds from the sale of materials, which are funded by public and private sources, are used to produce more materials and to help suport the full range of NCPC's work including the National Citizens' Crime Prevention Campaign.

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Acknowledgments

No one in this nation favors gun violence in our streets and homes. Writing in a practical and helpful way about reducing such violence, however, proved to be a significant challenge; it was also an outstanding opportunity to highlight the many thoughtful and imaginative efforts around the country to reduce this scourge.

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Introduction

Crimes committed with guns plague many of our communities, from large metropolitan areas to small towns. Community leaders, elected officials, and citizens see an urgent need to reduce this violence. Americans no longer accept the staggering personal, economic, and social losses as a lamentable but inevitable part of life. They are eager to find ways to address the difficult issues that reducing violence—particularly gun-related violence—entails.

From daily news reports of gun violence, Americans sense the scope of the problem. The actual statistics are even more alarming: Between 1984 and 1993, more than 135,000 Americans were murdered with firearms.[1] In contrast, fewer than 50,000 Americans were killed in the entire Vietnam conflict.[2] Gun violence is markedly American: in 1990, 11,719 people in the United States were killed with handguns, while the total for Great Britain, Canada, and Japan combined was 187.[3] Statistics are alarming, but do not come close to measuring the impact. For every homicide victim, many more are wounded—even disabled for life—by gunfire. And the psychological wounds heal slowly, if ever. The group of people affected by gun violence surrounding each victim is wide, encompassing family, friends, and neighbors.

Causes of gun violence are complex. Some view the ready accessibility of firearms as the key cause. Others studying the problem have recognized such factors as drug and alcohol abuse and learned aggressive behavior and desensitization that can result from persistent exposure to violence in various entertainment media, as well as the learned aggression that can take place in homes where there is a history of violence. Long-standing social ills also exacerbate the problem. Poverty, inadequate education, lack of jobs and training programs, homelessness, the breakdown of families and communities, discrimination, the lack of understanding and respect for ethnic differences and resulting racial tension, and other core issues—and the feeling of hopelessness that is often generated by those persistent problems — are all part of the reason violence, including gun violence, persists.[4]

In addition to recognizing multiple causes of gun violence, Americans working to address the problem should be aware that both perpetrators and victims of shootings have become, on average, significantly younger. Problems in schoolyards and playgrounds unheard of 50 years ago have prompted new thinking about how to deal with gun violence and the many youth involved. Across the nation, communities are trying a variety of approaches in an effort to end the violence that is costing too many lives.

This guide is designed to help concerned citizens determine the kinds of gun violence prevention efforts they can explore and initiate. It describes three major strategies local communities are using in their attempt to eliminate the problem. One approach is to change attitudes among youth and others within the community to reduce acceptance and use of violence and to encourage individual and community preventive action. Another approach involves building partnerships between the police and the community to address specific local problems and needs that could otherwise lead or contribute to violence. A third approach uses government, through legislation, the civil justice system, and concentrated enforcement. Comprehensive gun violence prevention efforts in Kansas City, Missouri; Cleveland, Ohio; and Seattle, Washington, are described. These communities are combining approaches, devising overall strategies, and drawing on a wide range of community skills and interests. In addition to these three comprehensive efforts, examples of other strategies from around the country are highlighted.

THE DISTURBING PROFILE OF GUN VIOLENCE IN AMERICA

Firearm violence is currently the second leading cause of injury-related death in the United States, trailing only motor vehicle accidents. Many public health experts believe firearm deaths could soon officially surpass motor vehicle accidents as this country's leading cause of injury-related death.[5]

Crime is the major cause of firearm deaths and injuries, with suicide and accidental shootings making up the remainder. Although violent crime decreased slightly from 1992 to 1993, homicide, especially firearm homicide, increased.[6] Between 1983 and 1993, the number of handgun homicides rose from 8,496 to 13,980.[7] The 65 percent rise in handgun homicides and the overall 31 percent increase in murders have been widely publicized and contribute to a situation where many feel unsafe. A growing num-

ber of Americans are settling disputes violently: During the ten-year period beginning in 1984, the number of murders in the United States increased by 5,834; the number of handgun murders rose by 5,755.[8]

Many people say they buy guns because they fear attack from strangers. In 1993, firearms were the weapons used in approximately seven out of ten murders.[9] Of those murder victims, almost half were either related to or acquainted with their assailants.[10] Research indicates that a gun kept in the home is 43 times more likely to kill a member of the household or friend than an intruder.[11] Solving the problem of firearm homicide requires an effort far broader than focusing on stranger victimization.

It is estimated that for every firearm fatality, approximately 7.5 times as many people are shot and survive.[12] Firearm injuries are especially expensive to treat. In 1990, they cost the United States nearly $20.4 billion in health care expenditures.[13] According to the U.S. General Accounting Office, approximately 80 percent of gun violence victims are uninsured, so the cost of their care is often absorbed by taxpayers. These costs have a devastating effect on health care facilities. In Los Angeles County, California, alone, 10 trauma centers were closed between 1983 and 1990. They could not sustain the high, unreimbursed costs of intentional injuries, most of which were caused by firearms.[14] Everyone, whether or not directly touched by gun violence, is burdened by increased insurance rates, higher taxes, and diminished access to health care because of gun violence.

Among the most alarming trends is that American youth are being killed or injured by firearms at rates inconceivable just two decades ago. In 1985, the number of firearm homicides for youth 19 years old and younger was 1,339; by 1990, it had more than doubled to 2,861.[15] Death due to firearms for both white and black males in the 15-19 age bracket increased substantially from 1985 to 1990. Death for white males in this age group jumped 44 percent; for black males, the rate skyrocketed by nearly 160 percent.[16] Homicide victimization rates for young females have also increased, and handguns are often the weapon of choice. The FBI reports that nationwide close to 80 percent of firearm homicides are committed with handguns.[17]

Youth are not only more often the victims of firearm homicides; they are committing more crimes using firearms. Between 1983 and 1992, juvenile arrests for weapons law violations increased 117 percent. During this same period, juvenile murder arrests rose 128 percent, and aggravated assault arrests rose 95 percent.[18] These

figures suggest that teens with illegal guns are very often involved in other illegal and violent [illegible]

One of the most disturbing occurrences of our time is young students carrying weapons, including firearms, to school. One in five children has reported taking a weapon of some kind to school, reportedly for self-protection against others whom they believe have weapons.[19] In some areas, metal detectors have provided little deterrence to determined students. Though it is difficult to quantify, the threat and reality of weapons in schools unquestionably create an unsafe environment adverse to learning. How safe are our schools, and how much learning can take place, if weapons are an ever-present worry?

Violence is portrayed as acceptable through such entertainment media as television, films, video games, and music. A number of parents allow their children unrestricted exposure to violent media. By the sixth grade, a typical child has viewed an estimated 8,000 murders and 100,000 acts of violence on TV, a significant number of which were committed with firearms.[20] Media-portrayed gun violence seldom reflects the long-term consequences: the pain, the long-standing grief, and the psychological and financial costs of permanent disability or death.

The challenge and opportunity facing our communities is to take action to reduce both the causes of and the opportunities for violence. Finding ways of reducing the availability and incidence of firearm death is unquestionably part of that picture.

Assess the Community

An accurate picture of gun violence can point to initiatives that can help overcome gun violence in a community. The most promising solutions often depend on the type, level, and impact of gun violence in a locality, as well as on existing and potential resources. Answers to questions like the following can go a long way toward dispelling myths and defining needs:

- How many firearm deaths occur each year in the community?
- How many of the total are homicides, suicides, unintentional killings, and justifiable (the deceased was killed in self-defense)

homicides? Local or state police should have the data to answer these questions.

- What are the ages of the victims and (if known) the perpetrators? What are the circumstances of the killings?
- What do vital statistics show about firearm deaths and injuries in the community? How are these distributed by age groups? What is the distribution within the community? The state health department can usually provide these statistics.
- What gun-related incidents have taken place in local schools or on school property? The school administration should have these figures.
- How many licensed firearms dealers are there in the community? For the answer, write or call the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF), U.S. Department of the Treasury, 650 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20001, phone number (202) 927-7777. Information must be requested under the Freedom of Information Act, and there is a charge to cover the cost of reproduction. Staff will explain the process and provide the needed order form.
- What zoning or other codes and laws govern gun dealers' operations? Zoning boards can regulate gun dealers' terms and conditions of doing business in a number of ways, such as restricting areas and hours of operation or setting requirements for security systems and insurance coverage. Some questions to ask: Are gun dealers allowed to operate out of their homes? Can they be located near schools, parks, day care centers, alcohol outlets, or recreational facilities?
- What is the financial cost of gun violence to the community? How are school and hospital budgets affected by security costs? Local hospitals, rehabilitation centers, and public health agencies may provide some help. The local chapters of the American Medical Association or American Academy of Pediatrics may be able to provide information as well.
- What are the local, state, and national laws regarding firearm purchases and possession? How easy is it to obtain a weapon—a handgun or a long gun? How restrictive are the concealed weapon-carrying laws? What are enforcement priorities with respect to existing laws and regulations?
- What do you know about firearms? To address the issue of gun violence credibly, you need to know something about firearms. Local gun associations, the local library, and other sources can help here. Although firearm technology and terminology can become very complicated, the basics are under-

standable. Without that basic knowledge, informed decision-making is almost impossible.

- What are the attitudes toward gun violence in the community? Gun violence will continue unless the majority of the community wants it to stop. Some people may regard firearm use as a necessary means of self-protection, despite the fact guns are frequently discharged against family members and acquaintances.[21] Others believe that having a gun and using it on the street is part of popular culture, even a status symbol. Still others see gun use as a convenient and natural way to resolve disputes. An understanding of why guns are being carried and used is necessary to formulate a strategy that will change views and actions toward gun violence.

Organizing

Organizing citizens who share concerns and bringing them together to ensure that those concerns receive appropriate attention and corrective action is the first step. It can entail years of effort or a one-month campaign. The idea is to gather a core group with shared interest in an issue, develop a way for the group members to identify goals, and define and implement ways to work together toward those goals.

Here are some places to enlist support:

- faith communities and religious congregations;
- elected officials;
- law enforcement agencies;
- peace and social justice organizations;
- domestic violence prevention networks;
- schools;
- hospitals and health professionals;
- small businesses;
- taxi drivers;
- convenience store workers;
- antipoverty groups;
- university students;
- children's welfare groups;

- civil rights organizations;
- community associations;
- civic leagues;
- professional and social organizations; and
- women's organizations.

People who live in large metropolitan areas have a unique opportunity to harness the energy and coordinate the efforts of organizations from both the urban core and the surrounding suburbs. Some of these groups may not initially view themselves as having much in common. However, they soon realize that everyone has a stake in reducing gun violence and everyone is touched by the problem.

Sometimes it takes a loss of life to generate action to reduce gun violence. People who have lost loved ones and those who live in fear are often willing to tackle the gun violence problem in their community. Survivors of murder victims are often able to inspire and motivate people by sharing their experience and loss.

Once possible coalition members are identified, they should be invited to an exploratory meeting. This is not a commitment, but an opportunity to gauge the depth and breadth of community interest and generate discussion about common aims and purposes.

There are various tried and true models for organizing. The best choice depends on the community's interests, characteristics, commitment, and resources. The ideas below represent what some communities have done to unite diverse groups and work toward a common goal.

- **Coalition of organizations**—Coalitions take advantage of the existing organizations within a community. If the city or town already has a wide range of antiviolence organizations and activists dedicated to reducing crime through a variety of approaches, then this may be a productive model to build upon. To avoid administrative complications, the focus should be on coordination and participation, not formal membership. Because coalitions harness the energies and resources of diverse groups, they can involve members of the community that individual groups could not otherwise reach.
- **Project of a larger organization**—For example, affiliation with a church or social justice organization allows the group to maximize the resources and membership of the parent organization. Organizing a project of a larger organization can offer a head start on obtaining volunteers willing to help establish a network.

- **Individual members with an organized structure**—These or- [illegible] ticipation. Each person shares in the success, the day-to-day workings of the organization, and identifying ways to respond to community needs. This approach relies on a core group of people who direct the movement of the organization. Financial support can increase as these groups become larger, but it is vital to keep the membership active and interested.
- **Individuals**—Some "organizations" are primarily the work of one or two people. These are usually highly motivated people with a well-defined focus or event to highlight the problem of gun violence. They develop strategies for accomplishing their own goals, while avoiding the complex decision-making procedures in a formal structure. Their success can be limited by lack of money and support.

PROJECT GOALS

The organization must develop clear goals. It must also answer these questions: How is success to be measured? What are the bedrock principles for this group—the principles upon which action will be based? What are the shared assumptions? What steps are an integral part of success? What are the members' interests and needs (whether groups or individuals)?

No matter what goals are set, the group must be realistic about what is possible in the short, medium, and long run. Short-term, achievable targets help keep people committed and motivated while working toward longer-range objectives. In the northwest Bronx area of New York City, residents joined together and helped organize police and city officials to end a drug operation that was run out of one large apartment building. This was an important step in a larger police-community partnership to reduce crime and rehabilitate the neighborhood.

Plan events that give participants a personal stake in the project and allow opportunities for networking. Small events, such as meetings between elected officials and involved citizens, can generate large dividends by providing a forum for people to make contact and share concerns. Large events, such as rallies, marches, and vigils, attract press coverage, heighten public awareness of the gun violence issue and give member groups visibility within the community. Large or small, successful events depend on active participation and good planning.

As the organization implements projects, there must be some means for assessment that will help analyze the direction of the project and refine its focus. If resources are sufficient, evaluation by an objective outsider may yield the most accurate picture. If funds are limited, questionnaires are an informal and inexpensive method of evaluation. If the results of the evaluation are disappointing, remember that the organization is flexible, that goals and strategies must be adaptable, and that each lesson learned is a step forward.

Overview of Three Major Strategies

CHANGING ATTITUDES

For gun violence to stop, the majority of the community must find it unacceptable. It may be necessary to change people's attitudes toward gun usage.

School Curriculum and Zero Tolerance

In response to the unprecedented number of school-aged children killed and injured in gun-related incidents, many communities have adopted school-based curricula to educate youth about the danger of firearms and how to prevent injury. Some programs are geared toward high school students; others focus on elementary students. Curricula may focus on safety measures to prevent accidental shootings or seek to shape attitudes toward guns and crime. Programs may consist of a day long or week long presentation or be incorporated into the daily lesson plan throughout the school year. Educational leaders should choose the curriculum that corresponds to the population of students and the needs of the community.

"Zero tolerance" describes school policy that requires long-term suspension or expulsion for any student caught bringing a weapon to school—even the first time. Zero tolerance emphasizes community values and sends a clear message that will deter some students from bringing weapons to schools. If the violating student has the opportunity to take part in an alternative program for the period

of suspension or expulsion, there is potential for reform. Public schools in Topeka, Kansas, recommend to parents of students ex-pelled or suspended for carrying weapons that the student attend the Second Chance School for three hours of academic instruction per day. Parents are also given referrals to public agencies that counsel on a sliding-scale fee basis.

Teen Advocacy and Conflict Resolution

Teen advocacy groups build teens' sense of responsibility by giving them a forum to work on gun violence prevention policies with community leaders, policy makers, the media, or other organizations. Because teens can be effective in peaceably resolving disputes between peers and communicating the anti-gun violence message to them, conflict resolution programs are increasing in junior and senior high schools. Conflict resolution draws upon the abilities of young people to find alternative ways to resolve disputes that might otherwise end in violence.

Positive Outlets

Positive outlets are activities for young people that serve as alternatives to the behaviors often associated with gun violence. Young people often lack opportunities outside of school for education, jobs, organized sports, and entertainment. Idle time can lead to the destructive activities associated with gun violence. Programs can be designed to serve educational and vocational training needs, create part-time and summer employment, or provide organized recreation. They can promote cooperation, sportsmanship, and character building among youth.

Public Awareness Campaigns

Public awareness campaigns use focused public education strategies on a variety of media—such as radio, television, newspapers, posters, flyers, and billboard. Too often, young people see violence and the use of weapons as legitimate solutions to conflict or as necessary for protection. Public awareness campaigns alert the community to the gun violence problem, warn of the dangers of using firearms, and introduce positive alternatives to violence. The format and

clarity of the message will determine its effectiveness. Local advertising agencies may donate their resources to help design campaigns, and local newspapers and TV and radio stations may make public service announcements on behalf of the campaign. Public awareness campaigns are often an integral part of a comprehensive community-wide effort to reduce gun violence.

At the national level, the National Citizens' Crime Prevention Campaign has developed an outstanding track record of persuading people to take action against violence, linking nationwide ads to change attitudes with a local network that builds on and benefits from these changes. In appealing to adults' desire to protect children, the campaign urges action by individuals, families, and neighbors, as well as community groups.

Victim Groups

Survivors of those who died of gun violence or people who have personally sustained firearm injury are often effective communicators. They can convey their tragedy in compelling terms to help others avoid similar experiences. Victim groups may work to defuse situations where there is an immediate threat of gun violence, warn young people and prison inmates of the repercussions of gun violence, and work as advocates for stricter laws and enforcement to prevent gun violence. In addition to their work on prevention and intervention, victim organizations provide a supportive, positive environment for their members.

COMMUNITY-POLICE PARTNERSHIPS

Gun Buybacks

Gun buybacks are campaigns that give monetary or other rewards to people who turn in guns to the community police department. Because they provide an outlet for disposal, buybacks can be immediately effective in reducing the number of firearms in community households. While they can receive a great deal of cooperation from the community, they have proven less successful in attracting people to turn in semiautomatic weapons, handguns, and illegally obtained firearms. Communities should be careful not to encourage residents to acquire inexpensive guns illegally to take advantage of a buyback reward.

Community Policing

There is no single definition of community policing, but the most respected descriptions share two elements: involving the police department in the community and problem solving. This is not a specific strategy aimed solely at gun violence, but an approach to public safety. Community policing may use many nontraditional methods; it is concerned with crime prevention and with reacting to existing problems. The following analogy to the medical profession illustrates this point:

> The doctor [police officer] talks to the patient [community] to identify the problem. Sometimes the solution lies solely with the patient [community]; e.g. change of diet [owner agrees to remove eye-sore abandoned auto]. Sometimes it calls for the doctor [police officer] and the patient [community] to work together; e.g., change of diet plus medicine [organize the neighborhood to help shut down a 'blight' establishment]. Sometimes only the doctor [police] alone can solve the problem; e.g., surgery [enhanced law enforcement].[22]

The traditional policing solution to gun violence is to identify and arrest perpetrators on a case-by-case basis, as quickly as possible. A community policing approach looks at the causes of gun violence and works toward preventing it by using methods specifically tailored to the needs of the community. Such methods may include expanding the number of neighborhood foot patrol officers, fostering and rewarding prevention strategies initiated by the community, educating the community about improving home and neighborhood safety at neighborhood meetings, establishing mini-stations in neighborhoods or public housing communities, helping neighborhoods form Neighborhood Watch organizations, and enlisting officers to serve as mentors for youth needing support.

Reporting Campaigns

Reporting campaigns encourage the community to inform the authorities of persons they suspect of illegally carrying guns. Some communities provide a special hotline for this purpose, while others use the existing 911 emergency number. With the information provided by the caller, police can investigate, and when warranted, confiscate the weapon. The call is free and anonymous. However,

in some communities, people have been reluctant to participate in these programs because they prefer not to get involved, look upon informing as "snitching," or fear retribution.[23]

LAWS, REGULATION, AND ENFORCEMENT

Legislation

In 1991, there were approximately 211 million firearms in circulation, nearly one for every man, woman, and child in the United States.[24] The federal government regulates international traffic in firearms as it involves the United States and some types of interstate commerce involving firearms, but much of the responsibility for immediate local regulation rests with the states and their subdivisions.

Legislation to reduce the supply of guns addresses such important issues as their availability and safety requirements for prospective purchasers. Here is a sampling of state legislation that has been proposed or enacted to limit the supply of firearms:

- limiting the number of guns a consumer can purchase within a given period;
- taxing weapons and ammunition;
- banning certain types of weapons;
- requiring extensive background checks and waiting periods before purchases can be completed;
- requiring certain safety measures for storage of firearms;
- requiring the purchaser be a certain age; and
- requiring the purchaser take part in a safety training program before being licensed.

Communities can reduce the supply of guns by regulating gun shows within their boundaries. Although many law-abiding people attend them, gun shows are popular places for criminals to purchase weapons for two reasons: first, lack of enforcement of laws governing licensed gun dealers; second, sales between private individuals are unregulated except in the few states that have passed specific legislation.[25] In most states, anyone who owns a firearm is free to sell it to whomever he wishes, without so much as demanding identification.[26]

The ATF is working to strengthen enforcement.[27] Local police departments [illegible] pertaining to federally licensed gun dealers. Where there is no statute to control sales, the ATF and police can do nothing to prevent private individuals from making unregulated sales of guns at gun shows and flea markets. However, fairground authorities and convention centers can stop unregulated gun sales by refusing to rent booths to unlicensed individuals. Communities can also stop unregulated gun sales by advocating adoption of state legislation that specifically addresses the issue of gun sales between private individuals.

One legislative approach seeks to control crime by allowing citizens to carry concealed weapons. Proponents believe that potential perpetrators will hesitate before committing violent crimes, for fear their victims may be armed. Opponents believe that more guns will result in an increase in fatalities, availability for potential perpetrators, accidents, and the incidence of minor altercations that turn deadly. Although a number of states allow citizens to carry concealed weapons, there is little evidence on whether firearm violence has increased or decreased as a result of such legislation.

Legislation is one way to regulate the supply of weapons, and it is always an option at the state level. However, legislation can be less feasible for individual communities. Communities may encounter difficulty passing firearm legislation if their state laws preempt local laws. Preemption statutes forbid local communities to enact laws stricter than the existing state law. For example, in a preemption state that has enacted a law specifying a waiting period before a firearm purchase can be completed, cities within that state could not increase the waiting period beyond the state's provision.

One recourse these communities have to regulate firearms within their own boundaries is repeal preemption in their states. Those who advocate a repeal of preemption believe that local governments know best how to govern their communities and should be free from overreaching state regulation. Those who support preemption believe that key policies should be uniform statewide. Preemption pertains to all local legislation, not just that which addresses firearms. Before undertaking a campaign to repeal preemption, citizens must investigate its broader effects and implications.

Many agree that comprehensive federal legislation would provide the most consistent and effective gun regulation. However, local regulation is more easily achieved. Changing the law can put burdens on the whole legal system. Consider that for every law there must be enforcement. While legislation can have lasting benefits, the results are not always immediate.

Regulation

Localities can limit gun violence through regulatory authorities such as public housing authorities and licensing and zoning boards. One benefit of regulation is that it bypasses the legislative process.

In the last 20 years, some public housing authorities have adopted lease provisions limiting or banning guns. These provisions were enacted in response to residents' requests and community pressures. Some ban the use, display, or possession of guns on housing authority property, while less strict provisions require that any firearm kept in public housing units be stored in locked gun cabinets. Both of these approaches are considered acceptable by the legal counsels of the housing authorities adopting them because the regulatory language set forth by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development allows public housing authorities to make lease provisions that are "necessary and reasonable . . . for the benefit and well-being of the housing project and the tenants."[28]

Although these gun lease provisions have had an impact on reducing gun violence, few public housing authorities have instituted such provisions. The Public Housing Authority of Portland, Maine, adopted strict lease provisions concerning guns and found that they were effective in helping to prevent the gun violence that occurs throughout the city from taking place in the public housing projects.[29] Despite the provision's apparent success, a few residents sued the Portland Public Housing Authority on the grounds that the lease provision violated their Second Amendment rights to keep and bear arms. The housing authority won the case; however, a majority of housing authorities have not adopted lease provisions limiting gun possession because they fear incurring large legal costs of similar suits.

Local zoning boards regulate commercial activity in each neighborhood and, as with liquor stores, can specifically regulate gun dealers by restricting their areas and hours of operation and setting requirements pertaining to space allocation, security systems, payment of a gross receipts tax, and amount and kind of insurance coverage. Licensing boards set similar requirements by issuing permits to do business within the locality. With the passage of the 1994 Federal Crime Law, gun dealers are required to comply strictly with state and local laws and can be closed down for operations that violate local ordinances. A 1994 survey in Contra Costa County, California, found that of 700 gun dealers, only 238 had the state Certificates of Eligibility and only 64 had local business licenses. Strict enforcement of local ordinances, higher federal

licensing fees, and closer scrutiny of applicants by the ATF caused the total number of gun dealers in [illegible] county to drop in just one year.[30]

Gun Court

The city of Providence, Rhode Island, established a Gun Court in September 1994. The idea behind a special court for all crimes committed with guns is to set community and judicial standards of low tolerance for gun violence. Providence's Gun Court seeks to accomplish this by swiftly adjudicating cases and implementing statutes for mandatory terms: two to 10 years for illegal possession of a firearm for a first offense, five to 20 years for a second offense, and 10 to life for a third offense.

The Gun Court resulted in a marked difference in the adjudication of crimes committed with guns. In the nine month period before the court was established, only 32 violators were sentenced to prison terms, and only seven of those were sentenced to serve more than two years. Such cases took an average of 518 days before disposition. In the year after the Gun Court was established, 97 violators were sentenced to prison terms and 57 of those were sentenced to serve more than two years. These cases took an average of only 128 days before disposition.[31]

According to Providence police, the Gun Court has been effective in getting the message out to potential perpetrators that illegal gun usage will not be tolerated.[32] This type of court has received a great deal of attention, and communities in Texas, Louisiana, Illinois, and Florida are considering Gun Courts of their own. Although establishing Gun Courts may be difficult because they require planning and extra funding, they are generally supported by both gun control activists and the National Rifle Association (NRA).

Civil Justice

When a firearm is used for an illegal purpose, the criminal justice system looks to find and punish the criminals. The goals include: prevention through deterrence and sending a message to potential wrongdoers that such behavior is intolerable. The civil justice system can also be an extremely powerful tool for preventing crime: it too can be used to curtail gun manufacturers' and sellers' ability

to supply firearms. The government will not initiate civil litigation; it is the responsibility of individual victims to bring these cases to court.

To acquire a basic understanding of firearms litigation, it is important to understand its three categories, each designed to limit a different type of behavior.

Product Liability

A product liability suit is filed against a manufacturer for producing a defectively designed or manufactured product that unintentionally discharges or accidentally injures—for example, when a gun blows up because of a defect in the barrel construction or unintentionally discharges because of a failure or lack of safety mechanisms. In product liability cases, a lawyer can point to problems in the manufacturer's design process that, if corrected, would have prevented the injury.

Dealer Liability

A second kind of suit holds the dealer responsible for selling a weapon later used to violate federal or state law by injuring someone. The classic case is *Kitchen v. K-mart.* In the *Kitchen* case the plaintiff was paralyzed when she was shot by her ex-boyfriend. The boyfriend was able to purchase the firearm used in the shooting even though at the time of the purchase, and the shooting a few hours later, he was extremely and noticeably intoxicated. A Florida jury found that K-Mart was negligent and thus responsible for the shooting because it had violated Florida law by selling a firearm to an intoxicated person. Federal and state law generally specify who is prohibited from purchasing firearms. Selling a firearm to someone underage, with a criminal record, or under the influence of drugs or alcohol is usually prohibited. Violation of these laws will generally give rise to civil liability against the seller.

Dangerous Consumer Product

Another kind of suit is brought by the victim of an intentional shooting against a firearms manufacturer. These suits, which are very difficult to win, allege that the designing or marketing activity of the manufacturer contributed to the intentional shooting of the victim, usually by a criminal third party. In three cases—one in Maryland and more recently in California and New York—courts

have let this type of case proceed, although none has yet been decided. The ultimate issue in these cases is the [illegible] behavior required for a manufacturer to be held liable when a third party intentionally shoots the victim. In the Maryland case, *Kelley v. R.G. Industry*, a manufacturer of "Saturday night specials" was held civilly responsible for the intentional shooting of a store clerk by a gunman using an R.G. handgun. The court held the defendant strictly liable because it had manufactured a firearm that when used as intended, would result in exactly this type of harm. Similar cases based on the *Kelley* decision have been unsuccessful in other jurisdictions; the Maryland legislature has limited its use even in Maryland.

One obstacle to use of civil law for limiting gun violence is that many people injured by firearms do not know that they have legal recourse against gun manufacturers. Even when people are aware of the option of civil litigation, it can be difficult to discover the source of the gun and how it was acquired, information vital to successful prosecution.

Gun Interdictions

Gun interdiction programs attempt to remove guns directly from the street. Police officers on patrol carry out searches and confiscate weapons in high-crime areas. Gun interdiction is primarily carried out by police departments and can be brought about by pressure from citizens and elected officials. It can also require additional funding. How the interdiction is carried out depends on the gun violence rate of the city and the density of the population.

Some have raised concerns that gun interdiction searches will mean that young black males are searched based on their race rather than an objective criteria. If police officers implement discriminatory searches, the police department may be criticized. However, such searches can be carried out properly if officers are properly trained and supervised.[33] Gun interdictions are likely to be supported by a community, regardless of its ethnic composition, if a community has requested the program.

Community Overview

Many communities throughout the United States are taking a comprehensive approach to solving the problem of gun violence. In each of the following cases, citizen organizations united with elected officials and community institutions to address the problem of gun violence through programs tailored to fit the specific needs of the community. These are not comprehensive, unified efforts that were generated through a planning process, but evolutionary efforts that have grown as citizen concern and activism have grown.

There are common elements to each community's effort: participants from different backgrounds, diverse aims, collaboration, and coordination. By enlisting a combination of strategies that show promise, each community is actively identifying the contributing factors of gun violence and working toward addressing them.

KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

Residents of Kansas City began in late 1994 to develop a broad strategy for addressing their gun violence problem. Though long-term results are not yet available, homicides had dropped 19 percent in October 1995 compared with October 1994, and all other violent crimes were down by significant percentages as well.[34] With active citizen involvement, motivated community institutions, and responsive officials, the future promises a continuation of this positive trend.

In 1994, representatives of a wide range of city organizations began meeting informally to discuss the growing trend of youth violence in the Kansas City metropolitan area. Crime, including gun violence, committed by and upon area youth was rising at an alarming rate. A significant portion of the group had come together as a result of the death of a nine-year-old child who was shot in his driveway by an alleged drug dealer. Still others worked with the Child Fatality Review Program of the Division of Family Services and knew firsthand of the growing youth violence in the Kansas City community. The informal group includes representatives from Children's Mercy Hospital, the Missouri Division of Youth Ser-

vices, the Community Affairs representatives of a TV station (Channel 9, KMBC), Kansas City Free Health Clinic, Psychiatric First Aid, and the United States Attorney's Office, as well as two citizen groups, Ad Hoc Group Against Crime and Project Neighbor-H.O.O.D.

On March 30, 1995, the group sponsored a town hall meeting to discuss how Kansas City could respond to youth violence. The meeting was broadcast live by a local television station and attended by U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno. As a result of the gathering, the group identified the need for a collaborative effort that emphasized greater cooperation between existing organizations and concerned individuals. Representatives developed **Communities Investing in Today's Youth** (**CITY**). Rather than relying on separate funding, CITY sees its members as its resources.

CITY organizers used two different approaches to the community youth violence crisis. The first, called **Emergency Response Team** (**ERT**), is a collaborative initiative that uses a health care advocacy model to quickly respond to incidents of violence and provide the community with effective intervention. ERT gathers information on causes, effects, and prevention of youth violence, then evaluates and distributes the information to the community so that residents can learn ways of preventing it. ERT's long-term goal is to initiate broad community prevention activities. It also intends to coordinate action and reflection among public health officials, neighborhood activists, law enforcement officials, crime prevention agents, and the faith community to find and implement preventive strategies to combat violence.

The **Presenting Other Ways to Encourage Responsibilities** (**POWER**) committee spearheads the second approach that grew out of the CITY organization. POWER is a neighborhood-based model that focuses on one particular area of the community for a given period. It concentrates its efforts by addressing youth violence on a street-by-street basis, thus having a cumulative effect. POWER seeks to create positive environments through developing and supporting ongoing programs that focus on reducing youth crime, enhancing self-esteem, encouraging responsibility, and developing conflict resolution skills.

The Kansas City effort promotes informal cooperation among citizen groups, the CITY initiative, the police department, and preventive programs organized by the local hospital. This evolved from the participation of diverse individuals willing to serve in more than one community-based organization. For example, hospital professionals in injury prevention and trauma counseling are also involved

with citizen groups aimed at reducing gun violence through community education. This coordinated effort keeps administrative problems to a minimum.

Project Neighbor-H.O.O.D., a central component of the community-wide effort, is a citizen group that works to reduce drug and alcohol abuse. Although Project Neighbor-H.O.O.D. was founded long before CITY, its work is closely linked with CITY because many of the gun violence incidents in Kansas City are linked to alcohol abuse or drug-related disputes. Project Neighbor-H.O.O.D. trains residents in target areas to act as neighborhood mobilizers. These trained activists help neighbors address drug and alcohol problems and report dangerous situations at Project Neighbor-H.O.O.D. meetings. Project Neighbor-H.O.O.D. also reaches community members through the schools by introducing high-risk young people to mentors. The mentors provide one-on-one dialogue with the youth and their families and suggest programs that would meet their needs. The project also mobilizes the community by organizing vigils after shootings and marches against drug houses. This advocacy work creates an atmosphere of low tolerance for gun violence and the behaviors that lead to it.

Operating in concert with CITY efforts is the **Ad Hoc Group Against Crime**, a grassroots, volunteer-driven organization working to address many community concerns, including gun violence. The group's numerous programs are aimed at helping high-risk youth. These programs offer conflict resolution training, crisis intervention, job training, cultural awareness, and confidence-building exercises. A special summer program for boys and girls of color aged 12 to 18 pairs children with volunteer mentors who themselves were once considered to be high-risk teenagers. The group also runs a youth help line and a confidential witness line, which provides monetary rewards for information that leads to the identification, arrest, and filing of charges against those suspected of violent crime.

The Kansas City Police Department is implementing community policing strategies to enhance the effectiveness of CITY, Project Neighbor-H.O.O.D., and the Ad Hoc Group Against Crime. There are two main components of the departmental effort. The first is implementation of **Community Action Network (CAN) Centers**, which conform with the Project Neighbor-H.O.O.D. program. With funding from the U.S. Department of Justice, the police department budget, and revenues from a county-wide antidrug tax, the police department has set up CAN Centers in many troubled neighborhoods. These police mini-stations are run by neighborhood mobilizers, police officers, and a city building codes inspector. The

inspector helps find and condemn drug houses by identifying building code violations and citing owners of abandoned property and empty lots. The CAN Centers host community meetings where police and residents discuss how to identify nuisance spots; address specific, known drug houses; educate residents on the use of 911; prevent child abuse; and other matters of interest to the community.

The second component of Kansas City community policing is **Community Action Teams (CATs)**, teams of specialized police officers who work in any section of the city where they are needed. Team members carry pagers and distribute their pager numbers to citizen groups throughout the community. CATs use bicycles or patrol on foot to maintain close contact with residents and citizen groups.

The Kansas City effort includes an anti-gun violence advocacy component. **Eliminate Needless or Unnecessary Gun Habits (ENOUGH!)** is a citizen group that focuses on limiting gun violence through education and legislation. The group advocates the Straight Talk About Risks (STAR) antigun violence curriculum developed by the Center to Prevent Handgun Violence. ENOUGH! provides and distributes information on firearm safety through schools, community meetings, and ERT. The group educates state representatives on gun control issues and is working to pass an ordinance that would require gun buyers to purchase trigger locks. Members of ENOUGH! participate in CITY and engage in informal public debates with members of the NRA.

Community officials have a high degree of commitment to the program. For example, neighborhood mobilizers working on the front lines directly contact their local U.S. Attorney to discuss problems and strategize solutions. The U.S. Attorney's Office uses information about particular neighborhoods to actively participate in coordinating the community-wide violence prevention effort. After a shooting, the U.S. Attorney's Office frequently acts as a liaison between the media and informed residents of the neighborhood. It tries to influence the media to report the incidence of violence and communicate a constructive message about how similar incidents can be prevented. Through CITY, the U.S. Attorney's Office is also in contact with the Kansas City Police Department and recommends community policing procedures.

A local TV station, KMBC Channel 9, is an active supporter of CITY and plays an important role in keeping the public informed about the progress of violence prevention efforts. KMBC broadcasts follow-up reports of the CITY effort with representatives of POWER and ERT, which include information for citizens about

how to get involved. KMBC also designs and airs public service announcements and sponsors events to increase public awareness.

A local hospital, Children's Mercy, is another community institution working to respond to violence in the city's neighborhoods. Their program, **Psychological First Aid**, helps children aged 5-11 cope with post-traumatic stress syndrome which frequently follows exposure to violence. Without exposure to positive alternatives for addressing grief and rage, there is a likelihood that many of these children would become violent.

The level and diversity of gun violence prevention in Kansas City is representative of the community's commitment to reducing gun violence. The effort is truly citizen-based. Organizing residents and coordinating the work has been challenging but rewarding. An effort that began as a grassroots initiative blossomed into a coordinated movement of citizen groups, community institutions, and public officials. Great strides have been made to improve the quality of life by reducing gun violence and its associated behaviors.

CLEVELAND, OHIO

Cleveland's strategies for preventing gun violence have been implemented through the energies of a great number of concerned, committed citizens. Many independent entities pulled together to work on the urgent issue of youth and gun violence. The mayor established an Office of Violence Reduction and Crime Prevention, generated partly by these groups' early successes.

People Empowered Against Child Endangerment (PEACE) is an umbrella organization begun in 1991 by a city council president in response to the escalating number of violent deaths and injuries of Cleveland's children. Through committees staffed by volunteers, PEACE coordinates existing efforts and forms coalitions for problems not yet addressed.

An example of a PEACE project is the *Youth and Family Resource Directory*, a comprehensive referral guide distributed by the Public Health Committee of PEACE and sponsored by local public television station WVIZ and *The Plain Dealer* newspaper. The Public Health Committee, which consists of volunteer health care professionals from hospitals throughout Cleveland, is faced daily with the reality of treating preventable injuries and fatalities among children, many of which result from gun violence. The community surveyed area hospitals and identified a need to educate both the health care community and the public about violence prevention, as well as the

programs available to deal with the consequences of violence. The *Youth and Family Resource Directory*[35] lists [illegible] and information centers, community centers, health services, police departments, mediation and conflict resolution programs, and all other organizations that directly and indirectly address the problem of violence. It is distributed to doctors in hospitals and citizen groups throughout Cleveland.

The city's administration has played an integral part in the movement against gun violence by participating in PEACE and through its own initiatives. In 1994, the mayor of Cleveland initiated the Summit on Violence, a meeting attended by hundreds of civic leaders, community activists, and neighborhood groups. The Summit resulted in drafting a plan for community policing, which was approved and implemented in 1995. Also following the Summit, the mayor set up the Office of Violence Reduction and Crime Prevention, which administers many programs that directly and indirectly address gun violence. The director of the Office of Violence Reduction and Crime Prevention coordinates his efforts with PEACE and sits on one of the PEACE committees.

One of the first programs initiated in 1994 by the Office of Violence Reduction and Crime Prevention was a gun buyback campaign, whose organization embodies Cleveland's community-wide cooperation to end gun violence. The Office of Violence Reduction and Crime Prevention worked with police, city council members, local reglious organizations, businesses, and TV and radio stations. The police helped with logistics and the city council rallied support. A local supermarket chain donated a voucher good for $75' worth of groceries in exchange for each handgun. Reglious organizations reinforced the dangers of handguns used in violent acts, encouraged participation in the buyback, and served as neighborhood-based turn-in sites. The combined work of these organizations resulted in a successful buyback campaign, which netted a total of 2,300 guns.

One long-term program administered by the Office of Violence Reduction and Crime Prevention is a two-year antiviolence media campaign, consisting of public service announcements, positive news stories, special publications, week-long series of features and stories, editorials, and special prime-time programming. During the gun buyback campaign, news stories and public service announcements donated by local radio station WZAK and TV station WEWS-TV5 were critical to the project's success.[36] Future plans for the media campaign include a television show hosted by the commander of the police department featuring partnerships between community organizations and the police. Also, to increase

public awareness, the Office of Violence Reduction and Crime Prevention is developing an electronic police bulletin board, which will give residents immediate access to Cleveland's crime statistics, crime prevention tips, and crime watch and neighborhood groups.

Another organization that has cross membership with PEACE is the **Gun Safety Institute,** initiated by a Cleveland businessman because of his concern about the rise of gun violence. The Gun Safety Institute focuses on preventing handgun violence through research and public school education. With the help of a doctor from the Child Guidance Center of Greater Cleveland, the Gun Safety Institute worked with Cleveland State University and Case Western Reserve University to develop a curriculum called "Solutions Without Guns or Violence" that addresses children's motivations for carrying firearms and using violence. The Gun Safety Institute reports that the curriculum can prove its effectiveness through an evaluation survey, administered to students before and after their exposure to the curriculum.

The **Handgun Control Federation of Ohio (HCFOhio)** shares office space with the Gun Safety Institute and is directed toward limiting gun violence through legislation. HCFOhio was started in 1970 by the widow of a man murdered with a handgun. Originally, the goal was to pass handgun licensing and registration ordinances in Cleveland and area municipalities, but HCFOhio has become the premiere advocacy organization in Ohio for gun control legislation. Most recently, HCFOhio has been fighting proposed legislation that would allow Ohio's citizens to carry concealed weapons. HCFOhio also participates in PEACE.

Founded in 1981 by the Cleveland Bar Association, the **Task Force on Violent Crime** is a nonprofit public charity with three priorities: reducing youth violence, improving safety in and around public housing, and reducing recidivism. Members of the Task Force also sit on PEACE committees. The Task Force does not operate programs but serves as a catalyst, creating new programs that are responsive to community needs. The Task Force brings together key leaders from the legal and corporate communities, law enforcement, schools, small business, community groups, and the media to initiate and administer antiviolence programs. Among the many Task Force accomplishments are: establishing police mini-stations in Cleveland public housing; presenting gang awareness workshops for teachers, law enforcement officers, and parents; and establishing seven Youth Resource Centers that coordinate the efforts of police officers, probation officers, teachers, and guidance counselors to identify and handle disruptive children. It is funded

by the local community and state grants, and all board members and committee members are volunteers.

The Cleveland Chapter of **Physicians for Social Responsibility** (PSR) has been particularly active in drawing attention to the local issue of gun violence. Part of the group's mission is preventing violence and its causes. To further this goal, PSR members have served on the PEACE committee that published the *Youth And Family Resource Directory* and participated in other PEACE activities. PSR advocates gun control legislation by appealing to state legislators and raising public awareness. To attract media attention to the gun violence situation, in April 1995, Cleveland's PSR staged a "Die In." Medical students and doctors enacted for the media a disturbing hypothetical case of an emergency gunshot victim situation.

Concern about gun violence is also reflected in the efforts of citizens involved in religious organizations. During March 1995, the month that has historically had the highest murder rate for minors in Cleveland, the Church of the Covenant held a meeting on domestic violence. During that same month, the National Council of Jewish Women's Cleveland section held a lecture on the effects of violence and its prevention. The Commission on Catholic Community Action held a day-long, Gandhi-King program in Cleveland's Catholic and public schools. In April 1995, the Unitarian Universalist Society of Cleveland held a toy gun buyback and peace fair. Four thousand items, including toys, vouchers for food, books, and video rentals were donated by local merchants, and extensive media coverage helped get the message out to the community.

Cleveland's citizens involved in preventing gun violence didn't deny that it is sometimes challenging to coordinate their efforts while maintaining the momentum of their own programs. However, they are encouraged by success. From 1993 to 1995, crimes committed with guns, including homicide, rape, robbery, and felony assault, decreased by 25 percent.[37] There were 24 fewer homicides committed with guns, a decline of 27 percent.[38] Through well-focused and well-organized strategies and working together, Cleveland is reducing gun violence.

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

Led by their mayor, Seattle residents launched a city-wide, broad-based **Seattle Campaign Against Violence** to reverse trends of increasing violent behaviors. The campaign's philosophical thrust is community involvement and public awareness. The campaign

brings together existing community organizations, linked by a coordinating council headed by the Mayor's Office. The groups share key goals but implement them in varying ways.

The Violence Prevention Project is the part of the campaign that focuses on community involvement. To activate residents, all municipal departments—from the Parks and Recreation Department to the Water Department—are encouraged to pull together an Action Team to focus on an aspect of building the community. Teams are made up of volunteers who collectively select a project. Teams, supported by their department heads, are allowed to use work time to organize but must conduct their activity outside of work hours. Existing citizen groups, such as Parent-Teacher Associations (PTA) and neighborhood block committees, also form community-based Action Teams. The Violence Prevention Project began as a partnership between the City of Seattle and the Group Health Foundation, but it is being integrated into the Seattle Police Department's community policing administration.

As part of the effort to increase community awareness and help citizens find out how to participate in the effort against violence, the Campaign put together educational brochures for young people and a workbook for adults called *Building Blocks to Peace*. The workbook is distributed through community agencies, neighborhood service centers, and community groups, as well as Action Teams. It offers examples of Seattle residents taking steps to build the community and provides a resource guide of active organizations.

The key element of the campaign that deals with community awareness is **Partners Against Youth Violence**, a coalition of more than two dozen agencies and organizations that describes its mission as seeking "to prevent youth gun violence by educating the community, specifically young people and their parents, about the consequences of youth gun possession and related gun violence."[39] Partners include Harborview Hospital, crisis clinics, school administrators, several civic and professional groups, the prosecutor's office, the city council, the state medical association, and the police department's crime prevention, youth, and school safety units.

The main thrust of Partners is **"Options, Choices and Consequences,"** an interactive presentation on violence prevention designed to appeal to a broad range of student and community participants. Visual aids, lectures, and group activities encourage participants to consider the ramifications of gun violence. Teams of volunteers, law enforcement professionals, prosecutors, and physicians from each partner organization present the program to middle and high school students, their families, and community groups

such as PTAs, churches, and Rotary clubs. "Options, Choices and Consequences" is managed by police department personnel as part of the Seattle Police Department's commitment to community policing.

In addition to administering "Options, Choices and Consequences," the police department helps prevent youth gun violence in other ways. It has strengthened investigation and prosecution of those suspected of illegally selling guns to youth, investigated and helped prosecute youth who illegally possess handguns, supported youth and adult education programs, built parent and community awareness of youth violence, and dedicated extra prevention and enforcement efforts in parts of the city where levels of youth gun violence are high.

Many of the partners that make up Partners Against Youth Gun Violence are grassroots organizations which predate the Campaign Against Violence and combat gun violence in less direct ways. One such organization, **Mothers Against Violence in America (MAVIA)**, is run by a board of directors made up of concerned citizens, community and business leaders, respected authorities, and survivors of violence. MAVIA heightens community awareness of gun violence through community meetings, conferences, a speaker's bureau, and a 30-second public service announcement. MAVIA also publishes antiviolence materials for the media and has lobbied for numerous state legislative solutions to the gun violence problem.

The Crisis Clinic is a long-standing organization that works in cooperation with Partners to Prevent Youth Gun Violence. The Crisis Clinic provides comprehensive telephone crisis intervention and information and referral services in the hope of preventing tragic incidents such as those relating to gun violence. Members of the community volunteer at the Crisis Clinic and help callers to the Crisis Line sort through problems and explore alternatives. These volunteers undergo 40 hours of classroom training before working on the Crisis Line. In addition, the Crisis Clinic maintains a database of over 2,400 human services, which is accessible to the public.

Washington Ceasefire, another partner, takes the advocacy approach to eliminating gun violence. This nonprofit corporation operates statewide to promote gun storage safety programs and provide resources on violence and its public, economic, and psychological consequences. Washington Ceasefire's main purpose is to support major changes in national and local gun control laws. The group works with the community through such activities as providing speakers for "Options, Choices and Consequences" and jointly sponsoring events such as the PTA's *Gun Violence & Our Children* workshop.

Washington State University has researched the violence issue on behalf of the Campaign Against Violence and identified interventions and alternatives to violence that have proven effective elsewhere. Its findings supported the Campaign's approach of using multiple strategies, including a school-based curriculum, outreach to parents, a media campaign, and firearm regulation and enforcement. By investing time in recruiting partner organizations, identifying local conditions and needs, researching effective approaches, and designing activities that actively involve partners and enlist even more members of the community—younger and older—Seattle has launched a thoughtful, tailored, flexible initiative.

Programs

The following is a list of programs that use the approaches described in Chapter 3. These may be appropriate for limiting gun violence in your community. Some of these programs may overlap, but this points to the necessity of coordination.

School Curriculum

Straight Talk About Risks (STAR)

Center to Prevent Handgun Violence
1225 Eye Street, NW
Suite 1100
Washington, DC 20005
202-289-7319

This curriculum teaches children in grades pre-K through 12 how to avoid carrying and using guns. The STAR curriculum provides materials to schools as well as professional training and support. The lessons focus on making safe and smart decisions, resisting peer pressure to use or carry guns, distinguishing between real and media violence, understanding the consequences of resorting to guns to solve problems, and learning how to solve problems without vio-

lence. The curriculum can be incorporated into traditional subjects, such as mathematics, science, and [illegible]. It has also been translated into Spanish. Currently, the STAR curriculum is being used throughout the state of New Jersey; Dade County, Florida; New York City; and Los Angeles, San Diego, and Oakland, California.

Eddie Eagle Gun Safety Program

National Rifle Association (NRA)
Safety and Education Division
11250 Waples Mill Road
Fairfax, VA 22030
800-231-0752 or 703-267-1573

This curriculum was formulated by the NRA to promote gun accident prevention for children in pre-K through sixth grade. Recognizing that firearms are present in about half of all American households, the curriculum teaches children a simple safety message so they know what to do should they come upon an unsecured firearm: "STOP! Don't touch. Leave the area. Tell an adult." The program uses Eddie, a friendly eagle, as an educational safety mascot to convey the message and emphasize that guns are not toys. Program materials are available in English or Spanish and include workbooks, instructor guides, posters, stickers, a letter to parents, and an animated video. Training by professional educators or an in-service video is offered to schools. Since the inception of the program in 1988, Eddie Eagle has reached over 7 million children throughout the United States and Canada.

Gun Buybacks

St. Louis Police Department

Lieutenant Colonel Charles E. McCrary
City of St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department
1200 Clark Street
St. Louis, MO 63103
314-444-5321

The St. Louis Police Department set up this campaign to buy back guns from citizens. The police recognized that those who were prone to commit violent crimes would not readily sell their firearms, but believed that it would benefit the community to deplete the supply of firearms that criminals draw upon.

To carry out the project, funds from the Police Department Asset Forfeiture program were matched with donations from local corporate and private donors. The *St. Louis Post Dispatch* donated space to announce the event and encourage city-wide participation. The Police Department raised $25,000 and decided to pay $50 for all handguns and $25 for all long-barrel weapons.

The buyback was a great success. In its four weeks of operation, the buyback stations received 7,547 firearms, of which 5,032 were pistols. Among these were 703 firearms that were either stolen or illegal. To further heighten community awareness to the gun violence problem, turned-in firearms were melted down into a memorial statue of Christopher Harris, a 9-year-old killed when he was caught in the crossfire between the gunfire of two alleged drug dealers.

Reporting Campaigns

Kid With A Gun—Call 911

Ninki Vickers
Mobile Bay Area Partnership for Youth, Inc.
305A Glenwood Street
Mobile, AL 36606
205-473-3673
Fax: 205-479-8831

In Mobile, Alabama reports of incidents involving weapons in schools tripled in the 1992-1993 academic year. These escalating statistics coupled with a rash of deaths and injuries caused by accidental shootings involving young children, spurred law enforcement and other community agencies to partner on creating a public awareness campaign.

The goals of the campaign are threefold: alerting the public to the consequences of youthful possession of handguns, encouraging preventive measures against juvenile violence and death, and educating adults about their responsibility for child safety. The slogan "Kid With a Gun—Call 911" focused public attention on the juvenile gun violence problem while it instructed citizens to call 911 to report a kid with a gun, just as they would call about a crime or other emergency. The media provided invaluable support by airing ads during prime time and publishing newspaper articles on the growth of youth violence and the importance of the "Kid With a Gun" campaign. Art work and billboards were also donated.

Weapon Watch

Memphis City School District
2597 Avery Avenue
Memphis, TN 38112
901-325-5300

Weapon Watch was started in November 1993 to involve children in the Memphis, Tennessee, school district in reducing the number of guns and other dangerous weapons. The school district joined forces with the Memphis Police Department and Crime Stoppers, a national organization that financially rewards citizens for calling in tips to solve crimes. A hotline was established for students to call anonymously and report other students carrying weapons to school. The hotline number is advertised through public service announcements on the radio, and flyers distributed at PTA and neighborhood organization meetings and posted on school bulletin boards.

The program has been a success in the view of its sponsors. A broad section of the community, including students, parents, school bus drivers, teachers, and other school personnel have used the hotline. Although callers are entitled to a $100 reward for the arrest of a gun carrier and $50 for the arrest of a carrier of weapons other than guns, less than 50 percent of the callers have claimed the reward.

Victim Groups: Healing and Preventing

Save Our Sons And Daughters (SOSAD) Detroit

244 West Grand Boulevard
Detroit, MI 48208
313-361-5200
Fax: 313-361-0055

SOSAD is a crisis intervention and violence prevention organization founded by Clementine Barfield, whose 16-year-old son was shot and killed in 1986. In addition to providing counseling and support to survivors of homicide, SOSAD sponsors several strategies for communities traumatized by violence, including:

- *Peace Movement*, implemented in schools to make peace popular, acceptable, and achievable among students. In the 1994-1995 school year, 12,635 students participated in SOSAD peace rallies and peace activities.

- *Victims Impact Panel* visits the Michigan Boot Camp and talks to young perpetrators about how the lives of survivors have been painfully and senselessly affected, with the hope of sensitizing and deterring these perpetrators from lives of crime.
- *Crisis Response Team* of trained volunteers goes to neighborhoods and schools after a tragedy has occurred to debrief and defuse the impact of violence.
- *Crime Victims Speak Out Forum* provides a way for judges, the county prosecutor, and police officers to address the concerns of survivors.
- *Information* program provides information about the criminal justice system and the rights of victims through staff, advocates, and SOSAD newsletters.

People Opening the World's Eyes to Reality (POWER)

Samuel Lehrfeld, Program Director
Goldwater Memorial Hospital
Roosevelt Island
New York, NY 10044
212-318-4361
Fax: 212-318-4370

POWER members are patients at Goldwater Memorial Hospital in New York who are disabled and sometimes dependent on respirators. All were seriously injured as a result of drugs and/or street violence. They range in age from 19 to 44. Twice a week they pay visits to high schools, correctional facilities, probation agencies, and community centers to tell their stories to persons of similar ages and circumstances. Their fundamental message to the youth of New York is simple: "Put down the guns and drugs and pick up the books, because drugs, guns, and violence have only three results: jail, paralysis, or death!"

Teen Advocacy/Conflict Resolution Groups

Teens On Target (TNT)

Summit Medical Center
South Pavilion, 4th Floor
350 Hawthorne Avenue
Oakland, CA 94609
510- 444-6191
Fax: 510- 444-6195

TNT is a grassroots organization whose goal is reducing youth violence, particularly from firearms. It emphasizes training these youth to be leaders and advocates for violence prevention in their families, among their peers, and in their communities. TNT maintains a trained core group of high school students who are at risk for violence themselves. TNT members present workshops to other young people on the causes and consequences of violence and strategies for prevention, including ways to resolve disputes peacefully. TNT members also counsel youth up to the age of 19 who have been expelled from school and are recovering from violent injuries, TNT members discourage them from retaliation.

Members also are active in advocating violence prevention policies. They help eliminate "kitchen table" gun dealers in Oakland, provide testimony on youth curfews, help develop school safety plans, are working on a service and recreation site for youth, and advocate their nonviolence message. TNT advocates have appeared in *U. S. News and World Report*, and on *The Today Show*, MTV, and CNN.

Student and Family Empowerment (SAFE) Program

Marge LaBarge
Orange County Public Schools
445 W. Amelia Street
Orlando, FL 32802
407-849-3327

SAFE was established in 1987 to help young people deal with tough issues, including violence. Teams of adults were formed to work in schools with high-risk students and their parents. School teams received training and formed partnerships with hospitals, treatment centers, and community agencies. SAFE offers a number of services, including counseling and support for high-risk elementary school children and children facing tough family issues or other challenges and organized support groups for secondary school students with similar concerns. An additional service offered by SAFE is **Peace by Peers**. Five students per grade level, in fourth grade through high school, are selected based on the perception of their peers that they are trustworthy, empathetic, and helpful. These students are trained in a two-day, off-campus retreat to become mediators. They are then able to defuse crises in the schools and help fellow students in conflict find positive solutions. In 1994-1995, elementary school mediators helped their peers successfully resolve 92 percent of the conflicts in which they intervened.

SAFE is recognized for its violence prevention work. Since 1993, SAFE student participants have held an annual Partners in Change Conference. In preparation for the event, student representatives from all Orange Country middle and high schools identify special challenges at their schools and work on team building and group interaction skills. At the conference, these student representatives encourage the 2,000 conference participants to get involved in preventing violence on their campuses and in their neighborhoods.

Gun Interdictions

Weed and Seed Program

Kansas City Police Department
1125 Locust Street
Kansas City, MO 64106
816-234-5000

Kansas City, Missouri was the first city in the country to execute a gun interdiction program. The operation concentrated on a particularly troubled neighborhood that had a homicide rate 20 times higher than the national average. For nearly seven months, four police officers worked evening and early morning hours to increase the seizures of illegal weapons. The two main methods of finding illegal guns were searching automobiles and frisking suspects. Seizures were carefully conducted so as not to violate anyone's constitutional rights. As a result, gun crimes in that neighborhood were reduced by nearly 50 percent.

New York, New York

New York City Police Department
1 Police Plaza
New York, NY 10038
212-374-6710

The Police Department in New York City is stepping up its efforts at ending illegal gun possession by vigorously enforcing federal, state, and local gun control laws. Minor infractions of the law are no longer tolerated. Much as in the Kansas City program, police target neighborhoods with the highest rate of gun crime and investigate people who drink alcohol in public, play loud music in the street, and violate other so called "minor laws." The increased enforcement started in June 1995 and, in just that one month, frisks rose 150 percent[40]

The results in New York City have been impressive. In just one year, murders have declined [illegible] percent. There have been 732 fewer shooting incidents and 818 fewer shooting victims. Surprisingly, while total arrests have gone up 27 percent from 1994 to 1995, arrests for gun violations have declined 17 percent. Police believe that this is because more people are leaving their guns at home because they fear police frisks and confiscation. Increased police presence has decreased the number of guns on the street as well as the frequency of antisocial behavior, resulting in a reduction of all crime, including shootings and killings.

Positive Outlets

Hartford, Connecticut Public Libraries

Anwar Ahmed
Albany Avenue Branch, Hartford Public Libraries
1250 Albany Avenue
Hartford, CT 06112
860-293-6081

Hartford Public Libraries have set up homework centers for young children and high school students. The effort is part of a broader neighborhood building initiative being conducted throughout Hartford. The homework centers provide a safe haven and a resource center during after-school hours and weekends, time when young people are most vulnerable. The library has extended its hours by reallocating resources and has acquired computers, mostly through donations. Staff at the branches are prepared to focus on younger children, while the main branch, easily accessible to the high schools, is geared toward students in grades 9-12. Library representatives are reaching out to the community by vising schools and neighborhoods to gather feedback about young people's needs while talking about the availability of the homework centers.

City Streets

2705 North 15th Avenue
Phoenix, AZ 85007
602-262-7370

The City Streets Program was started in 1985 as a pilot program by the citizens of West and Southwest Phoenix who were concerned that the youth in their area did not have enough constructive activ-

ities. The program has since expanded to serve thousands of youth throughout Phoenix. It offers many services, including dance troops, fashion shows, movie days, health fairs, modeling lessons, cooking lessons, rap sessions, counseling, drug abuse awareness, disk jockey lessons, job skills training, pregnancy prevention, and GED preparation.

Developers credit the success of City Streets to the contribution of young people in assisting with planning, organizing, and implementing programs. Another reason for the program's success is that it is adaptable to virtually any facility, such as parks, community centers, malls, schools, churches, and any other location where teens congregate.

Community Policing

Bridgeport, Connecticut

Bridgeport Police Department
300 Congress Street
Bridgeport, CT 06604
203-526-7611

Bridgeport, Connecticut, a city of 143,000, faced large obstacles in the early 1990s due to financial difficulties, a diverse population of 54 separate ethnic groups, and a crime crisis. It had the highest homicide rate in New England, and many of the victims were youth. Drug markets were blatant. Making matters worse, there was a long history of police-resident animosity. Before corrective measures were taken, a video recorder set up by the police department recorded 164 shots fired in one evening, and none were reported.

The department decided to focus efforts on the toughest area of the city, a 1.75-square-mile area of burned-out buildings that was plagued nightly by automatic gunfire. Gangs walked around openly, shooting out street lights. No one would provide information to police for fear of retaliation.

The department's Community Services Unit under Lieutenant Hector Torres (now a Deputy Chief) started an outreach to the community, based on community policing techniques. Torres talked to every group he could find, even though the turnouts were sparse at first. He began to encourage them to work together, even if at relatively symbolic projects. At the same time, the police stepped up traditional enforcement in the area. Observations, sweeps, and other aggressive tactics helped emphasize to the com-

munity that the police had a genuine interest in addressing the community's blatant problems.

As the months of increased enforcement measures and outreach continued, more and more residents came forward to get involved. Meetings drew as many as 200 people. Emboldened residents became more inclined to report suspicious activities or plans for lawbreaking they overheard. They now call 911 or page community officers immediately to report crimes they witness.

In addition to increased enforcement, community policing strategies in Bridgeport include setting up road blocks to catch out of town drug buyers, forming neighborhood block watches, and involving the community in eradicating blight. Seventy abandoned houses have been boarded up, and a number of vacant lots have been cleaned up by residents and police officers working together. These groups have also removed graffiti throughout the area. Residents are actively involved in every aspect of these efforts, including selecting projects.

Community policing has had a clear and positive effect in Bridgeport. The sense of community has grown over the past four years, and crime prevention programs have been developed in the new, positive atmosphere, crime is down 40 percent overall and 75 percent in the targeted areas. The decline is even more remarkable because police believe that the reporting rate is up.

RESOURCE DIRECTORY OF NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

American Academy of Pediatrics
141 North West Point Boulevard
Elk Grove, IL 60007
708-228-5005

American Bar Association
740 15th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20049
202-662-1680

American Medical Association
Department of Mental Health
515 North State Street
Chicago, IL 60610
312-464-5066

Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America
230 North 13th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19107
215-665-7762

Boys & Girls Clubs of America
1230 West Peachtree Street, NW
Atlanta, GA 30309
404-815-5700

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms
U.S. Department of the Treasury
650 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20226
202-927-7777

Bureau of Justice Assistance Clearinghouse
PO Box 6000
Rockville, MD 20850
800-688-4252

Bureau of Justice Statistics Clearinghouse
PO Box 6000
Rockville, MD 20850
800-723-3277

Center to Prevent Handgun Violence
1225 Eye Street, NW
Suite 100
Washington, DC 20005
202-289-7319

Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence
Institute of Behavioral Science
University of Colorado at Boulder
Campus Box 442
Boulder, CO 80309-0442
303-492-1032

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
US Department of Health and Human Services
1600 Clifton Road, NE
Atlanta, GA 30333
404-639-3311

Committee for Children
2203 Airport Way South, #500
Seattle, WA 98134-2027
800-634-4449

Community Relations Service
US Department of justice
5550 Friendship Boulevard
Suite 330
Chevy Chase, MD 20815
301-492-5929

D.A.R.E. America
[illegible]
Los Angeles, CA 90051
800-223-DARE

Handgun Epidemic Lowering Plan
2300 Children's Plaza, #88
Chicago, IL 60614
312-880-4000

International Association of Chiefs of Police
515 North Washington Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
703-836-6767

HUD Drug Information and Strategy Clearinghouse
PO Box 6424
Rockville, MD 20850
800-245-2691

Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse
PO Box 6000
Rockville, MD 20850
800-638-8736

The Missing Peace
708 Cloverly Street
Suite 200
Cloverly, MD 20905
301-879-0561 or 800-638-8736

Mothers Against Violence In America
901 Fairview Avenue, North
Suite A-140
Seattle, WA 98109
800-897-7697

National Center for Education in Maternal and Child Health
2000 15th Street North
Suite 701
Arlington, VA 22201-2617
703-524-7802

National Committee to Prevent Child Abuse
332 South Michigan Avenue
Suite 1600
Chicago, IL 60604
312-663-3520

National Crime Prevention Council
1700 K Street, NW
Second Floor
Washington, DC 20006-3817
202-466-6272

National Criminal Justice Reference Service
P.O. Box 6000
Rockville, MD 20849
800-851-3420

National Organization for Victim Assistance
1757 Park Road, NW
Washington, DC 20010
202-232-6682

National Resource Center on Domestic Violence
6400 Flank Drive
Suite 1300
Harrisburg, PA 17112-2778
800-537-2238

National Rifle Association
1600 Rhode Island Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20036
202-828-6000

National School Safety Center
4165 Thousand Oaks Boulevard
Suite 290
Westlake Village, CA 91362
805-373-9977

National Victim Center
211 Wilson Boulevard
Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201
703-276-2880

Pacific Center for Violence Prevention
San Francisco General Hospital
San Francisco, CA 94110
415-285-1793

Turn Off the Violence
PO Box 27558
Minneapolis, MN 55427
612-593-8041

YOUTH ALIVE!
Summit Medical Center
3012 Summit Avenue
Suite 3670
Oakland, CA 94609
510-444-6191

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